AEL BERKMAN

NEWSLETTER

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MAERSK, HAPAG-LLOYD RESUME TRANSITS

Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd resumed limited transits through the Red Sea after a ceasefire between the US and Iran, though both carriers stressed that a wider return depends on regional stability, reports Kuehne+Nagel. Only a few vessels are deployed, with schedules unchanged and safety concerns still dictating reliance on alternative routings. Evergreen introduced the UBX service linking Asia and Africa with nine ships averaging 4,800-5,600 TEU. Cosco launched the SEI2 Asia-Indian Subcontinent service with five vessels of 3,800 TEU. CMA CGM suspended its Asia-US Columbus pendulum service, with final sailings in May and port calls extending into summer. MSC re-launched the Pearl service with 6,200 TEU ships and the Sentosa service with 14,900 TEU ships. Ocean Alliance revised its CBX Transpacific rotation to include Port Klang and New York, while also launching the Mekong Transpacific Express with 9,000-13,000 TEU ships. MSC added the Sierra service from Asia to Mexico with 9,000 TEU vessels.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

MSC DRIVES MED SHIP UPSIZING 78PC

Container lines are deploying larger ships on intra Europe services, with the Mediterranean seeing a sharp rise in vessels above 8,000 TEU, reports Amsterdam's Breakbulk News. Alpha liner said the number of ships above 8,000 TEU trading in the region has risen from nine a year ago to 16 today, a 78 per cent increase. The average vessel size in the trade remains much smaller, at 1,870 TEU. The shift reflects carriers adjusting networks and seeking lower unit costs on regional services. Larger ships, once reserved for long haul trades, are now appearing on routes where sailing distances and cargo flows justify the capacity. MSC is leading the trend, operating nine of the 16 vessels above 8,000 TEU compared with six of nine a year ago. New additions include the 9,411 TEU MSC Giselle, the 9,408 TEU MSC Elma, the 9,403 TEU MSC Lagos X, the 9,403 TEU MSC Nairobi X and the 9,288 TEU MSC Brittany.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

CMA CGM ORDERS 8 BOX SHIPS FROM HENGLI

French container line CMA CGM has signed firm shipbuilding contracts for eight mid-sized containerships with Chinese shipbuilder Hengli Heavy Industry, reports London's Lloyd's List. The firm contract covers eight 6,000 TEU vessels with deliveries scheduled for 2029. The vessels are expected to follow a design developed by the Marine Design and Research Institute of China. The Marseille-based carrier already operates six vessels based on this design which feature conventional fuel systems but are ammonia-ready. In addition to the latest order, CMA CGM is set to charter a further 10 vessels of the same class from Singapore-based Eastern Pacific Shipping. While the fuel type for the eight new vessels remains undisclosed, the French carrier has heavily favoured liquefied natural gas propulsion in recent years. The company holds the largest newbuilding orderbook among global liner operators with 160 ships on order.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

AIR CARGO CAPACITY SHORTAGES LOOM

Air cargo growth could be constrained over the next decade as Boeing and Airbus struggle to deliver new aircraft, leaving ageing fleets in service and limiting freighter conversions, reports New York's Journal of Commerce. Industry executives said demand is projected to expand 3.5 to 5 per cent annually, but capacity is expected to grow just one per cent. Atlas Air Worldwide's Martin Drew warned that wide-body freighter shortages could restrict growth for at least a decade. IATA noted that despite a gradual recovery in deliveries, supply remains structurally constrained. Orders continue to exceed deliveries, with the backlog reaching 18,100 aircraft in May, up from 17,000 in 2024 and representing more than half the active fleet. IATA Director-General Willie Walsh said supply chain failures have left airlines short of over 5,000 fuel-efficient aircraft, costing carriers US$11 billion in 2025. Higher lease rates and maintenance costs are compounding the problem.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

CHINA CONTAINERIZED FREIGHT INDEX

ROUTE	LAST PERIOD 2026/6/18	THIS PERIOD 2026/6/26
CCFI	1599.07	1710.47
(JAPAN SERVICE)	959.13	967.66
(EUROPE SERVICE)	1980.13	2159.05
(W/C AMERICA SERVICE)	1229.07	1338.62
(E/C AMERICA SERVICE)	1400.85	1503.28
(KOREA SERVICE)	655.85	656.84
(SOUTHEAST ASIA SERVICE)	1132.58	1152.56
(MEDITERRANEAN SERVICE)	2584.76	2804.78
(AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND SERVICE)	1263.76	1309.83
(SOUTH AFRICA SERVICE)	1206.84	1239.42
(SOUTH AMERICA SERVICE)	1322.36	1465.61
(WEST EAST AFRICA SERVICE)	1096.69	1122.22
(PERSIAN GULF/RED SEA SERVICE)	2791.48	2951.47

