

WEEK 28

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APERTURE & *FOCUS*

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GLOBAL APERTURE

Operations have resumed at Canada's west coast ports following [a tentative agreement between port operators and labor unions](#) that is now in process to be ratified by the respective sides. The latest in a line of cost-cutting measures implemented by ocean carriers has come in the form of [halting chartered ships altogether](#)— another indication that the market has softened as operators face declining volume and increasing operating costs. New estimates predict that approximately [one-third of all containers are expected to be equipped with telematics hardware](#), providing real-time tracking and monitoring capabilities by 2027. The adoption of these technologies, driven by decreasing device costs and the competitive advantages they offer to carriers and shippers, is expected to enhance operational efficiency, supply chain control, and equipment availability—ultimately leading to a more transparent and resilient maritime supply chain.

REGIONAL FOCUS - AMERICAS

Citing exceptionally warm sea surface temperatures, researchers have revised previous predictions and now anticipate [an above-average hurricane season for 2023](#) that includes 18 named storms, nine hurricanes, and four major hurricanes. The forecast acknowledges the uncertainty caused by conflicting signals from an anticipated robust El Niño and warmer Atlantic waters, which may offset the detrimental effects of increased wind shear in the Caribbean and tropical Atlantic.

Canada: The 13-day strike at Canada's western ports has ended after [the dockworkers' union and employers reached a tentative agreement](#) over a new four-year deal on July 13. While vessel service has resumed, [13 ships remain offshore at the Ports of Prince Rupert and Vancouver](#) with a combined \$7.5 billion in goods waiting to be unloaded and industry experts expect a minimum of several weeks to recover.

USA: On July 7, [U.S. West Coast port workers' unions declared](#) that they will not handle containerships that were originally bound for the Port of Vancouver but were diverted to the Port of Seattle. With diverted ships already bound for arrival in the coming days, it remains unclear where ships will be unloaded as they reroute to Tacoma, Los Angeles, or the East Coast as alternatives.

Mexico: Cargo airlines [have begun sending planes to an alternative airport](#) outside Mexico City to comply with the Mexican government's ban on freighter aircraft at the main international airport. The forced relocation is causing operational complexity and increased costs for carriers, as shipments are split between two locations, and the move sets a concerning precedent for altering trade agreements governing commercial aviation.

REGIONAL FOCUS – ASIA-PACIFIC

Bangladesh: Following the temporary closure of Bangladeshi factories for the Eid-ul-Azha holidays, [vessels departing from Chittagong port are leaving half full](#) due to lack of available cargo. This reduced production has also caused a shortage of empty containers and limited deliveries, further impacting the container-carrying capacity of the vessels.

China: China's trade is under pressure as both [foreign shipments and domestic demand have now been in decline throughout the majority of 2023](#), leading to a significant drop in exports and imports. As the outlook for global growth wanes and geopolitical tensions rise, experts predict that recovery is unlikely in the near future.

REGIONAL FOCUS – EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

EU: [The EU's Greening Transport Package](#), introduced on July 6, has been mostly welcomed by European transport organizations, but concerns have arisen regarding the proposed deadlines and infrastructure for alternative fuels. While the package offers opportunities for improving operational efficiency and reducing emissions, [several organizations have expressed worry](#) about restrictions on the use of traditional vehicles after 2035 and criticized the lack of clarity for how they will address the infrastructure for charging heavy-duty vehicles.

Belgium: More updates at the port of Antwerp-Bruges will arrive in the form of [mandatory ID-based container pick-up beginning January 14, 2024](#). The move aims to enhance security and streamline container imports at the port terminals by eliminating the use of pin codes to pick up containers; and will be introduced for barge and rail in the coming months.