LOGISPICKS

Cargo intelligence handpicked for leaders

SEPTEMBER 2026



GLOBAL TRADE / SEPTEMBER 2026

THE FREIGHT OPERATIONS ISSUE

From air corridors to ocean schedules, the story of cargo is in the handoffs between them.

AIR FREIGHT | OCEAN FREIGHT | PORT OPERATIONS | SERVICES TRADE

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EDITORIAL OPINION

Follow the whole shipment

Markets are made at their handoffs as much as on the voyage or flight.

> **A growing cargo market can still leave a shipment stranded at the next interface.**

September offered strength and friction in equal measure. Air cargo volumes climbed, yet there was little evidence of an exceptional year-end peak. Ocean spot prices rose toward the United States while Europe-bound assessments eased. Vessel capacity remained tied up in congestion even as the orderbook expanded. Each signal is useful, but none tells us whether a particular shipment will reach its destination on time.

That question starts with the gap between nominal and usable capacity. A carrier can add lift to a region without adding space on the lane, date and product a shipper needs. A fleet can grow while longer rotations and port delays absorb the extra ships. When an indexed rate rises, it may reflect demand, disrupted supply, or both. Treating every price move as proof of a general shortage gives a false sense of certainty; the service attached to the price must be examined.

The handoffs at terminals expose what headline numbers miss. Gulf hubs kept cargo moving through disrupted airspace and altered port calls. India's JNPA set a September container record as South Asian gateways reported yard and transfer pressure. Brussels Airport says its digital truck process is in daily use; Tema is improving port-call coordination. Rotterdam showed that ships can work while trucks struggle to reach the port. In each case, physical capacity depends on a functioning interface.

Reliability deserves similar care. An on-time percentage is an average across a defined sample, not a promise to an individual consignment. A late arrival can trigger storage, a missed production window or an expensive mode switch. The fastest advertised service can also lose its advantage in a queue for acceptance or release. The useful comparison is total elapsed time and the range of likely outcomes.

LogisPicks will keep asking what the market numbers mean at shipment level. We will distinguish measured change from plausible scenarios, compare rates only where units and service terms permit it, and look for operating results behind claims of new capacity or technology. The aim is to give readers a clearer basis for judgment while conditions shift.

The month in context

Latest available September-relevant observations; periods and units differ.

WTO GOODS BAROMETER

102.0

Sep release

AIR VOLUME

+6%

Sep, Xeneta

AIR SPOT / KG

$3.10

Sep, Xeneta

OCEAN WCI / FEU

$4,468

24 Sep, Drewry

OCEAN RELIABILITY CHANGE

-5.9pp

Jul-Aug, Sea-Intelligence

CONTAINER THROUGHPUT

141.9

Aug flash, RWI/ISL

BRUSSELS CARGO

70,764t

Aug, released Sep

LOS ANGELES TEU

955,907

Aug, released Sep

Two clocks of trade

Value and volume answer different questions about momentum.



The WTO barometer's component readings tell a more useful story than its headline on the dashboard. Electronic components stood at 104.9 and export orders at 103.5, while container shipping was 99.6. Technology-linked orders were running ahead of the shipping signal. A broad reading above trend should therefore not be turned into a claim that all cargo categories were accelerating together.

UNCTAD estimated global goods-trade value at about $13.7 trillion for the first half of 2026, 12.5% above a year earlier. The agency cautioned that higher prices explained a significant share of the rise. An invoice total can climb while the boxes and tonnes required to move it rise much more slowly.

One clock records money; the other records physical movement. A third clock, freight pricing, reflects available capacity and disruption on individual lanes. The three may move together for a time and then separate. Treating them as equivalents can lead to overbuilding capacity or misreading a budget increase as a volume surge.

The barometer is best read beside actual port and air cargo measures. It can raise the question of whether new export orders will become sustained shipments; it cannot answer when those shipments will arrive at a gateway. The next page follows the physical measures that can help test the signal.

WTO UNCTAD

Cargo tests the signal

August cargo readings provide a physical check on the global trade narrative.



The August RWI/ISL flash was barely above revised July. That supports continued container movement, while leaving open how much activity shifted between ports and routes. The flash covers a large port sample and can change when late reports arrive. Its value as a physical check lies in its direction and coverage, rather than in treating a preliminary decimal as final.

Descartes counted 2,603,709 TEU of US container imports in August, 3.3% above August 2025. Los Angeles separately reported a record June-August period for total handling. These are not competing counts: the first is a bill-of-lading import population; the second includes the different flows passing through one gateway. Neither says how quickly a box cleared the terminal.

The air side also pointed to continuing demand, though its August and September observations come from different publishers and methods. They should not be spliced into one monthly growth series. The distinction matters because capacity planning is made against routes, products and booking windows, while these releases describe broad market activity.

The physical evidence supports a market with momentum and pronounced differences by route and commodity. It does not turn a trade-value estimate into a capacity forecast. The air and ocean features that follow ask a more specific question: where does demand meet usable lift, and at what price and level of reliability?

RWI/ISL DESCARTES PORT OF LOS ANGELES IATA XENETA

01 / AIR FREIGHT

Air freight

Demand is firm. Capacity, price and service quality vary widely by corridor.



IN THIS SECTION

08 The real price of capacity

09 Where capacity is tight

10 The corridor price

11 The buying cycle

12 From lift to delivery

13 The outlook

The real price of air capacity

A six-page reading of demand, usable lift, rates and the service that connects them.



The air market entered autumn with two pieces of evidence pointing in the same broad direction. IATA measured August cargo tonne-kilometres 4.4% above a year earlier, while available cargo tonne-kilometres declined 0.1%. Xeneta's later September assessment also found demand growing faster than capacity. Their samples and units are different, so the releases confirm a broad direction rather than forming one continuous series.

A global total is the beginning of the story, not the commercial conclusion. Capacity is sold as space on a service, through a specific gateway, for cargo with dimensions, handling needs and a delivery date. A shipment of dense components and a bulky urgent consignment may compete for different parts of the same aircraft. Reported ACTK cannot capture every restriction at the booking desk.

IATA's August global cargo load factor reached 46.0%, two percentage points higher year on year. Xeneta's September dynamic load factor was 62%, also two points higher. The levels differ because the publishers use different definitions, not because one can be corrected by the other. The common signal is tighter utilisation than a year earlier.

