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Premiere Logistics Celebrates the Homecoming of Netherlands GM Kiki Liu



On February 2, Premiere Logistics hosted a warm and heartfelt welcome-back event at its Shanghai headquarters to celebrate the return of Kiki Liu, General Manager of its Netherlands office. The gathering—attended by all colleagues across departments—reflected Premiere Logistics’ deep-rooted commitment to unity, shared values, and the collaborative spirit.

Blending professionalism with genuine warmth, the celebration unfolded in an atmosphere reminiscent of a close-knit family reunion. Team members welcomed Kiki with personalized notes, heartfelt speeches, and locally inspired refreshments—creating moments of connection that transcended geography. Colleagues highlighted her pivotal contributions to operational excellence and dedication to strengthening cross-border partnerships.

More than a simple homecoming, the event also underscored Premiere Logistics’ ongoing investment in employee engagement and retention. Attendees emphasized how inclusive, people-centered initiatives like this foster stronger professional bonds, elevate morale, and cultivate a profound sense of loyalty across the organization.

Premiere Logistics continues to champion meaningful, culturally resonant events that unite teams across borders. Because when people feel seen, valued, and connected—no matter where they’re based—that’s when exceptional logistics and extraordinary results begin.



United States and Bangladesh Sign Reciprocal Trade Agreement to Reduce Tariffs

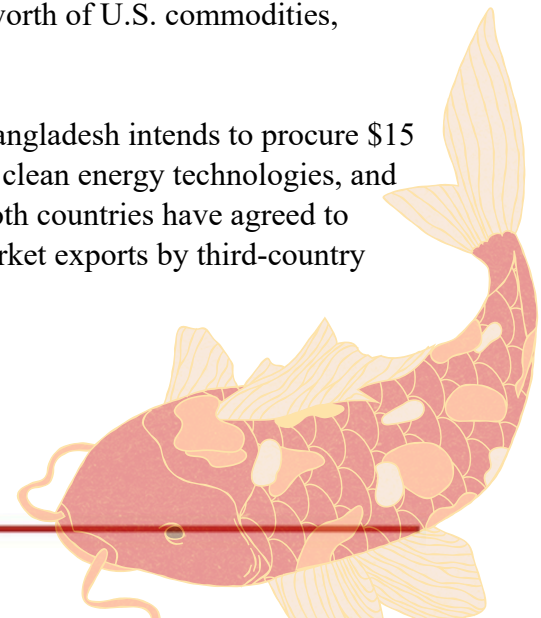


The United States and Bangladesh have signed a landmark reciprocal trade agreement aimed at lowering tariffs, broadening market access, enhancing regulatory alignment, and addressing key trade and investment challenges. The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) announced the agreement on Monday, calling it a significant step toward deepening bilateral economic cooperation.

Under the agreement, the U.S. reciprocal tariff rate on imports from Bangladesh is reduced from 20% to 19%. More significantly, the pact establishes clear pathways for duty-free treatment of eligible Bangladeshi goods—leveraging existing statutory exemptions authorized under a September 2023 executive order. It also introduces a novel, volume-based mechanism: a defined quota of textile and apparel imports from Bangladesh will qualify for tariff exemptions, contingent upon corresponding U.S. exports of comparable products—creating a mutually reinforcing trade dynamic.

In return, Bangladesh has committed to a comprehensive package of trade-enabling reforms. These include reducing tariffs on a wide range of U.S. exports—including agricultural commodities, automobiles, and industrial goods—and harmonizing select regulatory standards—particularly in automotive safety and food safety—with U.S. requirements. Bangladesh will also expand market access for U.S. agricultural products and has pledged to purchase \$3.5 billion worth of U.S. commodities, including wheat, soybeans, cotton, and corn, over an agreed timeframe.

The agreement also features a strategic long-term energy partnership: Bangladesh intends to procure \$15 billion in U.S. energy products—including liquefied natural gas (LNG), clean energy technologies, and related infrastructure solutions—over the next 15 years. Furthermore, both countries have agreed to collaborate on addressing distortive trade practices, including below-market exports by third-country firms operating in Bangladesh.



AI-Powered Shopping Is Reshaping Inventory Strategy



As artificial intelligence transforms online shopping behavior, retailers that position inventory closer to end consumers are gaining a decisive competitive edge.

At the event co-hosted by Supply Chain Dive and Retail Dive, panelists emphasized how AI-enhanced personalization and responsiveness—powered by tools like ChatGPT and generative recommendation engines—are accelerating purchase decisions, increasing last-minute orders, and intensifying demand for speed and convenience. This shift is fundamentally redefining inventory strategy, elevating the strategic importance of regional distribution networks.

