

APERTURE & FOCUS

WEEK 38 | 19 September 2024



GLOBAL APERTURE

The global shipping market [is expected to reach](#) a more balanced supply and demand environment by the fourth quarter of 2024, despite the possibility of disruptions such as a [U.S. East Coast and Gulf Coast port strike](#) and challenges in the Red Sea. Global container volumes have risen by 6.6% year-over-year, driven by strong imports to North and Latin America and steady exports from Asia.

London Heathrow (LHR) [retained its title](#) as the most internationally connected airport in the world for the second year in a row, according to the Official Airline Guide (OAG) report released on September 13th. Other airports in Asia and Europe, such as Kuala Lumpur (KUL) and Tokyo Haneda (HND), also ranked in the top three, while North American hubs like John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) and Chicago O'Hare (ORD) ranked within the top ten.

The world's largest transshipment hub, Singapore, will [gain six additional port calls](#) from Asia-North Europe carriers due to an upcoming reshuffle of global shipping alliances, starting

February 2025. This reshuffle will result in other regional ports like Malaysia's Tanjung Pelepas losing two calls, while Vietnam's Cai Mep will gain two, and Antwerp in Belgium will lose four calls.

REGIONAL FOCUS - AMERICAS

United States: On September 13th, the U.S. administration [announced new executive actions](#) to limit the abuse of the de minimis exemption, primarily targeting Chinese e-commerce platforms. Proposed regulations will exclude 40% of U.S. imports from the exemption and require importers to submit detailed data and Certificates of Compliance to enhance oversight.

Starting October 7th, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) [will require more precise cargo descriptions](#) for shipments submitted through the Air Cargo Advance Screening (ACAS) system, rejecting vague terms like "gift" or "parts." A warning period is currently in place, with daily notices being sent to carriers to correct non-compliant descriptions before the new rule takes effect.

According to a White House official, the administration [does not plan to invoke](#) a federal law, the Taft-Hartley Act, to prevent the potential strike by dockworkers at East Coast and Gulf Coast ports, whose labor contract is scheduled to expire on September 30th. The International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), representing workers at 36 ports, has [warned of a strike](#) on October 1st unless a new contract with the United States Maritime Alliance, Ltd. (USMX) is reached.

The Port of Long Beach [experienced record-breaking cargo](#) volume in August 2024, processing 913,873 Twenty-Equivalent Units (TEUs), a 33.9% increase from the previous year. This surge is driven by retailers expediting goods ahead of possible tariff changes and [labor negotiations](#) at East and Gulf coast ports.

A severe storm on September 14th caused the roof of the Mexican customs facility at the World Trade Bridge in Nuevo Laredo to collapse, [temporarily closing](#) the busiest U.S.-Mexico commercial crossing. Shipping trucks were diverted to the Colombia Solidarity International Bridge. After debris was cleared from the World Trade Bridge, it reopened to traffic on Monday, September 16th.

REGIONAL FOCUS – ASIA-PACIFIC

China: Shanghai [implemented a widespread shutdown](#), including closing ports and suspending transportation services, as Typhoon Bebinca made landfall on September 16th. This is the most serious cyclone threat the city has faced since 1949. Authorities issued a red alert because of the heavy rain and strong winds, resulting [in the cancellation](#) of over 1,400 flights, 570 train

services, and recalling ships during the Mid-Autumn Festival holiday. As of September 18th, Shanghai port [is temporarily](#) closed.

India: Nhava Sheva Port is [experiencing capacity challenges](#) due to a surge in ship calls, prompting the terminals to impose temporary restrictions on vessel operations. The port is working closely with container freight stations to manage backlogs and expedite the movement of priority cargo.

Australia: The federal government has [approved the construction](#) of a third runway at Melbourne Airport (MEL), set to open in 2031. This will allow for simultaneous take-offs and landings, increasing air freight capacity and reducing delays.

REGIONAL FOCUS – EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

On September 17th, severe flooding across central and eastern Europe [caused significant transportation delays](#). The floods have led to several container terminals facing operational limitations, collapsed bridges, road closures, and interruptions to rail services in Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Austria, and Germany.

While London Heathrow (LHR) retained its title as the most internationally connected airport in the world, other European airports like Amsterdam Schiphol (AMS), Paris Charles de Gaulle (CDG), and Frankfurt (FRA) also [ranked in the top 10](#), though several experienced slight declines in connectivity due to reduced services to Asia due to ongoing flying restrictions over Russia and Ukraine.

Netherlands: A container barge [collided with the Willemsbrug road bridge](#) in Rotterdam on September 12th, causing 5 containers to fall into the Maas River. Engineers are currently assessing the damage to the bridge, while authorities have recovered four of the five containers, with one still submerged.