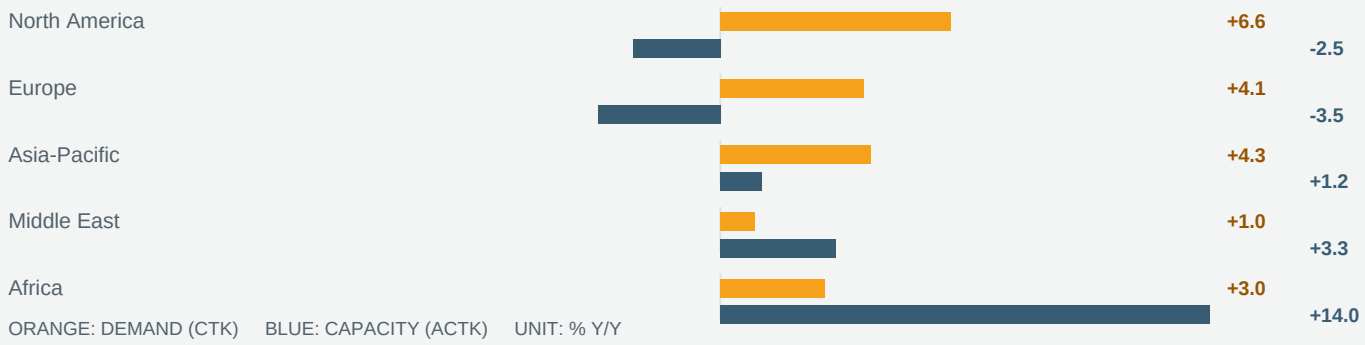
To see where that pressure could become a service problem, the next step is regional and corridor evidence. A worldwide rise can coexist with weakness elsewhere, as the Gulf-linked lanes showed. The distinction matters before anyone treats a global growth figure as proof that every flight will be full. The following figure sets demand growth beside IATA's regional capacity changes.

IATA XENETA

Capacity is a route, not a total

The IATA comparison shows why a single global utilisation figure conceals local constraints.

FIG 01 | IATA AUGUST 2026 CTK AND ACTK, YEAR ON YEAR



The figure shows demand outpacing capacity in North America and Europe, with Asia-Pacific also tightening on the publisher's regional measure. The direction matters more than reading each bar aloud: extra demand has to fit onto schedules that may have less spare lift. Yet these carrier-region aggregates still do not identify the airport pairs where a booking is most difficult.

Africa points in the other direction, with capacity expanding far faster than demand. The Middle East also shows a different balance from the two tightest regions. Aircraft deployment, belly-space recovery and market conditions can therefore create several air markets inside one global headline. A capacity surplus in one region cannot necessarily be moved to the lane or date where another shipper needs it.

The corridor view is sharper. IATA reported Asia-North America cargo traffic up 13.2% in August. Europe-Middle East and Middle East-Asia fell 12.1% and 11.0%. Even where traffic contracted, disruption and rerouting can leave a high price for usable lift. Volume by itself does not establish available capacity at the required airport or transit point.

A more practical measure of tightness is the time required to confirm uplift and the frequency of a booked shipment being rolled. Those are service observations, not substitutes for IATA's published statistics. They test whether the market pressure visible in the chart is being felt by cargo. Once that distinction is clear, the rate evidence becomes easier to interpret.

IATA

The corridor price emerges

September spot assessments varied far more than the global average implies.

FIG 02 | XENETA SEPTEMBER SPOT RATES



XENETA MARKET-AVERAGE SPOT ASSESSMENTS; CORRIDOR AND PRODUCT SPECIFIC

The global spot average on the dashboard gives a cost direction, but no shipment is priced by an abstract world lane. The chart makes the corridor spread visible using one publisher and one September assessment period. Northeast Asia to North America carried the highest of the selected rates; Europe-bound movements were lower, though still far from interchangeable. Product, density and service terms would further separate actual quotations.

The corridors did not follow identical paths. Xeneta reported both Northeast Asia routes up 5% from August, while China to Western Europe rebounded 10% after prior summer declines. Into the Middle East, week-39 spot rates remained far above late-February levels from South Asia and Europe. Those comparisons have different baselines and should not be placed on a single trend line.

The price spread is not a pure demand ranking. Distance, freighter and belly supply, airport charges, commodity mix and route disruption also enter the assessment. IATA's August traffic contraction on two Gulf-linked lanes coexisted with elevated later spot pricing into the region. That is a reminder that a low volume does not always mean easy access to low-cost lift.

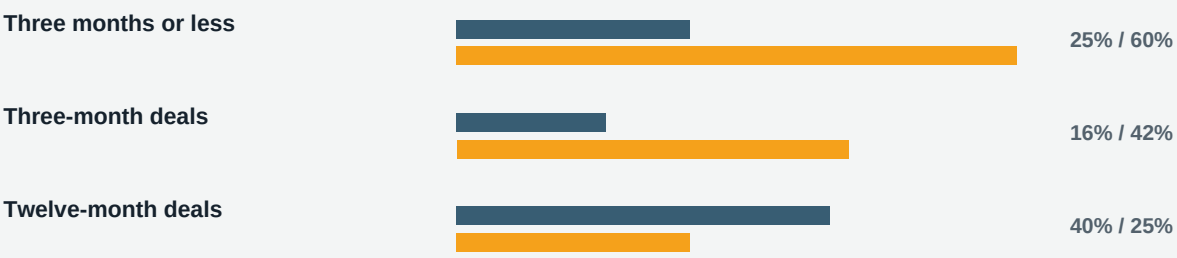
The all-in invoice adds another layer. IATA said jet fuel prices were 79.2% higher year on year in August. A base air rate may be fixed while fuel, security or local handling changes. Quote validity matters as well: a price that expires before the cargo is ready offers no cost certainty. It is the structure behind the quote that leads to the next part of the story.

XENETA IATA

The buying cycle shortens

Contracts reveal how the market is distributing price and capacity risk.

FIG 03 | SHARE OF NEW AIR CONTRACTS, Q3



BLUE: Q3 2025 ORANGE: Q3 2026 | XENETA-OBSERVED NEW DEALS

The contract chart shows how much shorter Xeneta's observed new deals became between the two third quarters. Short commitments gained share while annual terms lost it. This is a sample of agreements visible to one market platform, not a census of every global air cargo contract. It nevertheless exposes the central trade-off: buyers and providers are keeping more opportunities to revisit price and allocation.

The movement toward shorter terms is understandable after volatile fuel and route conditions. A buyer can revisit a high rate sooner; a carrier or forwarder avoids holding a fixed price across a moving cost base. Yet repeated tenders have their own cost, and short validity can leave priority cargo exposed when space tightens. Flexibility is valuable only if it does not remove the service the contract was meant to secure.

The answer need not be a binary choice between a year fixed and pure spot. A base allocation can carry a defined price-adjustment mechanism, while irregular or surge cargo remains on shorter terms. The formula should identify its benchmark, period, included charges and review trigger. Otherwise the apparent certainty of an indexed contract can disappear in a dispute over what the index covers.

The service terms should be just as exact: airport pair, cut-off, uplift window, special handling, and the recovery option after a miss. Without those details, an agreement may protect a number on an invoice while leaving the actual movement uncertain. The next handoff is at the airport, where booked lift must become accepted, screened, loaded and released cargo.

From booked lift to delivered cargo

The airport process can change the value of a fast flight.

A fast aircraft does not make a fast shipment if the terminal handoff loses the time gained.

A confirmed flight is one milestone in a longer clock. Freight must reach the terminal, pass acceptance and security, be built into a ULD or loaded loose, then be broken down and released after arrival. Public monthly air statistics do not provide one global dwell-time series for this chain. That absence matters when a shipment pays an air premium for speed.

September airport reporting supplies concrete examples of the interface. Brussels Airport described a digital truck process that coordinates delivery and collection through BRUcloud applications. It reported shorter waits but did not publish a common before-and-after time series in that release. The operational question is whether an arrival slot, a cargo-ready message and the truck actually meet at the same time.

