

e-CARGO NEWSLETTER



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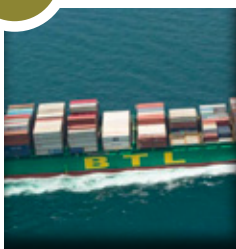
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THE NEW US ADMINISTRATION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON FREIGHT FORWARDING IN INDIA:

AN ECONOMIC VIEW

The new US government, characterized by its 'America First' trade policy, introduced profound changes in international trade patterns. For India, which is a vital trading partner of the United States, these policies meant both challenge and opportunity in the freight forwarding sector. The article examines the economic and market effects of Trump's tariffs, trade policy, and regulatory adjustments on India's logistics sector with a specific focus on how freight forwarders evolved to suit the changing scenario.

1. MAJOR TRADE POLICIES OF THE NEW US ADMINISTRATION

1.1. TARIFFS AND TRADE BARRIERS

Under his rule, Donald Trump imposed tariffs between 10% and 60% on imports from nations such as China, Mexico, and Canada. For India, the most urgent concern was the possible imposition of retaliatory tariffs, intended to counter the trade deficit. India, having a trade surplus with the US, initiated sector-wise studies to gear up for these possible tariff increases.

1.2. SUSPENSION OF THE 'DE MINIMIS' RULE

Suspension of the 'de minimis' rule, which earlier permitted duty-free entry into the US for parcels of value less than \$800, had a major effect on e-commerce and small and medium-sized enterprises in India. This development brought in higher import expenses and longer customs clearance durations, making it difficult for the responsiveness of Indian exporters and their freight forwarders.

1.3. GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN SHIFTS

Trump's tariffs had made several companies diversify supply chains to escape costly duties. Vietnam, Mexico, and India were the countries that became alternative sourcing centers, to the advantage of Indian electronics, textiles, and engineering goods exporters.

2. IMPACT ON FREIGHT FORWARDING INDUSTRY IN INDIA

2.1. ESCALATING SHIPPING COSTS AND OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES

New tariffs resulted in higher shipping rates, with research indicating transport prices might increase by 15% as a result of higher handling, storage, and processing charges. For Indian freight forwarders, this translated into compromises between cost-effectiveness and the ability to deliver quality services.

2.2. TRADE ROUTE ADJUSTMENTS

Trade policy changes resulted in new trade corridors and shifts in demand. With the relocation of production to tariff-friendly nations, Indian ports and logistics corridors saw cargo volumes fluctuate. Freight forwarders responded by seeking alternative trade corridors and coping with heightened demand for customs brokerage services.

2.3. DEMAND FOR IMPROVED CUSTOMS BROKERAGE SERVICES

With increased custom documentation and compliance regulations, freight forwarders

also had to make technology and training investments in streamlining procedures. This was crucially important to e-commerce logistics, where there is an immediate need for both speed and efficiency.

3. SECTOR-SPECIFIC IMPACTS

3.1. IT AND PHARMACEUTICAL EXPORTS

India's IT industry, which was heavily dependent on H-1B visas, was in the lurch with Trump's immigration policy. But the pharmaceutical industry experienced mixed effects, with exports potentially growing as there would be less dependence on China.

3.2. E-COMMERCE AND SMALL BUSINESSES

Suspension of the 'de minimis' rule impacted Indian e-commerce companies by making imports more expensive. Freight forwarders were key players in delivering logistics solutions to maximize inventory management and overcome the complicated customs regime.

4. STRATEGIC ADAPTATIONS BY INDIAN FREIGHT FORWARDERS

4.1. SUPPLY CHAIN DIVERSIFICATION

In order to offset risks related to tariffs, Indian freight forwarders facilitated companies in identifying new sourcing regions. The move was complementary to the international trend towards non-China countries, presenting opportunities for Indian freight forwarders to expand their growth.

4.2. ADOPTING TECHNOLOGY

Investment in digital technologies like AI-based route planning, predictive analysis, and blockchain for improved tracking became vital. The technologies helped freight forwarders remain efficient even with heightened regulatory complexity.

