

Gulf cargo shifts to land routes as regional shipping still disrupted



Logistics providers are adjusting supply chains to maintain flows of food and medical goods to Gulf markets following disruptions to maritime transport linked to the conflict involving Iran. The disruption followed U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iran and subsequent retaliatory actions, alongside the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. This has halted most shipping traffic in the Gulf and affected supply chains. A.P. Moller-Maersk is redirecting cargo through overland routes by expanding its land bridge logistics network. Shipments are being routed through ports including Jeddah, Salalah, Sohar, and Khor Fakkan, before onward inland transport to destinations across Gulf countries.

Charles van der Steen said the company is scaling up the network while working with regional governments, which have introduced expedited procedures to support cargo movement. Cargo volumes arriving at Jeddah have increased by 40 per cent since the start of the disruption. Before the escalation, Maersk handled around 35,000 containers per week to and from Gulf countries. These volumes are now being redirected through land bridge systems. In the early phase of the disruption, the company coordinated with customers and Gulf governments to prioritize deliveries of medicines and food, including chilled and frozen products.

The company's chairman said the region is facing an "acute need" for food imports. Data from the World Economic Forum indicates that Gulf Cooperation Council countries import up to 85 per cent of their food consumption. COSCO SHIPPING Lines has also resumed bookings for general cargo containers from the Far East to selected Middle East destinations using multi-modal transport. Covered markets include the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Iraq, and Oman.

Transport arrangements are being made based on available space and regional conditions. Cargo to Abu Dhabi and Jebel Ali is being routed via a bonded land bridge through Khorfakkan or Fujairah Port. Shipments to Upper Gulf countries are moving via land bridge routes from Khorfakkan or Fujairah to Abu Dhabi CSP, where cargo connects to feeder services for distribution across the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Iraq. Cargo destined for Oman is being transshipped via Nhava Sheva, India, to Sohar.

Logistics operators are also working with governments on border procedures, customs clearance, and terminal operations, including fast-track "green corridor" systems. Rising costs for fuel, insurance, and transport are affecting logistics operations, and route adjustments may continue depending on the security situation.

Source: [Caliber](#), [Port Technology](#)

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