

## Airbus to launch cargo services with Bulbous Beluga

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Leiden : Airbus is planning to charter out its whale-shaped Beluga transport planes. Until now, the aircraft has been used to ferry aircraft parts between Airbus's plants in Europe and to help other industries haul urgently-needed oversized machinery by air.

Airbus said the move to rent out spare capacity on its existing Beluga ST and new Beluga XL transporters would lead to the creation of a commercial-cargo airline subsidiary from 2023.

After ending output of the world's largest passenger jet, the A380, Airbus is planning a new role for what could be the West's largest commercial freighter by volume, the Beluga.

The 100 per cent unit will work a commercial basis, Airbus said. "It will get its revenues from its sales, and it will bear all its investments and operating costs," a spokesman said.

Reports said, demand for oversized cargoes that can be transported without dismantling them has been rising, partly on the back of weakened supply chains. Logistics managers are turning to oversized planes when there is no time to use sea lanes.

Airbus cut average output by 40 per cent when the pandemic hit and plans to restore and slightly increase output of single aisle jets by summer 2023. But wide-body output is expected to remain around half levels foreseen when Beluga XL was

launched in 2014.

However, Airbus said, there was no connection between the project to commercialise the whale shaped Beluga fleet and planned production.

Airbus is a European multinational aerospace corporation which designs, manufactures and sells civil and military aerospace products worldwide.