The critical distinction is between a published flight schedule and the elapsed time experienced by cargo. At origin, acceptance cutoffs can turn a small truck delay into a missed departure. At destination, customs or breakdown capacity can postpone collection even when the aircraft lands on time. Measuring those events separately identifies where a premium service delivered its promised speed and where it did not.

A useful service report would show the share of freight accepted by cutoff, loaded as booked and available for collection within the promised window. It would also identify the recovery path when one milestone fails. Aircraft supply remains central, but terminal staffing, screening and information flow determine how much of that supply becomes a dependable shipment.

BRUSSELS AIRPORT

A firm market, an open outlook

September growth is observed; an exceptional fourth quarter is still a hypothesis.



The September demand and capacity balance described earlier is observed market activity, not a forecast of the fourth quarter. Xeneta said its contacts were not yet seeing a strong peak-season signal. That caution deserves its own weight: a firm market can remain firm without producing the kind of sharp, broad lift that forces a wholesale change in buying plans.

One possible swing factor is ocean disruption. If a slow or unreliable container service threatens a hard delivery date, urgent cargo can move to air. Xeneta identified that possibility but said its September data did not yet show a broad conversion. Treating it as inevitable would confuse a scenario with a measured shift.

The indicators to watch over the quarter are corridor spot rates, time to confirmed uplift, failed or rolled bookings, and actual cargo availability after landing. If price rises while service remains stable, the problem is mostly cost. If confirmation and release times lengthen, it becomes a service and planning problem. Those signals can arrive before a global monthly statistical release.

The six pages point to one conclusion. Air demand is growing, and usable lift can be tight in important corridors; neither fact justifies a universal shortage story. Rates, contracts and airport execution all form part of the same market. The informed judgment is to keep dates, units and service milestones visible as the peak season develops.

XENETA IATA

A new cargo gate

Brussels put a digital truck process into routine use as cargo volumes rose.



Brussels Airport's August cargo total, shown on the dashboard, was 22% above a year earlier. Flown cargo increased 8.5%, with full-freighter and belly segments growing, while integrator services declined. The mix matters operationally: different cargo streams use different acceptance processes, ramp resources and delivery schedules. A higher total does not mean every part of the complex experienced the same pressure.

On 23 September, the airport published results from its five-year Stargate programme. Its Digital Green Lane uses BRUcloud applications for cargo delivery and collection; the airport said 95% of goods in the cargo zone now pass through the system. It reported shorter truck waits, less paper and lower emissions. The release did not provide a quantified baseline for each result.

The operating value lies in an otherwise slow interface. A truck arrival, a cargo-ready message and documentation must line up before freight can move. A digital process may reduce avoidable waiting if the data are timely and exception handling is clear. The high adoption rate is evidence of deployment, not by itself a full performance evaluation.

A stronger evaluation would pair average and high-percentile truck turnaround with cargo-release time, rejection rates and rework. Rising tonnes create pressure on the same gates and staff. Brussels is a useful example of information becoming part of terminal capacity when physical flow grows.

BRUSSELS AIRPORT BRUSSELS AIRPORT

Readiness at short notice

Teesside and Toronto illuminate two different dimensions of resilience.



Teesside International Airport reported on 22 September that it handled a late-notice time-critical movement on a Pilatus PC-12, with its in-house team unloading the aircraft for onward transport. The case is a specific example, not a network-wide service guarantee. It shows the value of being able to assemble people, equipment and ground access when a charter request arrives unexpectedly.

The airport said cargo handled to August was up 120% on the comparable 2025 period. A high percentage on a growing, relatively small base should be read with caution. Teesside is developing a new cargo facility and has a Border Control Post for perishables, extending the types of cargo it can serve.

At Toronto Pearson, equipment supplier Lodige marked one year since the Air Canada Cargo terminal switched to new controls. It said the migration resumed operations an hour after a September 2025 cutover and supported more than a quarter-million tonnes of cargo over the first ten full months. The claim is attributed to the supplier, and it does not by itself establish a comparative productivity gain.

The two cases connect operational resilience to different capabilities. Teesside's example is human and procedural responsiveness; Toronto's is reliable control and ULD data in an established terminal. Both are necessary to turn aircraft capacity into a predictable shipment. A capacity assessment that counts aircraft but ignores terminal readiness is incomplete.

TEESSIDE AIRPORT LODIGE

Pilots need outcomes

Electrification and hydrogen should be reported at their actual stage of use.

The useful question is what a new process delivers after the demonstration becomes a normal shift.

Brussels said electric ground-handling equipment tested through Stargate had entered daily service, including two customised electric fuel dispensers. Its mobile sustainable aviation fuel blending installation is a separate pilot planned to continue through year-end. A deployed vehicle and a fuel experiment are different levels of maturity, even though both appear in one sustainability programme.

At Poznan Airport, a 30 September Interreg report described a test of hydrogen in cargo-terminal operations. Two electric forklifts were fitted with modular fuel-cell packs. The project is studying solar-linked production, compression, storage, refuelling and use. It has identified rapid refuelling as a potential advantage but has not published a comparative operating result in that note.

The test is not whether a vehicle can move once. Airport cargo work has peak-hour constraints, security boundaries, maintenance needs and strict safety requirements. A new energy system should be assessed for vehicle availability, downtime, refuelling or charging time, cost and the effect on cargo flow under normal and busy conditions.

These September accounts show an evidence ladder: a trial establishes feasibility; sustained use establishes adoption; measured throughput, cost and emissions establish impact. Reporting that ladder clearly protects the value of genuine progress without turning every pilot into a finished solution.

BRUSSELS AIRPORT INTERREG

A hub under constraint

Dubai and Doha show why network recovery must be read as an operating process, not a switch.

OPERATING PATH | RECOVERING A CARGO CONNECTION



EACH LINK MUST FUNCTION; A RESTARTED FLIGHT IS NOT YET A RESTORED SHIPMENT

Regional airspace restrictions beginning in late February forced Gulf hubs to work with changing corridors and schedules. Dubai Airports said its two airports still handled 213,000 tonnes of cargo between 28 February and 30 April, alongside 32,000 aircraft movements. Those are cumulative figures for a disrupted interval, not a September cargo reading. They document continuity of operation, but say little about the time or cost of an individual shipment.

The airport said operations were being scaled as UAE airspace restrictions eased. Rebuilding a hub means restoring banked arrivals, transfer windows, ground handling and onward connections together. A flight can operate while cargo arriving on it misses a planned connection. That distinction matters especially for consignments sold on a short door-to-door transit time.