4.3. REGIONAL MARKET EXPANSION AND NEARSHORING

Freight forwarders facilitated companies looking at nearshoring prospects by investing in more robust supply networks across Asia, advocating intra-regional trade as a viable alternative to the US market.

5. FUTURE PROSPECTS: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

5.1. OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW TRADE AGREEMENTS

With Trump's initiative towards bilateral trade agreements, India looked at potential for a narrow trade agreement to lower tariffs for certain products, such as farm products and medical equipment.

5.2. DOMESTIC MARKET GROWTH AND RESHORING

As US firms weighed the possibilities of reshoring production, Indian freight forwarders responded by improving domestic logistics infrastructure. The change generated opportunities in trucking, warehousing, and last-mile delivery services.

CONCLUSION

The economic policies of the New US transformed the trade landscape of the world, creating challenges as well as opportunities for India's freight forwarding sector. Indian freight forwarders were able to not just survive the dislocations but even discover new opportunities for growth through adopting strategic actions like supply chain diversification, the adoption of logistics technology, and the creation of new routes of trade.

As the world trade environment keeps changing, flexibility, innovative thinking, and proactiveness will be keys to success for logistics providers. What has been learned from the Trump period has strengthened the industry, making Indian freight forwarders better equipped to tackle economic changes with strength and adaptability.





AIR FREIGHT:

- High capacity on major routes
- Stable rates to all major trade lanes



SEA FREIGHT:

- Equipment availability normalized
- Regular vessel calls at major ports
- Rates stabilized on major routes

PORT UPDATES

NHAVA SHEVA

- Average waiting time: 1-2 days
- Normal operations

MUNDRA

- Smooth operations
- No congestion reported

CHENNAI

- Regular vessel calls
- Minimal delays
- Infrastructure upgrades ongoing

FORECAST

STABLE RATES EXPECTED

ADEQUATE CAPACITY AVAILABLE

NORMAL BOOKING WINDOWS

NO MAJOR DISRUPTIONS ANTICIPATED

THESE 4 AIRLINES OPERATE THE WORLD'S LONGEST BOEING 777-200LR ROUTES

The Boeing 777-200LR is approaching two decades of service since its introduction in March 2006). The long-distance -200LR would go on to attract over 60 orders, with operators keen on harnessing the plane's incredible range of up to 8,555 NM (15,843 km).

The variant was designed specifically with ultra-long city pairings in mind such as Singapore to New York. Boeing fitted larger fuel tanks to the aircraft, enabling it to handle pretty much every long-distance route on the planet. Interestingly, the four airlines that make this list are also the four largest 777-200LR operators in the world - Emirates, Air India, Qatar Airways, and Air Canada. So what are each airline's longest 777-200LR routes?

EMIRATES

LONGEST 777-200LR ROUTE: DUBAI TO MEXICO CITY VIA BARCELONA (7,732 NM)



Dubai-based carrier Emirates is the world's largest Boeing 777 operator with a total of 130 Boeing 777 aircraft in its fleet.

The vast majority of these are the longer 777-300ER variant at 120 aircraft, complemented by a small fleet of 10 777-200LRs. Incidentally, this makes Emirates the largest operator of the -200LR variant too.

AIR INDIA

LONGEST 777-200LR ROUTE: BENGALURU TO SAN FRANCISCO (7,552 NM)



Air India has the longest nonstop Boeing 777-200LR route in the world with its Bengaluru-San Francisco pairing served by

the three weekly -200LR flights. Measuring in at 7,552 NM and a typical flight time of around 16 hours, it is slightly further than Air India's second-longest 777-200LR route between Mumbai (BOM) and San Francisco (SFO), which is 7,300 NM.



QATAR AIRWAYS

LONGEST 777-200LR ROUTE: DOHA TO DALLAS/FORT WORTH (6,890 NM)



Doha-based Qatar Airways is another major operator of the 777-200LR with a total of seven aircraft in its fleet. The airline's

longest route with the -200LR is its daily flight between Hamad International (DOH) and Dallas/Fort Worth International (DFW) at 6,890 NM, with a flight time of around 16 hours 30 minutes.

