

APERTURE & FOCUS

WEEK 5 | 29 JANUARY 2025

GLOBAL APERTURE

A cargo rush prior to Lunar New Year, combined with concerns over potential U.S. import tariffs, is [causing congestion at major container ports worldwide](#). According to a new report, approximately 3.3 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU), or nearly 11% of the container shipping fleet, are currently held up at ports across Asia, Europe, and North America.

New data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA) revealed that 2024 was [a record year for air cargo demand](#), increasing by 11.3% compared to 2023 and surpassing the previous record set in 2021. Their analysis shows that this growth was primarily driven by high e-commerce volumes and constraints in ocean shipping.

During the World Cargo Summit in Bruges, industry experts discussed [a shortage of freighters](#) limiting air cargo capacity and constraining growth despite rising demand. Airlines are prioritizing passenger services, reducing the number of aircraft available for dedicated cargo operations, which is adding pressure to global supply chains.

REGIONAL FOCUS - AMERICAS

United States: The U.S. government [has threatened to impose a 25% tariff](#) on imports from Canada and Mexico starting February 1, 2025, a proposal that has sparked controversy over its potential economic fallout. In anticipation of this, industries such as chemicals and railroads are considering adjustments to mitigate potential impacts, warning that these tariffs could severely disrupt supply chains and raise costs, given the deep economic ties between the U.S. and its North American trade partners.

Brazil: The Port of Santos [is set to double its capacity](#) with the construction of a new container terminal, a project expected to significantly enhance Brazil's trade infrastructure. The expansion aims to boost efficiency and accommodate growing cargo volumes, reinforcing the port's status as a key gateway for South American exports.

REGIONAL FOCUS – ASIA-PACIFIC

Bangladesh: Ongoing industrial unrest, including garment worker strikes and a nationwide rail strike that began on January 29th, [is disrupting Bangladesh's manufacturing and supply chains](#), prompting some businesses to explore alternative sourcing options. India is emerging as a key beneficiary, with companies shifting orders to its textile and garment sector to mitigate risks.

China: Ningbo-Zhoushan Port has maintained its position as [the world's busiest port by cargo volume](#), handling over 1.3 billion metric tons in 2023. The port's expansion and strategic infrastructure investments have bolstered its capacity, reinforcing its role as a critical hub for global trade and supply chain operations.

REGIONAL FOCUS – EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

Persistent congestion at Europe's major container ports [is continuing to disrupt inland waterway transport](#), delaying cargo movement across the region. Bottlenecks at terminals are slowing barge operations, forcing shippers to seek alternative transport modes to avoid extended wait times.

United Kingdom: The UK logistics sector has welcomed the government's renewed commitment to building [a third runway at Heathrow Airport](#), citing its potential to enhance cargo capacity and improve global connectivity. Industry leaders argue that the expansion will strengthen the UK's role in international trade, though environmental and regulatory challenges remain key hurdles to the project's progress.

France: Port workers [are staging new strikes](#) to protest the lack of action on pension reforms, adding to disruptions at major cargo hubs, including Le Havre, Marseille-Fos, and Dunkirk. The industrial action is expected to impact container throughput and vessel schedules, further straining supply chains.