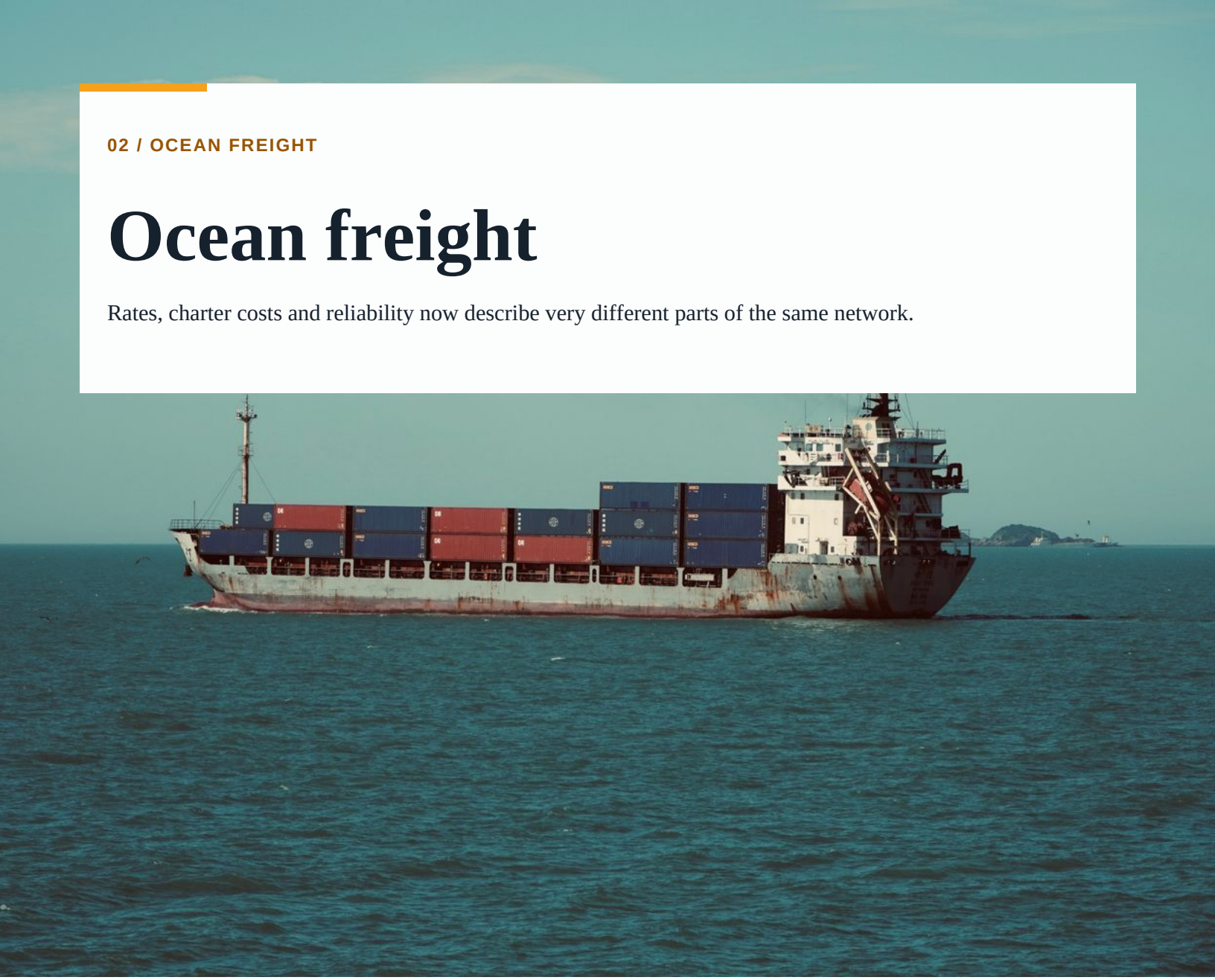
Qatar Airways likewise rebuilt its network through designated flight corridors. Its May operational update set out a schedule toward more than 150 destinations from mid-June through mid-September, subject to change. A passenger destination count is not cargo capacity; belly space depends on frequency, aircraft type, routing and how much is actually offered to freight.

The regional carrier comparison appears in the air-capacity figure earlier in this feature; the operational point here is different. A hub may have aircraft space while the transit path, arrival bank or ground transfer still fails to connect. The region was neither uniformly closed nor uniformly recovered. Connection integrity, acceptance cutoffs and handling performance need to be read alongside published flight schedules.

DUBAI AIRPORTS QATAR AIRWAYS IATA

Ocean freight

Rates, charter costs and reliability now describe very different parts of the same network.



IN THIS SECTION

19 The network behind price

20 Where rates diverge

21 Effective capacity

22 The charter market

23 Schedule reliability

24 Route changes

25 What the network delivers

The network behind the price

A seven-page reading of demand, usable capacity, cost and dependable delivery.



The global-trade section has already established that boxes were moving and that US imports were comparatively firm. The ocean question is narrower: did those flows meet a dependable weekly service? A carrier can report space somewhere in its network and still have no usable slot on the sailing, port rotation and week the cargo requires. That is why a demand reading alone does not explain the price paid on a specific route.

Container demand also reaches the network unevenly. A surge at one origin can exhaust equipment or feeder connections while another trade remains soft. The effect may travel through transshipment hubs before it appears in a headline rate. To understand the market, the useful observation is whether departures are offered at the promised frequency and whether the container is available after arrival.

The supply side is less visible. A container ship can exist in the fleet and still be unusable for the required sailing because it is delayed at a port or committed to a longer rotation. Linerlytica's late-September estimate of capacity caught in congestion showed the scale of that drag. Its orderbook describes future deliveries, not current available slots; the next capacity chart keeps those two clocks separate.

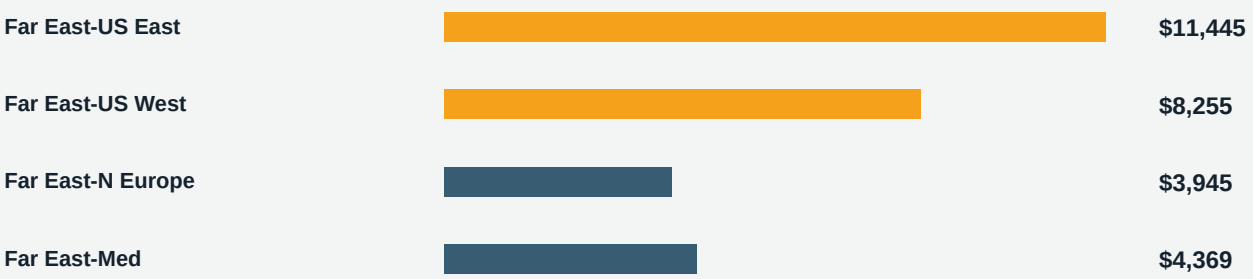
Demand that holds steady against interrupted effective capacity can sustain high rates on a route. Demand that softens while vessels become available can bring prices down. September showed both possibilities by geography. The first chart on the next page makes the divergence clear before turning to the capacity and service mechanisms underneath it.

LINERLYTICA

The route split is unmistakable

The same late-September market paid very different prices toward America and Europe.

FIG 04 | XENETA SPOT RATES, 24 SEPTEMBER 2026



USD PER FEU; US-BOUND AND EUROPE-BOUND DIRECTIONS DIVERGED

The Xeneta chart makes the late-September route split visible without forcing it into one average. Since early July, the selected US-bound assessments rose while the Europe-bound assessments fell. That opposite movement matters more than the composite: a shipper buying to New York faced a different market from one booking to North Europe, even when both boxes originated in the Far East.