This is closely followed by its second-longest -200LR route from Doha to São Paulo (GRU) at 6,402 NM, which is also a daily service.

AIR CANADA

LONGEST 777-200LR ROUTE: TORONTO TO SYDNEY VIA VANCOUVER (8,343 NM)



Air Canada operates a total of six 777-200LRs and has been flying the type since 2007. Its longest route is its service from

Toronto (YYZ) to Sydney (SYD), which runs with a stopover in Vancouver (YVR). This is the longest scheduled 777-200LR route in the world at 8,343 NM, but not the longest nonstop route, which is Air India's Bengaluru-San Francisco flight.

OVER £5.43M OF GOODS DISRUPTED BY HEATHROW SHUT DOWN

With 70% of all UK cargo by value passing through Heathrow, the chaos resulting from its unexpected closure, caused by a loss of power following a fire at an electricity substation, will impact on UK cargo for days to come, David Jinks, Parcelhero's head of consumer research, said this week.

Heathrow handles around 48% of all the UK's air cargo, with around 1.43m tonnes of goods travelling through the airport every year, with around 90% carried in the holds of passenger flights.

Jinks said: "That reliance on passenger services means delayed freight shipments will continue to compete for space with increased passenger luggage demand as people reorganise their schedules over the next few days."

He added that the actual cost of the disruption will be significant as Heathrow struggles to return its deliveries schedules to normal.

Jinks said: "Even though all Heathrow cargo facilities are now accepting deliveries again, freight facilities at Heathrow and alternative centres at Luton, Stansted and Gatwick could struggle with volumes and scheduling for several days to come."

"Last month, Heathrow handled 120,765 metric tonnes of cargo. The logistics of rerouting and scheduling even a portion of this volume of freight is daunting."

He added: "As just one example of the disruption caused, IAG Cargo's website reportedly showed

that the company was still unable to accept any freight at Heathrow on Saturday, but was updated on Sunday to show operations had resumed.

Jinks warned that airlines' cargo centres will experience disruption for several days to come, with priority being given to time-sensitive medicines, perishable goods and urgent express air freight deliveries.

He added: "Of course, all freight that travels by aircraft is time-sensitive, otherwise it would be moved by sea, which is a significantly cheaper mode of freight transport."

"Heathrow handles a huge variety of goods, from parcels and e-commerce to tech and gold bars, and both exports and imports have been disrupted."

"The top three exported products from Heathrow are salmon, books and medicines. The top imports are chemicals that are used in medicines, plastics and perfumes, in addition to perishable products such as vegetables and flowers."

Jinks said the complex cargo handling network at Heathrow will have had a major impact on global supply chains.

"European and transatlantic trade, in particular, has been impacted by the closure. The final cost of the disruption is likely to total millions of pounds."



SF AIRLINES LAUNCHES WEEKLY CARGO SERVICE IN BENGALURU



Chinese cargo carrier SF Airlines launched a weekly service using its Boeing 767-300 freighter between Ezhou and Bengaluru.

The first arrival into Bengaluru was marked at BLR on March 6, 2025.

This freighter operating every Thursday between China's Ezhou Huahu International Airport and Kempegowda International Airport.

The connectivity between Ezhou and Bengaluru will provide an annual air cargo transport capacity of more than 5,000 tonnes, the carrier said. In addition to Bengaluru, the airline also operates flights to other Indian cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, and Chennai.

AIR KERALA, SHANKH AIR, AND ALHIND AIR SET TO BOOST AVIATION SECTOR IN INDIA

Shankh Air, Air Kerala, and Alhind Air are set to boost travel in India with new affordable routes, improving connectivity and access to key domestic and Gulf destinations.



Uttar Pradesh residents are set to receive exciting news with the upcoming launch of three new airline companies, marking a significant shift in India's aviation landscape. Among these, Shankh Air is poised to begin operations from Jewar International Airport in Noida. Alongside it, Air Kerala and Alhind Air will take flight, enhancing regional connectivity, particularly to the southern states, and improving access to Gulf countries. The introduction of these airlines is expected to spark a surge in air travel across the country.

