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MAERSK TAKES STEP TOWARD SUEZ-RED SEA TRANSITS

Maersk has routed a 6,500-TEU vessel through the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, marking a cautious move toward resuming Red Sea operations, reports London's S&P Global. The Singapore-flagged Maersk Sebarok sailed from Oman to the US East Coast via the Houthi-controlled strait. Maersk stressed this was not a widescale return, but part of a stepwise approach to restoring east-west services through the Suez Canal and Red Sea if security thresholds are met. The carrier corrected earlier reports from the Suez Canal Authority that suggested regular services would resume in December. Maersk said transits would only normalise when conditions allow, with crew safety the top priority. Other carriers are also testing the route. Thailand Regional Container Lines launched a Red Sea-China service, while Ocean Network Express and Evergreen Marine are making tentative returns under slot charter agreements. CMA CGM will resume its Indamex service via the Suez Canal in January, with a full rotation planned by mid-2026.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

SEATTLE-TACOMA NOVEMBER BOXES SLIP 12.6PC

The Northwest Seaport Alliance (NWSA) processed 253,532 TEU in November, down 12.6 per cent year-on-year but up 8.4 per cent from October, reported London's Port Technology International. International volumes remained weak despite the month-on-month recovery. Full imports fell 19.4 per cent compared with November 2024, though they rose 8.8 per cent from October 2025. Full exports declined 16.9 per cent year-on-year but increased 6.1 per cent month-on-month. Year-to-date container volumes reached 2,918,676 TEU, down 3.9 per cent compared with the same period last year. Within this total, full imports decreased 8.7 per cent and full exports fell 3.8 per cent.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

CALIFORNIA PORTS DEFY TARIFF TURBULENCE

The ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach are closing 2025 near record cargo volumes despite tariff uncertainty, reports Ventura, California's gCaptain. Long Beach is on track to exceed its 2024 record of 9.6 million TEU, moving 9,047,477 TEU through the first 11 months of 2025, a 2.9 per cent increase. Los Angeles handled 9,447,731 TEU through November, one per cent ahead of 2024, and is set to surpass 10 million TEU for the year. November volumes declined compared to last year, with Long Beach down 7.5 per cent and Los Angeles down 12 per cent. Port of Los Angeles executive director Gene Seroka said the complex handled cargo without congestion, crediting coordinated efforts across labour, trucking, terminals and railways. Port of Long Beach CEO Mario Cordero noted operations remained steady despite market pressures. Analysts said frontloading ahead of tariffs drove strong first-half volumes but created a slowdown expected to persist into 2026. The National Retail Federation reported US ports handled 2.07 million TEU in October, down 7.9 per cent year-on-year, with November and December projected to fall further. NRF Vice President Jonathan Gold said retailers are well-stocked for holidays but face uncertainty in 2026.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

RETURN TO SUEZ CANAL ROUTINGS LOOMS DESPITE RISK

BIMCO forecasts mostly stable container shipping market conditions in 2026, with slightly weaker conditions in 2027, reported London's Air Cargo Week. Chief shipping analyst Niels Rasmussen said ship demand is expected to grow 2.5-3.5 per cent in both 2026 and 2027, while supply is forecast to rise three per cent in 2026 and 3.5 per cent in 2027. Recycling of older ships and slower sailing speeds are key assumptions in the outlook. BIMCO noted that a return to Red Sea and Suez Canal routings could cut ship demand by 10 per cent. CMA CGM will shift its INDAMEX and MEX services back to the canal in January, potentially prompting other carriers to follow. North American import volumes are expected to contract three per cent in 2025, before returning to two per cent growth in both 2026 and 2027. Rasmussen cautioned that up to 70 per cent of US economic growth in 2025 may be driven by AI investments, warning of risks if the bubble bursts.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

HAPAG-LLOYD AND COSCO UNVEIL MAJOR NEWBUILD DEALS

Germany Hapag-Lloyd and China COSCO Shipping have placed significant newbuilding orders with Chinese yards, reports Denmark's Shipping Telegraph. Hapag-Lloyd signed a US\$500 million deal with CIMC Raffles for eight 4,500-TEU vessels, scheduled for delivery in 2028 and 2029. COSCO finalized a domestic agreement with China State Shipbuilding Corp (CSSC) worth CNY50 billion (US\$6.9 billion) for 87 new ships across multiple fleet segments. The deal was signed in Shanghai on December 8. The CSSC subsidiaries will construct a diverse range of vessels including ultra-large container ships, bulk carriers, very large crude carriers, grain carriers, heavy lift ships, MR tankers and smaller container ships. Industry observers described COSCO order as historic, cementing its position as one of the world largest shipping companies.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