Drewry's composite eased 1% that week. Its Shanghai-Los Angeles assessment was $7,838 and Shanghai-Rotterdam $3,485. Drewry and Xeneta use different baskets and methods. Their absolute route numbers cannot be averaged as though they were one dataset, but both show why a composite conceals the lane a particular shipment will actually use.

A rate is also a dated offer or assessment for a defined service, not a universal cost per box. Surcharges, terminal charges, equipment terms and inland movement can alter the final invoice. The US East Coast premium over the West Coast may also reflect longer routes and different recovery options. Comparing the two only on ocean base freight would miss the total journey.

The price pattern prompts the next question: why has supply not responded evenly? Congestion, route length and deployment can absorb vessel-days even while new ships are ordered. The chart is a view of what shippers faced in one September snapshot, not an explanation by itself. The capacity mechanics follow on the next page.

XENETA DREWRY

Capacity is a moving target

Nominal fleet growth can coexist with a shortage of dependable weekly slots.

FIG 07 | TWO DIFFERENT OCEAN CAPACITY SIGNALS

3.76m TEU

TIED UP IN CONGESTION, WEEK 39

15.6m TEU

ORDERBOOK, FUTURE CAPACITY

DISTINCT POPULATIONS AND TIME HORIZONS; DO NOT SUBTRACT ONE FROM THE OTHER

The two capacity figures in the chart sit on different clocks. Congested ships cannot complete planned rotations now; an orderbook describes vessels arriving over future years. Subtracting one from the other would be meaningless. Their coexistence is the point: a large future fleet does not restore a missed sailing this week, while congestion can absorb ships that already exist.

The effective capacity available on a particular string is shaped by time at sea, time at anchor, berth productivity, blank sailings and the number of vessels assigned to hold a weekly frequency. A ship routed around a chokepoint may still sail, but its longer round trip requires more ships to maintain the same departures.

A shorter route can release capacity without a single new vessel being delivered. But the freed vessel-days do not immediately become bookable slots: ships need to be positioned, port windows revised and connections rebuilt. A carrier might initially use the time to stabilise a weekly string rather than add departures. The Suez transit evidence later in this feature shows the route change; the operational effect still needs to be measured in completed sailings.

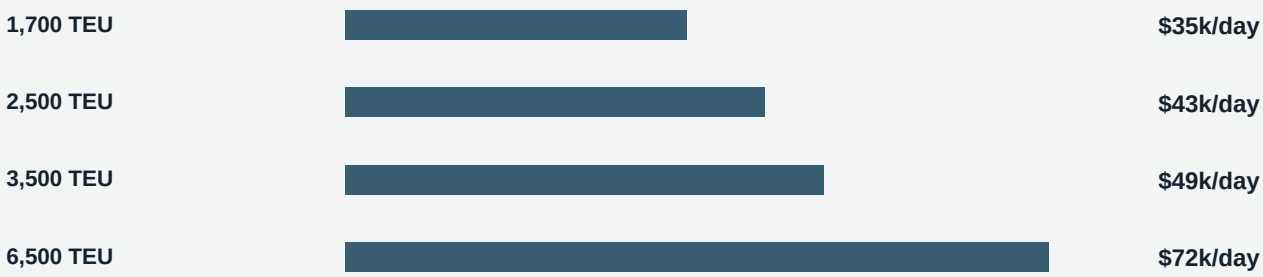
This is why a fleet headline is not a service promise. The useful measure is whether a carrier can protect the published weekly sailing and offer a credible recovery if a call is missed. The charter market offers another clue about how hard it remains to secure the ships needed for that service.

LINERLYTICA DREWRY

Charter cost holds its ground

The cost of hiring a ship can stay firm even while a spot route eases.

FIG 05 | HARPEX INDICATIVE CHARTER ASSESSMENTS, 25 SEPT



6-12 MONTH FIXTURE ASSESSMENTS; NOT A SHIPPER FREIGHT RATE

Harper Petersen's HARPEX index stood at 2,450 on 25 September, after 2,413 in late August. The figure sets selected ship sizes beside their time-charter assessments on one date. It shows the cost of hiring vessels, rather than the freight paid by a cargo owner. That distinction explains why the charter market may look firm while a customer-facing spot lane weakens.

A firm charter market can coexist with falling spot freight on a particular lane. The carrier may face higher ship-hire and bunker costs while revenue weakens on Europe-bound cargo. Ship & Bunker listed Singapore VLSFO at $854 per metric tonne on 30 September. That was one port and one fuel grade, not a global carrier fuel bill.

The relationship between those costs and an invoice depends on contracts. A bunker adjustment formula can reprice at a different interval from the ocean base rate. An expensive charter entered months ago may affect capacity decisions even if today's spot index changes. A shipper therefore sees only part of the carrier economics in a weekly rate movement.

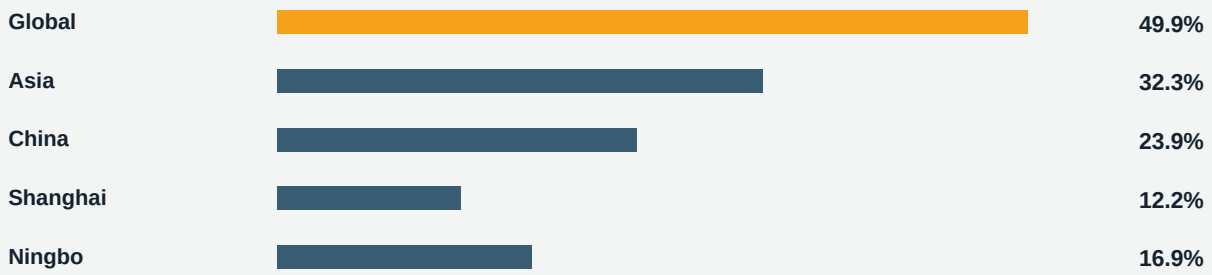
The cost stack helps explain why carriers may alter strings, cancel selected sailings or seek different surcharge terms in an uneven market. It does not prove which action any one line will take. The more decisive evidence for a cargo owner is whether the network delivers the promised service. Reliability data bring that question to the foreground.

HARPER PETERSEN SHIP & BUNKER

Reliability is not one number

Arrival performance fell in August, and Asian gateways were weaker still.

FIG 06 | SEA-INTELLIGENCE AUGUST ARRIVAL RELIABILITY



PUBLISHER-DEFINED ON-TIME ARRIVAL MEASURE; NOT DEPARTURE PUNCTUALITY

Sea-Intelligence reported a deterioration in global on-time arrivals from July to August. Late vessels averaged 6.81 days behind schedule. The figure shows the geography of that result: Asian ports were weaker than the global reading, with especially low arrival performance at the selected Chinese gateways. Its bars share a publisher, month and arrival definition, so the differences can be compared without mixing methods.

The Asian figures reveal concentrated risk. A global schedule average can look tolerable while a key origin gateway performs much worse. Yet a port-level result is still not the probability that any individual container will miss a delivery date. Service string, transshipment, terminal release and inland movement intervene.

Xeneta reported a separate August measure: 29.4% of departures on time. That number is not a competing estimate of Sea-Intelligence's 49.9% arrivals. Different milestones and samples prevent a direct subtraction. A ship may leave late and recover time, or leave on schedule and arrive late after congestion.