UGANDA AIRLINES TO LAUNCH LONDON FLIGHTS

Ugandan flag carrier, Uganda Airlines, has recently announced that it will start connecting the capital of the United Kingdom with its main hub, Entebbe.



The flights would connect London's second-largest airport, London Gatwick, with Entebbe, which serves Uganda's capital, Kampala. Commencing on May 18, they would be operated using Uganda Airlines' largest aircraft, the Airbus A330-800neo.

Uganda Airlines plans to operate the route four times a week, marking the first time it's connected Uganda and the U.K. in nearly a decade. It also marks the carrier's first reentry into Europe as a part of Uganda Airlines' broader expansion plan, which had previously been on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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ANOTHER MILESTONE FOR CARGOJET!

Cargojet marked its inaugural air cargo charter flight to Mumbai (BOM) Airport, strengthening its global network and expanding reach into South Asia.

This mission was a testament to its commitment to delivering seamless, reliable, and time-sensitive solutions to customers worldwide. From specialized handling to efficient cargo movement, Cargojet leading new standards in global logistics.



CMA CGM MOVES TO TAKE OVER AIR BELGIUM'S CARGO BUSINESS

French liner giant CMA CGM has submitted a bid to take over Air Belgium's cargo operations.

The Marseille-based carrier's move follows the ruling by the business court of Walloon Brabant earlier this month to revoke Air One Belgium's takeover of Air Belgium.

Air One Belgium, a consortium comprising PESO Aviation Management and Air One Holding International, has appealed this decision, with the hearing scheduled for April 3.

CMA CGM's proposal, which will be examined by the court later this month, covers the acquisition of the company's cargo operations, retaining the Air Belgium brand along with its four aircraft.



QATAR AIRWAYS CARGO EXPANDING INDIA OPERATIONS



The freight division of Qatar Airways is planning to expand operations in India which currently contributes nearly a tenth of its global revenue, said a top executive.

Revenues are expected to grow further by 9-12pc in the coming fiscal year driven by rising demand for perishables, pharmaceuticals, and high-value goods, Mark Drusch, chief officer cargo at Qatar Airways, told. He did not elaborate.

ETIHAD AND ETHIOPIAN PARTNER TO LAUNCH NEW FLIGHTS BETWEEN ADDIS ABABA AND ABU DHABI

Ethiad Airways has signed a new joint venture (JV) with Ethiopian Airlines, featuring a codeshare agreement and new flight routes, set to improve connectivity between Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.

Ethiopian Airlines will be launching direct flights to Abu Dhabi from Addis Ababa Bole International Airport (ADD) to Zayed International Airport (AUH), starting from July 15, 2025. It will operate the new route using its modern fleet of Boeing 777s and Airbus A350-1000s.

The potential destinations for expanded partnership travel feature major destinations on Ethiopian's network in Africa, such as Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; Kampala, Uganda; Kinshasa, DR Congo and Lusaka, Zambia.

It also includes cities in the UAE and Asia, among them Etihad destinations such as Colombo, Sri Lanka, and Islamabad, Pakistan and upcoming routes to Phnom Penh, Cambodia and Krabi, Thailand.

NOIDA AIRPORT ENHANCING AIR CARGO CONNECTIVITY

Located in Uttar Pradesh, Noida International Airport is positioned to become a key logistics hub for time-sensitive shipments, particularly in e-commerce, pharmaceuticals, and perishables.

Noida International Airport (NIA) is progressing towards its operational launch, marking a critical advancement in India's air cargo and logistics infrastructure. With regulatory approvals in process and construction milestones being met, the airport is poised to become a key hub for both domestic and international air freight operations, improving supply chain efficiency across northern India.

NIA has submitted its application for an aerodrome licence, a vital step in obtaining regulatory clearance for flight operations. Engagement with the Airports Authority of India (AAI), the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), and the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) is ongoing to ensure compliance with safety and operational requirements. The finalisation of the Aerodrome Information Publication (AIP) is also in progress, which will provide critical operational data for airlines and air traffic management.

The AAI is overseeing the development of the Air Traffic Control (ATC) tower, a key component of airspace management. Discussions with the Uttar Pradesh state government are also underway to finalise the inauguration timeline, aligning with the completion of essential airport infrastructure.