Rupal Deshmukh, Partner in Kearney’s Strategic Operations Practice, explained that AI-driven product recommendations often trigger immediate, intent-rich purchases—making real-time demand signals more volatile and localized than ever before. “From a supply chain standpoint,” she said, “the most impactful changes you can make are those that bring inventory as close to the customer as possible.” To keep pace, she urged companies to embed AI-informed behavioral insights directly into demand forecasting and network design.

Transportation economics also play a pivotal role. Rick Jordon, Senior Managing Director at FTI Consulting, noted that sustained declines in freight costs over the past two years have made regional inventory deployment economically viable—even attractive. However, he cautioned that even modest upward pressure on transportation rates could quickly erode that advantage, potentially triggering a recalibration toward more centralized, forward-deployed models.

In response, leading retailers are optimizing total landed cost per unit—not just procurement or warehousing, but the full cost-to-serve—and doubling down on automation within distribution centers to accelerate order processing, reduce labor dependency, and improve responsiveness across store and e-commerce channels. Deshmukh cited several major retailers deploying highly automated fulfillment hubs to dynamically feed both physical stores and direct-to-consumer networks with greater precision and speed.

UPS Expands RFID Deployment to Enhance Customer Appeal and Operational Efficiency



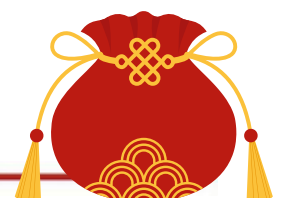
In a strategic move to strengthen its competitive positioning and drive operational excellence, UPS has significantly scaled up its deployment of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology—central to its broader “Smart Package, Smart Facility” initiative. Today, The UPS Store locations process roughly 1.3 million packages daily using RFID-enabled systems.

RFID provides real-time, end-to-end tracking—particularly enhancing inbound visibility for retailers’ distribution centers. As Matt Guffey, Executive Vice President and Chief Commercial and Strategy Officer, explained on the January 2025 earnings call: “Shippers gain visibility into exactly what’s arriving at their docks—and when—enabling smarter labor planning and more efficient warehouse operations.” This capability is especially attractive to large retail partners seeking greater supply chain transparency and agility.

By integrating RFID sensors into its delivery fleet, UPS has eliminated an estimated 12 million manual barcode scans per day. This reduction not only cuts labor costs and human error but also accelerates package handoffs and data capture, supporting UPS’s transition toward a more automated, responsive, and smaller and nimbler U.S. network—a vision emphasized by CEO Carol Tomé.

Automation remains a cornerstone of UPS’s productivity strategy. According to Tomé, the cost per piece in UPS’s 127 automated facilities is 28% lower than in conventional hubs. With 24 additional automated sites slated to come online in 2026, the company expects the share of U.S. volume processed through automated facilities to rise from 66.5% in 2025 to 68% in 2026.

Complementing RFID, UPS continues to scale its digital ecosystem—including the Digital Access Platform, which connects SMBs to major e-commerce marketplaces like eBay and Shopify. Revenue from this platform surged from \$139 million in 2020 to \$4.1 billion by year-end 2025—underscoring how integrated technology investments are reshaping both customer experience and operational economics.



Global Shipping Enters a New Era of Volatility in 2026



Descartes Systems Group's February 2026 Global Shipping Report reveals that maritime trade volatility has fundamentally shifted—geopolitical developments and evolving trade policies, rather than operational constraints, now serve as the primary drivers of disruption. Early 2026 brought heightened uncertainty fueled by escalating EU–U.S. trade tensions, persistent tariffs, and continued instability in critical Middle Eastern shipping corridors—particularly the Red Sea.

U.S. container import volumes in January 2026 reflect this recalibrated reality. At 2.32 million TEUs, imports rose 4.1% month-over-month but declined 6.8% year-over-year. According to Descartes, this pattern signals not weakness—but normalization: importers are moving beyond reactive crisis management toward deliberate, long-term adaptation to sustained volatility.

Sourcing trends underscore a broader strategic pivot toward supply chain resilience. While Chinese imports rebounded 9.3% month-over-month, they remain down 22.7% compared to January 2025. In contrast, imports from India surged 22% MoM, and Southeast Asian nations—including Thailand, Vietnam, and Indonesia—recorded robust double-digit growth on an annual basis, reinforcing regional diversification as a core procurement strategy.

“Geopolitical risk and trade policy uncertainty remain the most significant sources of market disruption,” said Jackson Wood, Director of Industry Strategy at Descartes. “Yet January’s data shows the industry is no longer just weathering volatility—it’s actively adapting to a new, structurally more volatile normal.”

The report concludes that resilience in today’s environment hinges on proactive, intelligence-driven risk management: rigorously vetting global partners, embedding real-time regulatory and compliance insights into decision-making, and maintaining end-to-end operational agility across dynamic trade lanes.





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Happy New Year