The practical endpoint is cargo availability. Schedule reliability is useful when paired with delay duration and the time to retrieve the box. A service with many short misses may behave differently from one with fewer but longer disruptions. The graph makes the August geography visible; the next page follows what a route change can do to that service.

SEA-INTELLIGENCE SEA-INTELLIGENCE XENETA

A route change is a service change

Suez movements can free vessel time but also force networks to be rebuilt.

A shorter route can release ships. It does not automatically restore a reliable weekly service.

Linerlytica counted 30 container ships above 4,000 TEU transiting the Suez Canal in the week before its 29 September note, and said more than 140 ships had returned to Suez-linked services since May. Drewry reported canal transits rising from 41 in week 37 to 48 in week 38. The series have different windows and vessel definitions, yet both show a network in motion.

Shortening a round trip can release ship-days and change the supply balance on Asia-Europe trades. It can also unsettle a schedule while vessels are repositioned, berth windows changed and transshipment links rebuilt. A faster route on paper is valuable only when the published connection and actual arrival remain credible.

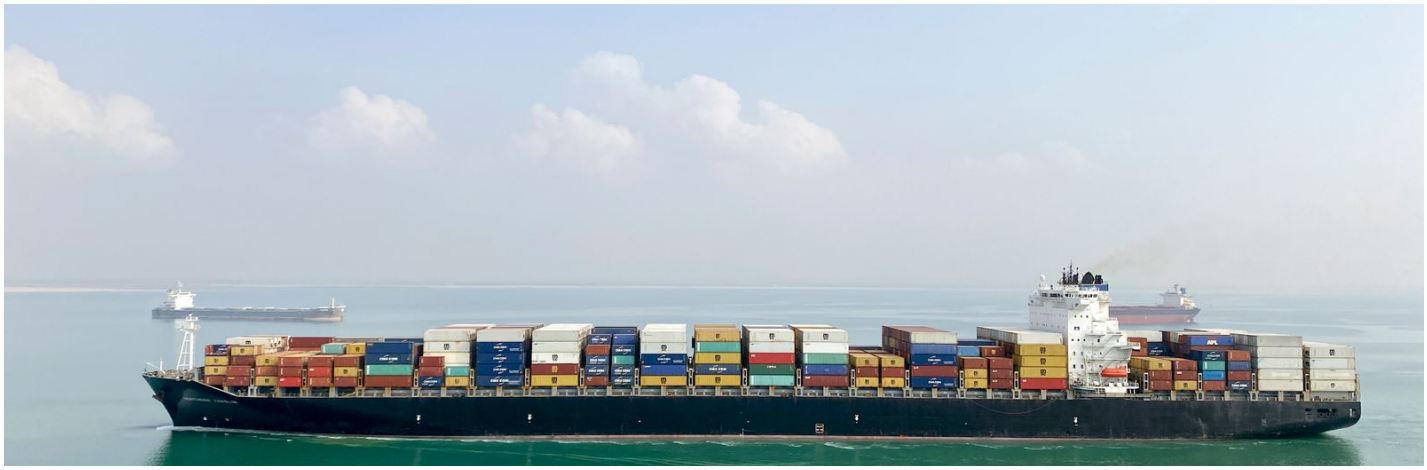
There is also a reversal risk. A renewed diversion would lengthen voyages and absorb effective capacity again. Cargo already booked may find that its vessel, port rotation or arrival week changes. Those consequences are more immediate than an abstract debate about the number of ships passing through a canal.

The evidence should be followed at service-string level: actual weekly departures, skipped calls, connection success and arrival time. A transit count is an input, not the delivered outcome. This leads to the feature's conclusion: procurement and network analysis need to price reliability alongside the ocean rate.

LINERLYTICA DREWRY

What the network delivers

The September conclusion is mixed by route, but clear about what to measure.



Ocean freight closes the month with steady physical activity, elevated US-bound spot prices, weaker Europe-bound assessments, firm charter costs and poor August arrival reliability. None of those statements cancels the others. Together they describe a network where the location and timing of usable capacity matter more than the nominal fleet total.

A comparison of two ocean services should therefore include more than their quoted base rate. The sailing frequency, port rotation, transshipment exposure, blank-sailing history and recovery option after a miss determine the value of the slot. Surcharges and inland costs complete the price. The cheapest number per FEU may be the most expensive delivered outcome if the itinerary has no resilience.

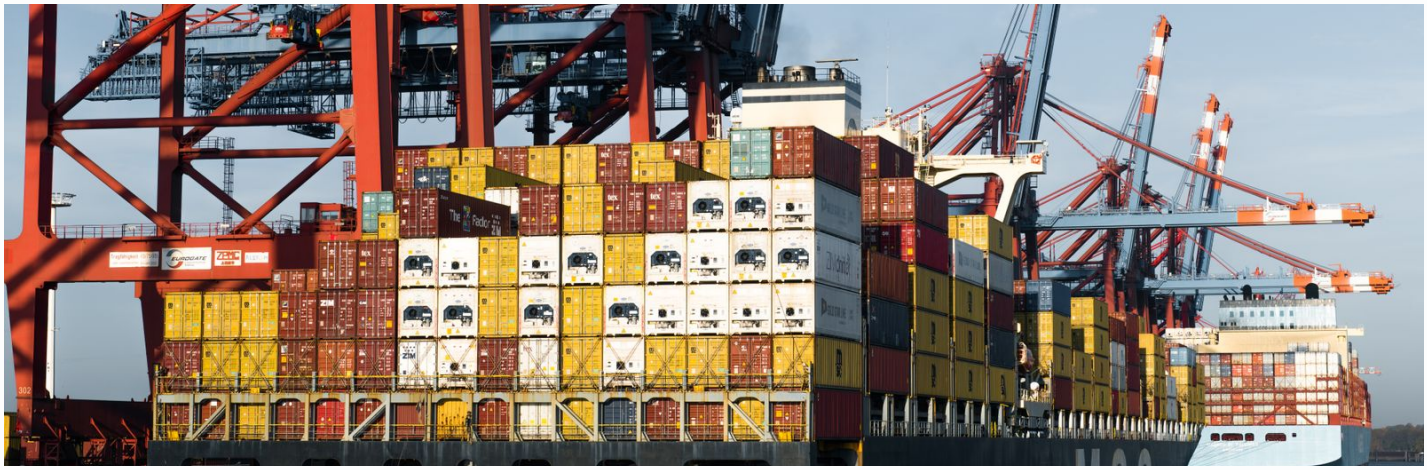
There is no universal premium for reliability. A delayed low-urgency replenishment order and a missed seasonal launch have different consequences. What can be measured is the distribution of actual arrival and availability times on the relevant route, then the cost of a late outcome to that cargo. That measurement keeps the decision grounded in service rather than reputation.

The next month may bring route changes, port recovery or further disruption. This feature does not assume which will dominate. It establishes a reading method: use one publisher and definition for each trend, follow effective capacity rather than orderbook alone, and test the promised voyage against completed cargo delivery. The port operations section that follows shows why that final handoff matters.

