

GLOBAL APERTURE

The United Nations' [World Economic Situation and Prospects 2026](#) report warns that global trade momentum is slowing, with economic growth projected to ease in 2026 as tariff uncertainty, geopolitical tensions, and weak investment weigh on demand. The report notes [that the shipping industry is likely to feel the impact](#) as the temporary boost from front-loaded shipments in 2025 fades, increasing the risk of softer cargo volumes and more volatile supply chain conditions worldwide.

Containership traffic through the Suez Canal [showed early signs of recovery](#) in the week ending January 11, 2026, with 26 vessels transiting the canal as several major ocean carriers cautiously tested a return after nearly two years of Red Sea disruptions. While some large ships operated by global carriers began limited passages, most traffic continues to divert around the Cape of Good Hope, underscoring the canal's ongoing importance to worldwide supply chains and the industry's continued focus on safety and reliability.

REGIONAL FOCUS – AMERICAS

United States: Containerized imports at major U.S. ports [are expected to remain below last year's levels](#) through at least May 2026, as trade policy uncertainty and softer global demand continue to weigh on shipping volumes, according to forecasts released January 9. While a short-lived uptick is expected in January ahead of Lunar New Year factory closures in Asia, volumes are projected to ease again through spring as importers manage inventories cautiously amid uneven global trade conditions.

Brazil: On January 9, Viracopos International Airport became the only airport in São Paulo State [to receive Authorised Economic Operator \(AEO\) certification](#), following approval by Brazil's Customs Authority. The certification recognizes that the airport meets its standards for control, risk management, and cargo security, supporting faster customs clearance, priority inspections, and more predictable air cargo flows for international shipments.

REGIONAL FOCUS – ASIA-PACIFIC

Cambodia & Japan: On January 12, Japan's government [approved nearly \\$19 million in grant funding](#) including support to strengthen customs functions at Cambodia's new container terminal at Sihanoukville Port, alongside continued landmine clearance and victim assistance programs. The customs-focused investment supports [growing Cambodia–Japan trade](#), which rose 17 percent year-over-year to a record \$2.55 billion in 2025, as both countries deepen maritime connectivity and trade facilitation amid expanding bilateral cargo flows.

Sri Lanka: Hambantota International Port has quickly emerged as an alternative to Colombo Port since launching container operations in 2024, [recording a sharp rise in throughput in 2025](#) as congestion and weather-related disruptions constrained capacity at Colombo. The increase in volumes, along with ongoing investment in additional berths and equipment, reflects Hambantota's expanding role as a regional transshipment gateway while Colombo continues to face operational pressure.

REGIONAL FOCUS – EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

Severe winter conditions disrupted air transport in early January, [forcing temporary airport closures](#) and [major operating restrictions](#) across multiple European hubs including Prague (Czech Republic), Vienna (Austria), and Amsterdam Schiphol (the Netherlands). Heavy snowfall, freezing rain, and runway icing led to flight suspensions, widespread delays, and de-icing constraints, with knock-on impacts to air cargo connectivity and schedule reliability expected to persist as weather conditions continue to affect the region.

United Kingdom: Severe winter conditions have also affected the UK, as [a powerful storm crossed the English Channel](#) on January 9, causing multiple vessels to lose containers overboard near the Isle of Wight and prompting warnings from the UK's Maritime & Coastguard Agency. The incident disrupted sea freight operations on key UK–Europe routes.