The construction of the passenger terminal and associated facilities is on track, with a focus on operational efficiency and sustainability. However,

beyond passenger services, Noida International Airport's strategic importance lies in its potential to enhance India's air cargo capacity.

Located in Uttar Pradesh, Noida International Airport is positioned to become a key logistics hub for time-sensitive shipments, particularly in e-commerce, pharmaceuticals, and perishables. Its integration with multimodal transport networks will improve freight connectivity, reducing dependency on existing hubs such as Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport. The planned dedicated cargo facility is expected to alleviate congestion and provide an efficient alternative for freight operators in northern India.

The development of Noida International Airport is a result of coordinated efforts between government authorities and private sector stakeholders. The Government of Uttar Pradesh has played a key role in expediting regulatory approvals and facilitating infrastructure investments. In addition to oversight from DGCA and BCAS, AAI's technical expertise in airspace planning has been instrumental in ensuring operational readiness.

The establishment of Noida International Airport is expected to have a transformative impact on India's air cargo industry. With a growing emphasis on reducing logistics costs and improving turnaround times, the airport is set to become a critical node in regional and international freight networks.

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WITH INDIAN
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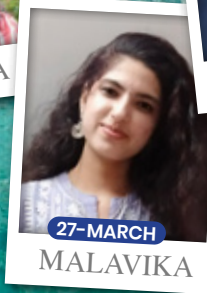
Happy Birthday



**20-MARCH
UMA EKA**



**23-MARCH
KVP NAIR**



**27-MARCH
MALAVIKA**

CMA CGM OVERTAKES MAERSK IN THE LINER RANKINGS



CMA CGM, the year's most aggressive acquirer of ships to date, has made history. As of this week, M a r s e i l l e - headquartered CMA CGM has surpassed rival Maersk to the second spot on

the liner rankings when including its huge orderbook.

The latest data from Alphaliner shows CMA CGM's fleet – including ships on order – stands at 5.42m slots, some 140,000 teu more than its Danish rival. Mediterranean Shipping Co (MSC) remains far out in the lead, however, its fleet – including ships on order – is now at 8.47m slots, larger than the extant fleets of CMA CGM and Maersk combined.

As well as being the largest buyer of secondhand boxships in the opening months of 2025, CMA CGM has been busy ordering newbuilds. Splash reported earlier this week on CMA CGM's latest series of containership newbuildings in China, opting for a dozen LNG dual-fuel 18,000 teu vessels at CSSC Jiangnan Shipyard, its second order for large containerships this year, following a \$2.6bn contract for another twelve 18,000 teu LNG dual-fuel newbuilds at Korean shipyard HD Hyundai Heavy Industries.

BENGALURU AIRPORT UNVEILS GREENFIELD DOMESTIC CARGO TERMINAL

Bangalore International Airport (BIAL) and Menzies Aviation have launched the country's largest greenfield domestic cargo terminal (DCT) at Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru (KIAB/BLR Airport).

Spanning 245,000 square feet across 7 acres, the terminal has a peak handling capacity of 360,000 metric tonnes, expandable to 400,000 metric tonnes. Equipped with 42 truck docks, over 400 cargo bins, X-ray-integrated conveyors, and 30 ULD stations, the facility also features real-time data capture with 40 handheld terminals and self-service kiosks for agents.

"Previously, our total cargo capacity was 750,000 metric tonnes. This terminal adds another 360,000 to 400,000 metric tonnes, pushing our overall capacity beyond 1 million metric tonnes," said Satyaki Raghunath, COO, BIAL.



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Shipping

SNIPPETS

ASIAN CONTAINER LINES TEAM UP TO LAUNCH NEW MEXICAN ROUTE

SEVEN Asian container liners have teamed up to launch a new route between Asia-Mexico as trade between China and Mexico continues to grow. The new route will be operated by China's Sinotrans Container Lines (Sinolines), Taiwan's TS Lines, Singapore-based SeaLead Shipping and Emirates Shipping Line, Thailand's Regional Container Lines, and South Korean carriers KMTC Line and Sinokor Merchant Marine together, TS Lines confirmed with Lloyd's List.