XENETA DREWRY LINERLYTICA SEA-INTELLIGENCE

A port can be open, yet hard to reach

Rotterdam's September access notices show the importance of the landside.



The Port of Rotterdam warned on 16 September that a partial closure of the western Suurhoff bridge on the A15 would seriously disrupt road access to Maasvlakte. Shipping under the bridge and freight rail were not obstructed. The difference is crucial: vessels and terminals can remain active while trucks and workers face a constrained approach.

The authority said the old bridge toward Maasvlakte would close overnight during repairs on 19-20 September. It did not publish a measured cargo loss in its notice. The reported event is a road restriction and a warning about likely effects, rather than a quantified fall in port productivity.

A separate Rotterdam notice on 14 September activated a tugboat capacity arrangement in the Botlek/City area because of high traffic demand. It warned of a possible waiting list and priority for tide-bound vessels at risk of missing their window. The arrangement ended the following morning. It was a short, specific constraint, not a port-wide shutdown.

Together the notices show why an operational status needs detail. Berth availability, tug service, road access and rail access are separate parts of one cargo journey. If only one is reported, the picture is incomplete. A port's ability to keep those handoffs visible is itself a measure of resilience.

PORT OF ROTTERDAM PORT OF ROTTERDAM

Less waiting at Tema

A coordinated port-call programme is now ready for measured implementation.

PORT-CALL PROCESS | WHERE COORDINATION SAVES WAITING



ADVANCE INFORMATION

PILOT & MARINE SERVICE

BERTH & TERMINAL

CARGO RELEASE

TEMA ESTIMATES TIME SAVINGS; THE PROGRAMME HAS NOT YET REPORTED REALISED GAINS

IMO's GreenVoyage2050 programme reported on 2 September that stakeholders at Ghana's Port of Tema agreed eight measures to make vessel calls more predictable. It estimated more than one hour of potential short-term idle-time savings, with another 1.5 hours possible through longer-term actions. Those are prospective gains, not measured reductions already delivered.

The work involves parallel processing where possible, earlier information exchange and better alignment of marine services. A Maritime Single Window can support advance completion of formalities. The port authority, terminal operator, maritime and border agencies, agents and shipping lines all participated, because the sequence cannot be fixed by one party alone.

A predictable berth and service plan can let a vessel adjust speed instead of arriving early to wait. That could save fuel and reduce emissions, but only if the arrival information remains dependable in practice. The plan therefore needs the same discipline as a schedule-reliability measure: planned and actual event timestamps, a baseline and a published result after implementation.

Tema's September announcement establishes cooperation and a specific improvement list. It does not yet prove the claimed time or emissions benefit. That distinction is important because a credible operational gain is more valuable than an untested estimate.

IMO GREENVOYAGE2050

Cargo volume meets future investment

Los Angeles and Rotterdam show how plans and present workload run on different clocks.

A record quay month and a future infrastructure plan are important, but they measure different moments.

Los Angeles completed a record June-August period above 2.9 million TEU. The monthly total appears on the dashboard; the operating question here is what happened after the quay move. Truck appointments, chassis, rail paths and warehouse capacity must absorb each box after terminal handling. A record at the berth does not measure the time to final delivery.

In September, the port released draft guidelines for a proposed three-year incentive programme for zero-emission drayage trucks. The proposed support was $60 per terminal visit and up to $36,000 per vehicle per year. Since the guidelines were draft, those amounts are programme proposals rather than benefits already paid.

Rotterdam reported on 24 September that a temporary 500 MW transformer could relieve power-grid congestion in Europoort. Commissioning is expected no earlier than the end of 2028, subject to permits and connections. That is future capacity, not electricity available to port users today. The port also said a longer-term grid solution lay in the years after 2032.

Both examples expose the lead time between a policy or capital announcement and an operational result. Cargo volumes can surge now; cleaner vehicles and electrified systems require financing, infrastructure and power delivery over years. Reporting those dates accurately is part of understanding how port capacity really grows.

PORT OF LOS ANGELES PORT OF LOS ANGELES PORT OF ROTTERDAM

The cost of delay

Air and ocean quotations cannot be compared by a headline ratio.



The dashboard's air and ocean averages describe different services in different units. Converting both into a comparable delivered cost requires the shipment's weight and cube, exact lane, local charges, inland move, customs process and the date on which the cargo creates value. A cheap line-haul quote can become expensive when it moves the wrong quantity too late.

The ocean reliability section also showed why a single advertised transit is a weak planning input. Late-vessel delay describes arrivals at port, while a consignee needs a usable delivery date after terminal release and inland transport. Compare the range of likely end-to-end outcomes, including what happens if a connection or appointment is missed.

A time-critical component may justify a high air premium if a missed date stops production. Routine replenishment with inventory cover may not. The most economical response can be to fly only the quantity needed for the immediate date while the balance moves by ocean. That turns a binary mode choice into a quantity and timing decision.

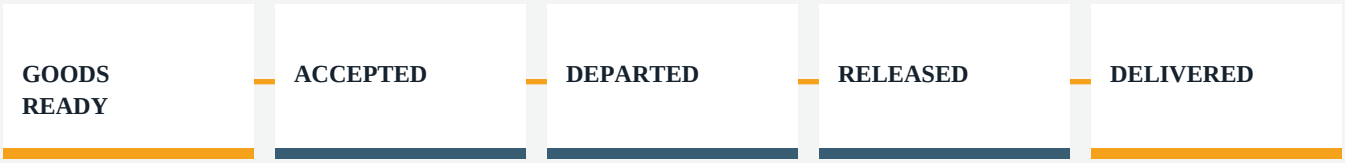
The calculation should use confirmed door-to-door offers and test normal, delayed and severely disrupted outcomes. It should also record which party can authorise a mode change before the cargo misses its window. A clear decision rule is more useful than a generic claim that one mode is faster or cheaper.

XENETA DREWRY SEA-INTELLIGENCE

The handoff test

Speed bought on one leg can be lost before or after it.

THE SHIPMENT CLOCK | START TO FINISH, NOT JUST LINE-HAUL



TRACK ELAPSED TIME AND VARIABILITY AT EVERY HANDOFF

A mode decision is easiest to make before an exception occurs. Set the required delivery date, then work backward through the milestones in the figure: final transport, release, arrival, departure and acceptance. Mark the last point at which a late handoff can still be recovered. That deadline may arrive well before the published flight or sailing date.

For each routing, ask for a normal transit and a credible late case. Include terminal availability and inland movement, not just the line-haul leg. The alternatives can then be compared by the probability and consequence of missing the required date. This is more informative than selecting the fastest advertised schedule or the lowest quoted base rate.

A useful escalation rule states who can authorise a change, how much premium can be spent and which shipment quantity needs to move. It also names the evidence that triggers action: missed acceptance, a rolled booking, a lost connection or a release delay. Without that rule, teams may recognise a failure only after the recovery option has closed.

After delivery, compare the planned and actual event times. If the premium routing saved the required date, record where it did so. If it merely delivered cargo into a queue, the next decision should change the handoff plan rather than pay for a faster line-haul leg again. This turns each movement into evidence for the next one.

Status is not outcome

The stage of a proposed rule determines what can be planned with confidence.

