



## GLOBAL APERTURE

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) revised its 2026 air cargo forecast, [lowering its expected growth rate](#) from 2.6% to 0.2% as disruptions related to the Middle East conflict continue to affect trade flows and capacity. Despite slower volume growth, IATA said capacity constraints, network rerouting, and elevated operating costs are expected to keep market conditions relatively tight throughout the year.

Ocean freight rates [continued to rise in early June](#) as Middle East conflict-related disruptions, vessel rerouting, bunker surcharges, and cargo frontloading tightened available capacity across major trade lanes. However, industry analysts noted that much of the recent volume strength appears to be driven by shippers accelerating imports ahead of anticipated cost increases and supply chain disruptions, raising questions about whether demand will remain elevated through the traditional peak season.

## REGIONAL FOCUS – AMERICAS

**United States:** Amid rising intermodal activity and stronger shipments of grain, metals, and motor vehicles, U.S. rail freight volumes [saw a significant increase of 7.8% year over year](#) during the week ending June 6, according to the Association of American Railroads (AAR). The increase reflects continued strength in domestic freight transportation demand across several key sectors.

The National Retail Federation (NRF) [forecasts an earlier-than-usual peak season](#) for U.S. imports as retailers accelerate shipments ahead of potential tariff changes and higher

transportation costs. While container volumes are expected to increase in June and July, the organization anticipates year-over-year declines later in the third quarter as economic uncertainty and inflation continue to weigh on consumer demand.

## REGIONAL FOCUS – ASIA-PACIFIC

**Australia:** Western Sydney International Airport's new cargo [precinct is scheduled to open in July](#), with freighter operations beginning on July 27 and trial flights taking place earlier in the month. The 24-hour facility will initially be capable of handling at least 220,000 metric tons of freight annually and is expected to expand air cargo capacity for importers, exporters, and e-commerce supply chains across the region.

**India:** Following congestion and inland transportation disruptions at Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) during April and May 2026, the port has introduced [a 50% reimbursement of ground rent charges](#) for eligible import containers. The relief measure aims to reduce cost pressures on importers as authorities continue efforts to improve cargo flow and ease operational bottlenecks.

## REGIONAL FOCUS – EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

**London:** Freight volumes through major United Kingdom ports [fell 3% year over year](#) in the first quarter of 2026, driven by lower energy-related cargo volumes and reduced imports of industrial raw materials. At the same time, container traffic at Felixstowe declined 16% compared to the same period last year as volumes shifted across the UK, including to the newly opened berth at London Gateway, whose container volumes increased by 19%.

**Egypt:** The Suez Canal Authority announced [new transit surcharges](#) effective July 15, 2026, as it continues efforts to attract vessel traffic back to the waterway amid ongoing regional security concerns. The changes come as some carriers gradually resume Suez Canal transits, although uncertainty in the Red Sea and broader Middle East region continues to influence routing decisions and supply chain planning.