

## APERTURE & FOCUS

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### GLOBAL APERTURE

Despite the interception of numerous threats by the multinational coalition Operation Prosperity Guardian, [ongoing drone and missile attacks from Yemen](#) targeting commercial shipping in the southern Red Sea have persisted. Attempts to attack ships on December 26 that were reported by the UK Maritime Trade Organization (UKMTO) highlight the continued challenges, with the shipping industry adjusting routes and closely monitoring the situation. While international [protection has begun to encourage the resumption of transit](#) through the Red Sea, many carriers [are intent on steering clear](#) pending further observation of the risk mitigation this protection offers.

### REGIONAL FOCUS - AMERICAS

**Unites States:** The California Air Resources Board (CARB) [has extended the registration deadline for the Clean Truck Check \(CTC\)](#), legislation that expands the state's smog check guidelines for trucks, from December 31 to January 31. The new rules [includes several emissions reporting mandates](#) that aim to eliminate the sales of medium and heavy-duty

combustion trucks in California by 2036, subsequently transitioning to zero-emissions technology by 2045.

**Canada:** Members of the Fédération autonome de l'enseignement (FAE), a teacher's union in Quebec, [blocked entrances to the ports of Montreal and Quebec City](#) on December 21, disrupting operations as negotiations with the provincial government stalled. The demonstration had a “major impact” on port operations according to the Montreal Port Authority, with about 25% of the morning traffic (between 500-800 trucks) unable to make their transactions.

## REGIONAL FOCUS – ASIA-PACIFIC

**India:** The rapid expansion of private ports in India has prompted the country's Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways [to announce its intent to create a national ranking database](#) to assess the efficiency of major ports. As private ports outpace major ports in terms of growth, the need to modernize alongside ongoing capacity expansion at many ports has become urgent according to officials.

**China:** Starting January 1, 2024, [China plans to impose tariffs](#) on certain chemical imports from Taiwan, citing violations of the Cross-Strait Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA). Products such as paraxylene, propylene, and orthoxylene will be affected, leading to increased costs for Taiwanese producers and potential impacts on trade flows, with tensions between Taiwan and China contributing to the ongoing economic challenges.

## REGIONAL FOCUS – EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

**UK:** The UK government has unveiled a roadmap comprising over 50 measures [to accelerate the success of Freeports](#), a policy aimed at reviving port communities in the country. The plan includes a £150 million Investment Opportunities Fund, extension of special tax reliefs in English Freeport sites from five to ten years, and measures to improve infrastructure, skills, and workforce access, among other initiatives.

**South Africa:** Shipping companies that are rerouting around the Red Sea due to Houthi attacks [are facing challenges as African ports](#), particularly in South Africa, dealing with red tape, congestion, and inadequate facilities. With hundreds of vessels taking the longer route around the Cape of Good Hope, major African ports like Durban, Cape Town, and Ngqura are cited as among the worst-performing globally, prompting concerns about limited choices for refueling and replenishment.

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