

APERTURE & FOCUS

WEEK 26 | 27 JUNE 2024



GLOBAL APERTURE

Heightened demand for ocean shipping [is continuing to outpace the influx of new supply of vessels and containers](#). The need for more ships to maintain weekly sailings from Asia to Europe has strained capacity, leading to a scramble among carriers to secure adequate vessel capacity to meet escalating needs. The ongoing disruptions of Red Sea routes have disrupted the balance between supply and demand.

In the midst of these disruptions, the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and seafarers' unions are [calling for immediate action](#) to protect seafarers in the Red Sea, where attacks on commercial ships have increased. Since November 2023, the increase in attacks in the Red Sea has had significant risks to the safety of seafarers and disrupted global shipping routes, prompting the ITF to demand for coordinated protective measures from governments, shipping companies, and flag states.

General air cargo volumes [have risen](#) in the first five months of the year due to e-commerce demand and container shipping disruptions. This trend has reversed the previous years' pattern when shipments that required special handling outpaced general cargo as the main reason shippers opted to ship via air, with significant increases observed in Asia Pacific and the Middle East & South Asia regions.

REGIONAL FOCUS - AMERICAS

United States: South Carolina Ports (SC Ports) and the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) [have reached an agreement](#) that will lead to the reopening of the Leatherman Terminal. This agreement follows the decision from the United States Supreme Court to not hear an appeal filed by the South Carolina Ports Authority (SCSPA) in January 2024 and signals the end of a long-running dispute that has kept the port terminal relatively inactive since its opening in 2021.

Mexico: Tropical Storm Alberto [caused significant flooding and power outages](#) in Monterrey, Mexico, and led to the closure of key roads and ports on June 20th. The ports of Altamira and Tampico were temporarily shut down, while the Corpus Christi Ship Channel in Texas was closed due to heavy rains and storm surges. Despite these disruptions, cross-border rail shipments have largely continued, though loading and unloading operations slowed due to the weather conditions.

REGIONAL FOCUS – ASIA-PACIFIC

India: Congestion at Mundra Port is [causing substantial delays in cargo movement](#), affecting both road and rail logistics. The congestion is partly due to delays in issuing port entry permits for freight vehicles, leading to long waits for truckers and inefficiencies in container rail operations.

Singapore: The ongoing congestion at Singapore's port is [disrupting the timely movement of goods](#) due to an influx of vessels avoiding the Red Sea amid attacks by Houthi rebels. Manufacturers and exporters face delays as the container build up in the port is making it hard to move goods in and out of the seaport. Nearby ports like Port Klang and Tanjung Pelepas are not viable alternatives due to connectivity and capacity issues.

REGIONAL FOCUS – EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

Belgium: A container [fire disrupted operations](#) at the Port of Antwerp-Bruges in Belgium on June 24th, prompting a temporary suspension of terminal activities and evacuation. Shipping traffic was halted briefly until firefighters contained the fire and moved the affected container to a safe location, allowing operations to resume within a few hours.

United Kingdom: Rail freight services at the Felixstowe port are [operating at 50% capacity](#) following an inbound train derailment on June 20th within the port. The disruption, blocking access to the North rail terminal, is expected to continue impacting intermodal freight transport in and out of Britain's busiest sea container terminal until repairs are completed in early July.
