

APERTURE & FOCUS

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GLOBAL APERTURE

Increased demand on the Far East to East Coast South America trade lane [has led to a rise in the average speed of vessels](#), resulting in higher emissions, according to the latest Xeneta carbon emissions index (CEI) ranking. Declining CEI performance from top carriers due to increased speeds when it is commercially beneficial calls into question the long-term effectiveness of slow-steaming as a long-term fix for ship emissions.

The seizure in Yemen of an Israeli-owned ship by Iran-backed Houthi rebels in retaliation for the conflict in Gaza [is causing alarm over potential disruptions in the Red Sea](#), a shipping route that is crucial for supply chains that extend throughout the world. Tensions have escalated as the Houthis have vowed to target Israeli ships until the conclusion of the military operation in Palestine and concerns are growing that the disruption may lead to increased costs and delays for shipping companies, potentially impacting global supply chains similar to pandemic-era congestion and chaos.

REGIONAL FOCUS - AMERICAS

USA: Cargo operations at Anchorage Airport (ANC) have returned to normal following unprecedented snowstorms that caused significant delays, [prompting calls for increased investment in improved cargo infrastructure](#). Despite being the third busiest cargo airport globally last year, recent events highlight the fact that ANC's cargo infrastructure has not expanded in over two decades, leading to challenges in snow management during storms.

Mexico: Delays at the Panama Canal have renewed interest surrounding [a rail infrastructure project known as the Isthmus of Tehuantepec Inter-oceanic Corridor \(CIIT\)](#), which will connect the Pacific and Atlantic oceans at the narrowest point of the country and allow transit in just seven hours. After the Mexican government's recent announcement of a \$2.85 billion USD investment in the project, officials expect that service will begin as early as December of this year, but the railway will not be fully operational until 2033.

REGIONAL FOCUS – ASIA-PACIFIC

Australia: DP World Australia has warned of further disruptions upon resuming terminal operations [after a weekend stoppage caused by a "serious" cyberattack](#) affected four terminals and 40% of cargo activity. Despite the backlog, the Maritime Union of Australia announced plans to proceed with labor actions this week, exacerbating delays for carriers and shippers, while DP World works with government agencies and national police on ongoing investigation and remediation efforts following the cyber incident.

Sri Lanka: Sri Lanka is [taking steps to expand Colombo Port](#), beginning with the construction of the West Container Terminal 2 and followed by the development of Colombo North Port, aiming to maintain its position as a key regional transshipment hub for containers. The West Container Terminal, led by a consortium including Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone, is expected to start operations in phases from December 2024 to February 2025, while the feasibility study for the West Container Terminal 2 is underway, with plans to extend the breakwater by 2028.

REGIONAL FOCUS – EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

European Union: European regulators [have reportedly delayed the implementation of certain aspects of the EU's new Import Control System 2 \(ICS2\)](#) without a formal announcement, leading to confusion in the industry. The revised schedule for ICS2 applicability to ocean shipments includes moving deadlines for vessel operators from March 1, 2024 to June 3 and to December 4 for House Bill filers, raising questions about the smoothness of the phased implementation process.

Netherlands: The Dutch government [has reversed its decision to cut the number of flights at Schiphol Airport](#) after objections from the US and European Union. The initial plan, aimed at reducing noise pollution, had proposed a reduction in the number of flights from 500,000 to 452,500 annually, but the US and EU argued that the plan did not follow the "balanced

approach" procedure required for noise pollution reduction, prompting the Dutch government to suspend the flight cuts until a Supreme Court ruling that is expected in the second quarter of next year.

South Africa: Severe congestion in South Africa's ports, exacerbated by adverse weather and equipment issues at Transnet, the state-owned enterprise operating and controlling the country's major rail, port and pipeline infrastructure, has led several major shipping lines [to omit the country from their services](#). With 96 vessels waiting outside ports, the South African Association of Freight Forwarders estimates that the congestion may persist until the end of January or early February.