

NEWSLETTER

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EXTERNAL NEWS

Global Shipping & Port Updates

Carrier & Logistics Developments

Industry News

Market Insights

China Containerized Freight Index

SUEZ RESUMES BUT HOUTHS MAKE THREATS

Container carriers have begun reopening services through the Suez Canal and Red Sea, but new threats from Houthi rebels underline continuing risks, reports Fort Lauderdale's Maritime Executive. CMA CGM has restored two regular services, following transits by the 23,000-TEU CMA CGM Jacques Saade and 15,536-TEU CMA CGM Adonis since Christmas. Maersk has also resumed operations, sending 6,200-TEU Maersk Denver north through Babelmandeb on January 12 and announcing the reopening of its US-India route via the corridor. Despite these moves, traffic remains depressed. Suez Canal transits in the fourth quarter of 2025 were 19 per cent lower than in 2023 and 45 per cent below 2024, with container volumes yet to recover. The last attack occurred on September 29, when MV Minervagracht was struck. On January 15, Houthi leader Abdel Malek Al Houthi warned of reconnaissance ahead of attacks on what he described as Israeli and Zionist positions in Somaliland. Analysts said the threats could also extend to Emirati and US sites across the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

ANALYSTS: RED SEA RECOVERY STILL DISTANT

Container carriers remain cautious about resuming Suez Canal transits despite recent trial voyages, reported London's Lloyd's List. Maersk's 6,248-TEU boxship Maersk Denver completed its second Red Sea passage this week, following the 6,648-TEU Maersk Sebarok's December voyage. French liner CMA CGM also made several transits, including the 23,000-TEU CMA CGM Jacques Saade in December 2025. Analysts at Xeneta said there is still a long way to go before traffic returns to pre-crisis levels. Elevated insurance costs, volatile charter markets and the operational impact of detours around Africa continue to delay a wider reversion to the canal. Experts warned that a sudden mass return could disrupt cargo planning and cause congestion if many ships arrive at ports simultaneously. MDS Transmodal noted that Cape of Good Hope diversions absorb six to eight per cent of global containership capacity, about two million TEU.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

HAPAG ORDERS 8 METH SHIPS FOR US\$500M

Hapag-Lloyd has signed a contract with Chinese shipyard CIMC Raffles to build eight 4,500 TEU dual-fuel methanol container ships, reported London's Logistics Manager. The US\$500 million investment marks the carrier's first methanol-powered newbuild order, with deliveries due between 2028 and 2029. The vessels are designed to be 30 per cent more efficient than current ships of similar size. Operating on green methanol, they are expected to cut annual emissions by 350,000 tonnes of CO2, advancing Hapag-Lloyd's Strategy 2030 climate goals. The order strengthens the company's multi-fuel fleet strategy, which already includes 37 dual-fuel LNG vessels. Supporting measures include a retrofit programme with Seaspan to convert five 10,100 TEU ships by 2027, and a supply deal with Goldwind securing 250,000 tonnes of green methanol annually.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

RETAIL OPTIMISM LIFTS TRANSPAC RATES

Container rates on the eastbound transpacific have strengthened as US retailers show signs of restocking, reports American Shipper. Spot Asia-US West Coast rates rose five per cent to US\$2,757 per FEU, while Asia-US East Coast prices increased seven per cent to \$4,033, according to Freightos. Analyst Judah Levine said the rate increases came earlier than usual for the pre-Lunar New Year period but matched National Retail Federation projections. The NRF forecast January volumes six per cent higher than December, the first monthly rise since July. Volumes remain five per cent below last January, with deficits expected through April amid economic uncertainty. However, the NRF's latest report projects stronger 2026 volumes than previously forecast. Asia-Northern Europe rates fell one per cent to \$2,978 per FEU, while Asia-Mediterranean prices held steady at \$4,851.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

CHINA CONTAINERIZED FREIGHT INDEX

ROUTE	LAST PERIOD	THIS PERIOD
	2026/1/16	2026/1/23
CCFI	1209.85	1208.75
(JAPAN SERVICE)	943.35	954.84
(EUROPE SERVICE)	1582.6	1588.19
(W/C AMERICA SERVICE)	867.21	881.45
(E/C AMERICA SERVICE)	977.16	973.52
(KOREA SERVICE)	494.96	518.58
(SOUTHEAST ASIA SERVICE)	1020.98	975.21
(MEDITERRANEAN SERVICE)	2283.21	2281.07
(AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND SERVICE)	1144.79	1151.9
(SOUTH AFRICA SERVICE)	1121.51	1153.17
(SOUTH AMERICA SERVICE)	512.84	486.66
(WEST EAST AFRICA SERVICE)	813.05	845.46
(PERSIAN GULF/RED SEA SERVICE)	1499.94	1472.83