The service will commence from April 30.

The seven lines will provide weekly service with a port rotation covering Shanghai and Qingdao in China, Busan in South Korea, Manzanillo in Mexico, before returning to Shanghai, according to TS Lines. The voyage will take 24 days from Shanghai to Mexico, and will be the only Mexico service calling at Busan old port.

COSCO SHIPPING AND NEPTUNE LINES LAUNCH CHINA-EUROPE VEHICLE SERVICE

Cosco Shipping Car Carriers (CSCC) has set up a hub at the Greek port of Piraeus in an agreement with Neptune Lines. The joint venture will create a direct connection between China and Europe for the import of Chinese vehicle brands and use Neptune Lines' feeder services out from the hub to 21 ports across 12 countries in the Mediterranean, Black Sea and North Africa.

Cosco said the service offered a 30-day transit from China to the Mediterranean ports, initially operating once a month, scaling to a bi-weekly service by the end of 2025 supported by the delivery of 13 new vessels.

The feeder services from Piraeus will call at Koper (Slovenia), Alexandria (Egypt), Limassol (Cyprus), and key ports in Turkey, Romania, Italy, France, Spain, Morocco, Tunisia, Malta and Black Sea regions.

LANDLOCKED SWITZERLAND BECOMES WORLD'S LARGEST CONTAINER SHIP NATION

Germany used to be the world's largest container shipping nation. But that is now a thing of the past. The title is now held by a country that doesn't even have access to the sea.

Switzerland – a country without its own sea access – has risen to become the largest container ship nation in the world. The previous global fleet leader, Germany, has even fallen back to third place, as the President of the Association of German Shipowners (VDR), Gaby Bornheim, said in Hamburg. China follows Switzerland in second place.

The fact that the Alpine country is now the leader in container shipping is due to a single company: the world's largest shipping company, Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC), based in Geneva. In the past, it has not only made a name for itself by acquiring a stake in the Hamburg port logistics company HHLA, but most recently also as a buyer of German container ships. "They have taken on a lot of tonnage," said Bornheim.



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RUSSIAN OIL FREIGHT RATES FROM BALTIC PORTS TO INDIA EASE AS MORE WESTERN SHIPOWNERS RETURN

Freight rates for Russian oil supplies from its Baltic ports to India are declining from recent record highs amid an increase in offers from Western shipowners after Urals crude oil prices fell below a price cap of \$60 per barrel, two traders said.



The Group of Seven countries, in coordination with the EU, imposed the price cap in late 2022 that blocked access to Western shipping services and insurance if Russian oil was purchased at more than \$60 a barrel, aiming to reduce Moscow's ability to finance its Ukraine war.

The cost of shipping Urals oil from the Baltic ports of Primorsk and Ust-Luga to India fell to \$7 million per one-way shipment on average after rising to a 12-month high early in March.

BENGAL TIGER LINE EXPANDS TO THE MEDITERRANEAN



Singapore's Bengal Tiger Line (BTL) has expanded its network to the Mediterranean with the introduction of a Turkey – Red Sea – West India service.

Alphaliner is reporting that the Andrew Winter-led container feeder operator is providing this new service through slots on a West India – Mediterranean trade, together with Turkish carriers Arkas and Turkon Line.

The service launched last month is covered by two 2,500 teu Arkas ships and two 2,700–2,800 teu vessels from Turkon, with Bengal Tiger Line involved in the loop's entire rotation.

The ships call at Istanbul, Ambarli, Yarimca, Nemrut Bay, Mersin, Aqaba, Jeddah, Nhava Sheva, Mundra, Jeddah, Aqaba, El Dekheila and Izmit.

Last month, BTL announced changes at the top, with industry veteran Bill Smart retiring as chief executive and Winter, who has spent nearly 24 years at feeder giant X-press Feeders, taking over the baton.

DID YOU KNOW?



A Boeing 747 burns about 1 gallon (4 liters) of fuel per second in flight, consuming approximately 3,600 gallons per hour. Over a 10-hour journey, this amounts to nearly 36,000 gallons (150,000 liters) of fuel.



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