LONG BEACH PORT'S CEO SAYS RAIL KEY TO GROWTH

Incoming Port of Long Beach chief Noel Hacegaba said expanding rail connectivity will be central to capturing more discretionary cargo, reported New York's Journal of Commerce. Mr. Hacegaba, currently chief operating officer, will succeed Mario Cordero as CEO on January 1. He said ports that best handle inland point intermodal freight will dominate Asia-US trades, stressing that "rail is the key to our growth." Long Beach competes with west and east coast ports for Asia-origin cargo bound for inland hubs such as Dallas, Chicago and Atlanta. The Pier B on-dock rail facility, under construction since 2024, is expected to cut ship-to-train times from nearly four days to less than 24 hours when completed in 2032. The port is investing US\$2 billion of its \$3.2 billion capital program over the next decade in rail. Containers moving by rail in November dwelled an average of 3.73 days at Los Angeles-Long Beach terminals, according to the Pacific Merchant Shipping Association.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

CARGOWISE PRICING CHANGE SIGNALS MARKET DOMINANCE

Complaints from forwarders over WiseTech Global's new CargoWise pricing model show the platform's deep market penetration, reports London's S&P Global. CargoWise is used by most forwarders for functions ranging from accounting to trade compliance. Estimates put its market share at 70 per cent, giving WiseTech a stronger position in its sector than even its largest customer, DSV, holds in logistics. WiseTech built its dominance through acquisitions of customs software vendors, giving it direct links to authorities worldwide. This network, combined with core accounting functions, makes switching to other systems difficult, forwarders said. Competitors from incumbents such as Descartes and Softlink to startups like GoFreight and Clear.ai have failed to slow CargoWise's growth, despite concerns over annual price increases and slow integration of acquisitions. WiseTech added a new dimension with its \$2.1 billion purchase of E2open in May, expanding into shipper-focused products.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

ASIA-EUROPE CARGO BOOKINGS SURGE IN DECEMBER

Container shipping demand from Asia to North Europe and the Mediterranean rose sharply in December, with bookings up 10 per cent compared with the prior three weeks, reported London's S&P Global. Data from Vizion showed 207,000 TEU booked on Asia-Europe trades in the three weeks ending December 7. Xeneta chief analyst Peter Sand said December has become the busiest month of the year on westbound corridors, with demand showing no signs of frontloading. Carriers responded by deploying record capacity. Xeneta data showed 1.12 million TEU deployed on Asia-North Europe in December, with 84,000 TEU blanked, down from November's 126,000. Planned January capacity is at a record 1.17 million TEU, with 54,000 blanks announced.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

CHINA PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

China offices will be closed from January 1st, 2026 to January 3rd, 2026 for New Year's Day, and resume work on January 4th, 2026. (Qingdao, Shanghai, Ningbo, Xiamen, Shenzhen)
Hong Kong will be closed from December 25th, 2025 to December 28th, 2025 for Christmas Holiday, and resume work on December 29th, 2025; will be closed on January 1st, 2026 for New Year's Day, and resume work on January 2nd, 2026.

CHINA CONTAINERIZED FREIGHT INDEX

ROUTE	LAST PERIOD 2025/12/12	THIS PERIOD 2025/12/19
CCFI	1118.07	1124.73
(JAPAN SERVICE)	960.9	964.14
(EUROPE SERVICE)	1470.55	1473.9
(W/C AMERICA SERVICE)	798.95	792.06
(E/C AMERICA SERVICE)	874.75	863.28
(KOREA SERVICE)	498.66	505.19
(SOUTHEAST ASIA SERVICE)	1073.82	1068.45
(MEDITERRANEAN SERVICE)	1779.92	1881.66
(AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND SERVICE)	1161.33	1114.67
(SOUTH AFRICA SERVICE)	1135.62	1069.89
(SOUTH AMERICA SERVICE)	574.93	604.67
(WEST EAST AFRICA SERVICE)	889.26	841.68
(PERSIAN GULF/RED SEA SERVICE)	1261.31	1299.14