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STEEP DROP IN CHINESE FREIGHT SHIP TRAFFIC TO PORTS OF LALB

THE pullback in trade between the US and China as a result of President Trump's steep tariffs on Chinese goods and fears of a recession are starting to show up in major ports data, with a steep drop in container vessel traffic headed to Los Angeles and Long Beach, according to CNBC. For the week ending May 3, the number of freight vessels leaving China and headed to the Southern California ports, the main US ports receiving Chinese freight and other Asian trade, is down 29 per cent week over week, according to Port Optimizer, a tracking system for ships. Year over year, the data shows a 44 per cent drop in vessels scheduled to arrive the week of May 4-May 10. This data is updated on a daily basis based on the vessel manifests declaring the port destination. These vessels are either scheduled to leave Asia or are already on the water and headed to these ports. The fallout from the ocean freight slowdown is beginning to hit ground transport linked to ports.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

MIXED Q1 AT ROTTERDAM PORT WITH BULK DOWN AND BOXES UP

THE Port of Rotterdam saw a throughput decline of 5.8 per cent in Q1 2025, falling to 103.7 million tonnes from 110.1 million tonnes in the same period last year. The drop was driven by reduced volumes of crude oil, oil products, iron ore, and coal, while agribulk, other dry bulk, and container throughput saw gains. US import duties on European exports had not yet impacted first-quarter figures, according to London's Port Technology International. Container throughput at the Port of Rotterdam rose 2.2 per cent in Q1 2025 to 3.3 million TEU. However, total container tonnage declined by 1.1 per cent year over year, driven by an 8.1 per cent drop in full export containers, which are typically heavier. Transatlantic container traffic fell 23.1 per cent due to the relocation of two services to other ports amid capacity constraints. Meanwhile, Asian trade rose 8.4 per cent on higher consumer goods imports. Breakbulk throughput edged up 0.6 per cent to 7.8 million tonnes. General breakbulk jumped 11.2 per cent to 1.6 million tonnes, supported by tubular pile shipments for the Porthos project.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

PORT OF LONG BEACH Q1 BOX VOLUME SOARS 27PC

THE Port of Long Beach recorded its highest first-quarter cargo volume in 2025, processing 2,535,575 TEU, a 26.6 per cent increase from the same period in 2024, according to the company's release. In March 2025, dockworkers and terminal operators moved 817,457 TEU, up 25 per cent from March 2024. Imports rose 25.8 per cent to 380,562 TEU, while exports fell 1 per cent to 104,063 TEU. Empty containers increased 35 per cent to 332,832 TEU. This marked the port's 10th consecutive month of year-over-year cargo growth, reports St Petersburg's PortNews. "We are leading the way as the nation's busiest port by ensuring the fastest, most efficient delivery of cargo from our docks to anywhere in the United States," said Port of Long Beach CEO Mario Cordero.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

EXECUTIVE ORDER INKED TO RESTORE US SHIPBUILDING

"WE'RE way, way, way behind," said US President Donald Trump, having just signed an executive order to revitalise shipbuilding and restore the US merchant fleet, reports London's Port Technology International. "We used to build a ship a day, and now we don't do a ship a year, and we have the capacity to do it," he told reporters in the Oval Office. Democrats and Republicans mobilised in support of the order with Senator Mark Kelly, Democrat, and Todd Young, Republican, committing to reintroduce their bipartisan legislation to enable the congressional approvals required for the industry's revitalisation, reported Reuters.line. Despite initial scepticism and concerns over subsequent supply chain disruptions, the order gives the US Trade Representative (USTR) the go-ahead with a levy of million-dollar US port docking tax. These taxes target ships belonging to a fleet that includes Chinese-built or flagged vessels.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

CHINA CONTAINERIZED FREIGHT INDEX

ROUTE	LAST PERIOD	THIS PERIOD
	2025/4/18	2025/4/25
CCFI	1110.94	1122.4
(JAPAN SERVICE)	1001.35	977.21
(EUROPE SERVICE)	1486.14	1499.5
(W/C AMERICA SERVICE)	811.65	823.14
(E/C AMERICA SERVICE)	929.63	930.47
(KOREA SERVICE)	508.84	499.76
(SOUTHEAST ASIA SERVICE)	990.62	1000.51
(MEDITERRANEAN SERVICE)	1812.36	1850.56
(AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND SERVICE)	921.07	943.73
(SOUTH AFRICA SERVICE)	956.97	968.21
(SOUTH AMERICA SERVICE)	619.93	597.61
(WEST EAST AFRICA SERVICE)	812.21	857.41
(PERSIAN GULF/RED SEA SERVICE)	1201.01	1248.99