US IMPORTS CLIMB AMID GLOBAL RISKS

US containerized imports rose 6.6 per cent in May to 2.43 million TEU, up 11.5 per cent year on year, reflecting seasonal growth despite lingering geopolitical and trade risks, reported the American Journal of Transportation. China-origin imports rebounded sharply to 816,197 TEU, a 19.9 per cent monthly rise and 28.1 per cent higher year on year. China's share of US imports increased to 33.6 per cent, though volumes remain 20.2 per cent below the July 2024 peak. Gains were also recorded from India, Vietnam and Hong Kong, while declines came from Thailand, Japan and South Korea. Eight of the top 10 US ports posted higher volumes in May. Savannah rose 17 per cent, New York/Newark 10.8 per cent and Houston 18.2 per cent. Los Angeles and Tacoma were the only gateways to decline. East and Gulf Coast ports captured 44.8 per cent of total imports, while West Coast ports accounted for 45.1 per cent.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

MIDEAST WAR HITS GLOBAL BOX VOLUMES

According to Lloyd's of London, the Gulf crisis in the Middle East has led to an estimated reduction of 660,000 TEUs in container numbers in April, lowering the annual growth rate from over 6% to 5.1%. Container Trades Statistics said April throughput rose 1.6 per cent on March and 4.3 per cent year on year to 16.24 million TEU. Imports and exports in the Middle East fell 54 per cent and 48 per cent respectively, underscoring the impact of concentrated geopolitical risk. The shortfall was 180,000 TEU lower than March as carriers adjusted networks and diverted cargo. CTS estimated 1.6 million TEU has been eroded from Middle East Gulf trades since the start of the year. Saudi Red Sea ports Jeddah and King Abdullah have emerged as diversion hubs, each handling about 50 per cent more cargo year on year. North America delivered one of the month's biggest surprises, with imports up 6.2 per cent year on year in April, narrowing the deficit to 1.9 per cent. Transpacific volumes rose 11.3 per cent year on year, driven by a 21 per cent surge in Chinese exports to the US. Drewry confirmed the transpacific peak season began earlier than usual, supporting stronger demand and firmer freight rates.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

MULTIMODAL 2026 LOGISTICS MEET JUNE 30

Multimodal 2026 will run from 30 June to 2 July at NEC Birmingham, bringing together the UK freight, logistics and supply chain sectors, reported London's Air Cargo Week. The event will feature hundreds of exhibitors, five conference theatres, more than 80 sessions, premium networking and the Multimodal Awards. It is the flagship of UK Logistics Week 2026, focusing on AI, net zero, customs compliance, resilience and future logistics talent. Organizers said last year's edition saw a 4 per cent rise in visitors, and this year is set to be the largest yet. The program includes sessions on sustainable logistics, rail freight, customs compliance, zero emissions strategies and AI adoption. Speakers include John Trenchard of DP World, Kathryn Oldale of DB Cargo, Caroline Rowden of the Chartered Institute of Export, Peter Roberts of LeShuttle Freight, Andrew Page-Dove of National Highways and Laurent Devulder of Port of Boulogne Calais. The Multimodal Awards will be held on 30 June at The Vox Conference Centre, hosted by comedian Rory Bremner, followed by the first-ever after show party. A new web-based event app will provide live updates, schedules and exhibitor directories.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

A-E SET FOR SHARP JULY RATE HIKES

East Ocean carriers on the Asia-Europe trade will impose steep spot rate increases and peak season surcharges from July 1, coinciding with a major quarterly bunker fuel adjustment, reports London S&P Global. Mediterranean Shipping Co (MSC) will raise freight-all-kinds rates to US$7,500 per FEU on Asia-North Europe and Asia-West Mediterranean, and $7,400 per TEU on Asia-East Mediterranean, including a $289 per TEU fuel surcharge. CMA CGM will lift Asia-North Europe rates to $6,300 per FEU, Asia-West Mediterranean to $7,700 per FEU, and East Mediterranean to $8,500 per FEU, while adding surcharges of $2,000 per FEU and $2,800 per FEU respectively. Maersk will apply a surcharge of $1,000 per FEU from July 1. Platts assessed Asia-North Europe rates at $4,333 per FEU, up 46 per cent year on year, with Asia-Mediterranean rates at $5,467 per FEU, up 20 per cent. Xeneta data showed similar increases, with Asia-North Europe spot rates at $3,826 per FEU and Asia-Mediterranean at $5,188 per FEU. Analysts said carriers' capacity discipline since 2023 has given general rate increases more weight.

(Source: Shipping Gazette)

CHINA PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Hong Kong office will be closed on July 1st, 2026 for Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Establishment Day, and resume work on July 2nd, 2026.