SHANGHAI TOPS 55 MILLION TEU IN 2025

Shanghai handled more than 55 million TEU in 2025, retaining its position as the world's busiest container port for the 16th consecutive year, reports Fort Lauderdale's Maritime Executive. Shanghai International Port Group said throughput reached 55.06 million TEU, a 6.9 per cent increase. Overall cargo volume rose just over three per cent to 600 million tons compared with 580 million tons in 2024. Yangshan Deep Water Port accounted for more than half of the total, with Phase III Terminal surpassing 10 million TEU for the first time. Few ports globally handle such volumes in a single year. Transshipment volumes rose 10.6 per cent to 7.9 million TEU, underscoring Shanghai's growing role as a global hub. SIPG said water-to-water operations and efficiency gains supported the increase. The port faced challenges from volatile trade conditions, geopolitical conflicts and extreme weather. SIPG said collaboration with shipping companies and improved resource use helped maintain resilience.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

US PUTS DUTIES ON ASIAN FOOD CONTAINERS

The Trump administration has announced sweeping trade penalties on disposable food containers from China and Vietnam after the US International Trade Commission (ITC) ruled American industry was injured by cheap imports, reports Fox News. The ITC found that thermoformed molded fibre products, including bowls, plates and takeaway containers, were being dumped at unfairly low prices. The US Commerce Department will now issue final antidumping and countervailing duty orders. Duties will reach up to 540 per cent on some Chinese producers, including more than 477 per cent for dumping alone, and more than 260 per cent on Vietnamese producers. The ITC also authorised retroactive duties on Vietnamese imports. Attorney Yohai Baisburd, counsel to the American Molded Fiber Coalition, said the penalties would level the playing field for US manufacturers. He added the duties would allow companies to reinvest in workers, operations and technology.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

ASIA-PACIFIC AIR CARGO STAYS STRONG INTO 2026

Air cargo demand across Asia-Pacific remains firm in 2026, led by artificial intelligence, technology and e-commerce shipments despite capacity constraints and disruptions, reports Mumbai's STAT Trade Times. Dimerco's January freight report said flows to North America and Europe continue to be strong, even as global manufacturing growth slowed late last year. Exports of semiconductors, servers and high-performance computing equipment are keeping volumes elevated on long-haul and Intra-Asia routes. In Northeast Asia, demand for AI and semiconductor cargo is tightening space and pushing rates higher. Taiwan's shipments rose 56 per cent year on year in November, while South Korea faces constrained capacity to both the US and Asia, driven by peak-season activity and major events. China's air freight demand is building ahead of Chinese New Year. North China routes to Taipei and Singapore are seeing higher rates, while US-bound demand remains firm. Hong Kong continues to face tight capacity to Singapore and Bangkok, with surging US-bound volumes. Southeast Asia is under pressure from seasonal demand and e-commerce backlogs. Vietnam, Singapore, the Philippines and Indonesia are experiencing congestion, while Thailand's US and Canada lanes remain tight. Shippers are advised to book several days in advance.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

CMA CGM OFFERS FEBRUARY OZ/NZ-US EAST COAST LOOP

CMA CGM will begin a new Oceania-US east coast service in February under a space charter agreement with Maersk, reports New York's Journal of Commerce. The KEA service will start with the 3,752-TEU Spirit of Melbourne departing Sydney in early February. The South Pacific rotation includes Melbourne, Port Chalmers and Tauranga in New Zealand. Americas calls will cover Balboa and Manzanillo in Panama, Cartagena in Colombia, and US ports Philadelphia and Charleston. CMA CGM is promoting KEA as a fast service for fresh fruits and frozen food from Oceania to the US east coast. CMA CGM and Maersk filed the charter agreement with the Federal Maritime Commission this month. CMA CGM will purchase 350 TEU, equal to 4,900 tonnes of space, including 100 reefer plugs, on each roundtrip sailing of Maersk's OC-1 service. The carrier said KEA will complement its Panama Direct Line, offering full US east coast coverage and transshipment options to northern Europe.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)