

DP World lays tracks for logistics growth with Pali facility boost

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Stretched across 44 acres, the sound of heavy machinery and the creaking of metal is constant at DP World's Pali rail terminal in Rewari, Haryana, which is slated to increase its capacity by 25 per cent, expecting greater business opportunities across Northern India.

Built along railway tracks that run parallel to the highway and often feature trains carrying containers of various colours, the route to the facility goes through a narrow, isolated approach road. With the advent of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor in the recent past, logistics players have been reaping the benefits of increased efficiency and time savings.

"Earlier, a journey between Pali and Mundra Port would take 72 hours. With the western corridor,

this journey now takes 24-36 hours and can carry considerably more containers," said Adhendru Jain, vice-president of rail and inland terminals at DP World, during a demonstration on the movement of containers at the Pali facility.

The dedicated freight corridor has larger dimensions than usual railway tracks, which allows for double-stacking of containers for transportation — essentially allowing up to twice the volume to be transported in one journey.

A 20-foot container can carry goods up to 28,000 kilograms in volume.

The Pali facility is the centrepiece of DP World India's logistics plan, as it is a hub under the hub-and-spoke model — the facility aggregates cargo with a dedicated rail service from Mundra Port, and then dispatches it by rail to various 'spokes' — its own container depots and partner terminals.



The company operates a container terminal at Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone-owned Mundra Port in Gujarat, as well as the Nhava Sheva International Container Terminal at Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority in Maharashtra.

One containerised train can carry 90-180 twenty-foot

equivalent unit of containers, depending on the weight and technical specifications of the containers. The recent capacity expansion will allow the Pali facility to handle 240 trains a month, leading to quicker evacuation of cargo to its intended markets.

Depending on the container

■ DP World's Pali rail terminal in Haryana set to increase capacity by 25% to enhance logistics in Northern India

■ Journey time from Pali to Mundra Port reduced from 72 hours to 24-36 hours due to the corridor

■ Pali serves as a hub, aggregating cargo from Mundra Port and dispatching by rail to

various container depots and terminals

■ Expanded capacity will allow handling of 240 trains per month. Each train can carry 90-180 TEU

■ Major cargo includes auto components (Pali); rice, consumer goods (Panipat); pharmaceuticals (Hyderabad); steel and ceramics (domestic)

depot or terminal, the company handles a variety of commodities. "In exim (export-import) cargo, it depends on the catchment area. At Pali, automotive components are a major cargo source. In Panipat, it's rice and consumer packaged goods, or sporting goods and paper in Modinagar. In Hyderabad, there are confectionery and

pharmaceutical products. On the domestic side, ceramics, polymers, steel, and edible oil are the top commodities," Jain said.

Recently, the company's global Chief Executive Officer, Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, said it is planning an expansion in industrial parks and logistics capabilities in India. The company's rail and inland vertical has over 100 operational rakes, seven private terminals, and around 16,000 domestic containers.

According to Jain, India will continue to present opportunities for the global logistics player. "We are evaluating India as a major strategic focus market, and wherever we see the right opportunity — whether it's the rail business or other logistics verticals. It's a case-by-case evaluation," Jain said.

While the company did not provide financial data specific to

its India operations, DP World's global business reported a 10.2 per cent rise in its container volumes in the Asia-Pacific and India region in the first half of calendar year 2024.

When asked about focus areas for expansion, Jain said that the company is agnostic to the nature of the cargo as long as the opportunity arises. "It is a combination of both exim and domestic plans — we're investing in capabilities for both. We're empowering customers by providing solutions for exim, but if you look at products like SARAL (Sustainable, Assured, Reliable, and Agile Logistics), where consumers can connect a single container from manufacturing clusters to consumption centres, it's all domestic."

SARAL is a dedicated door-to-door cargo service, under which South Gujarat and Chennai are connected to Northern India.