PORT HOUSTON ENJOYS RECORD MARCH BOX VOLUMES AS TRADE WAR CLOUDS LOOM

PORT Houston achieved record-breaking container volumes in March, handling 386,864 TEU, marking a 7 per cent increase from last year. However, the momentum faces significant headwinds as new forecasts predict a sharp downturn in US imports amid the Trump Administration's escalating global trade war, reports Ventura, California's gCaptain. "While March was a solid month for us, we're watching closely for shifts in the global market and how that could impact cargo in our region in the coming months," said port's CEO, Charlie Jenkins. March's success was primarily driven by strong export performance, with loaded exports surging 14 per cent year over year to 152,857 TEU. Import activity showed modest growth, increasing by 2 per cent. The port's year-to-date container volumes have surpassed 1 million TEU through the first quarter of 2025, reaching 1,068,695, maintaining stable levels compared to the previous year.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

AIR CARGO DEMAND TO REMAIN EVEN WITH RETURN OF RED SEA SHIPPING

IATA does not expect to lower its air cargo demand forecast when ocean shipping eventually returns to the Red Sea, writes London's Air Cargo News. The trade body confirmed in its Sustainability and Economic Outlook during the Plenary Session that it expected a 6 per cent growth in air cargo volumes in 2025. Speaking to Air Cargo News at the IATA World Cargo Symposium (WCS), IATA director general Willie Walsh said that the trade body believes the air cargo industry can well withstand the return of ocean shipping to the Red Sea, even though the prospect of such a return does seem a long way off. Reflecting on the impact on air cargo, Mr Walsh said: "I don't think it will be significant. This is because of the core demand from time-sensitive markets that airfreight serves. "What we tend to transport by air is critical in terms of time or critical in terms of value. And those goods tend to stick with air rather than move to transport by ship, so just-in-time products will invariably move by air."

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

HUTCHISON DEAL COULD MAKE MSC BECOME WORLD'S DOMINANT PORT OPERATOR

GENEVA-BASED Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC), the first container carrier to operate 900 ships, will strengthen its marine dominance by taking over CK Hutchison's overseas ports, reports Hong Kong's South China Morning Post. The world's biggest container shipping line, MSC, is also likely to become the largest port operator across the globe if it succeeds in taking control of the facilities from Hong Kong's CK Hutchison Holdings, further reducing the number of firms running terminals, industry experts have said. MSC will strengthen its marine dominance by the takeover across 23 countries of 43 ports, including two at the Panama Canal, through its Terminal Investment Limited (TiL) arm in partnership with US investment giant BlackRock. The deal, announced earlier this year, will see the BlackRock-led consortium take an 80 per cent stake in CK Hutchison's port assets outside its home base. This massive portfolio includes major hubs in Europe, Asia and the Americas.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

BOX RATES SEE UPTICK AS TARIFFS SHOCK SUPPLY CHAINS

THE upheaval in global trade following a spate of US tariffs has had container rates up with Asia-US west coast rising three per cent to US\$2,246 per FEU and Asia-US east coast up five per cent to \$3,541 per FEU, according to Freight's analysis. At the forefront of this trade war escalation is China, now facing a staggering minimum duty of 54 per cent on all goods exported to the US, with some items subject to over 70 per cent, and as much as 129 per cent, in tariffs, after a new 50 per cent duty announced by the White House. This dramatic increase compounds existing Trump and Biden-era duties, creating a formidable barrier for Chinese exporters and US importers alike.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

CHINA PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

China offices will be closed from May 1st, 2025 to May 5th, 2025 for Labour Day, and resume work on May 6th, 2025.

(Qingdao, Shanghai, Ningbo, Xiamen, Shenzhen)

Hong Kong will be closed on May 1st, 2025 for Labour Day, and resume work on May 2nd, 2025; will be closed on May 5th, 2025 for the Buddha's Birthday, and resume work on May 6th, 2025.