Separate draft rules, deployed practices and measured effects in every decarbonisation claim.

The IMO greenhouse-gas working group met from 1 to 4 September to discuss proposals related to draft MARPOL Annex VI amendments for a Net-Zero Framework. It was further work toward text for a later meeting, not final adoption of a new compliance rule. Plans based on a presumed final charge or timetable should therefore be labelled as assumptions.

For a commercial plan, the useful policy question is which milestone has actually occurred: proposal, agreement on text, formal adoption, entry into force or enforcement. Each stage changes the level of certainty. A draft may influence long-term fleet choices, but it should not be entered into a near-term budget as though a final obligation and price were already known.

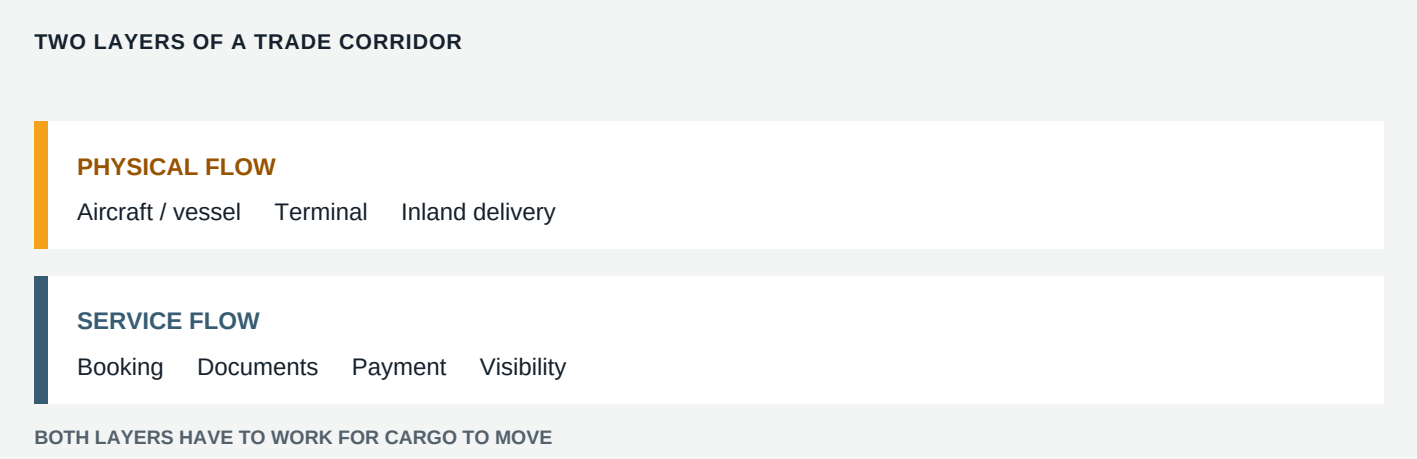
A policy track records what was proposed, agreed or adopted, and when it becomes binding. An operations track records actual waiting, fuel use, cargo performance and emissions after a change. Mixing the two can overstate both legal certainty and environmental benefit.

The more useful lesson is that measured operating improvements need not wait for the final shape of a global rule. At the same time, an operational pilot is not a substitute for a complete policy framework. Both require precise dates and transparent results.

IMO

The invisible supply chain

The data and services around cargo are increasingly part of market access.



UNCTAD reported that services accounted for 27% of global exports in 2025. Digitally deliverable services represented 56% of services exports, after average annual growth of 7.1% over the preceding decade. They may not appear in a port count, but software, finance and information services allow physical cargo to be sold and moved.

Least developed countries held only 0.6% of global services exports. Digitally deliverable activity made up 16% of their services exports, compared with 61% in developed economies. The gap suggests that transport links alone cannot create equal participation in higher-value trade.

A shipment needs a booking, trusted documents, payments, visibility and exception handling. Missing or incompatible information can hold cargo even when the vehicle and terminal are ready. The value of these services becomes clearest at a border or transfer point, where several parties must accept the same identity, status and release instruction.

The competitive strength of a trade corridor is therefore a combination of physical and service capability. Following only the box, tonne or aircraft misses part of the system that makes commerce possible. A global freight magazine should keep both the visible and invisible supply chain in view.

UNCTAD

The Gulf gateway test

Traffic can keep moving even as berth, yard and inland constraints change the route.

FIG 08 | SELECTED GULF-REGION PORT CONDITIONS, 29 SEPT

Jeddah yard density	70%
Salalah yard density	72%
Salalah berth delay	up to 36h
Sohar berth delay	about 2 days

HAPAG-LLOYD CARRIER SNAPSHOT; TERMINAL-SPECIFIC, NOT A REGIONWIDE AVERAGE

A late-September Hapag-Lloyd bulletin described a highly differentiated region. The figure sets out the carrier's reported yard pressure and berth delays at selected gateways. Jebel Ali was accepting some vessels on an ad hoc basis, while Dammam was reported without delay. These are terminal-level observations from one carrier on one date, not audited averages for every service or port.

The same bulletin noted Upper Gulf weather disruption and shifting call patterns. A cargo plan built around a nominal port call can therefore be altered by berth access, transshipment and the availability of a feeder or inland leg. The pressure is not simply whether a port is open; it is whether the full chain can absorb a late arrival without creating a second queue.

Jebel Ali's response has included alternative inland paths. DP World said in May that nearly 200,000 TEU had moved through regional overland truck and rail corridors over the preceding two months. That is a reported response to disruption, not spare capacity available to every shipment. It shows the value of a network with more than one physical exit, while also moving the bottleneck to trucks, rail slots, border processes and documentation.

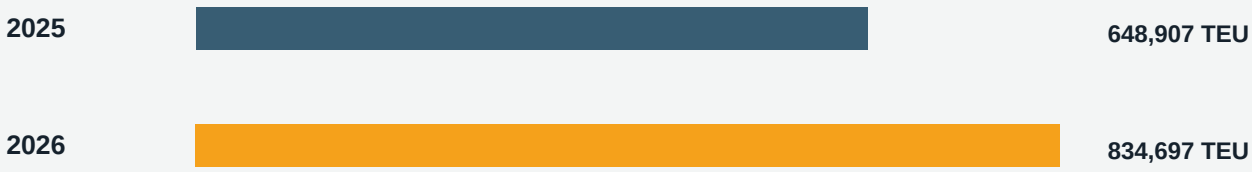
The contrast between relatively clear Dammam and pressured Jeddah or Salalah is a reminder that a regional headline can conceal local choices. Service operators need current terminal and corridor status, but the larger analytical point is general: route resilience is measured in usable connections, not on a map of alternative ports alone.

HAPAG-LLOYD DP WORLD

More boxes, more questions

India's west-coast record is clear; its causes require more than a tariff headline.

FIG 09 | JNPA SEPTEMBER CONTAINER THROUGHPUT



+28.63% YEAR ON YEAR

PORT THROUGHPUT INCLUDES IMPORTS, EXPORTS AND TRANSSHIPMENT

Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority set a September container record, as the year-on-year comparison in the figure shows. The broader April-September period reached 4.66 million TEU, up 17.61%. That is strong evidence of a throughput surge at one major gateway. The total includes imports, exports and transshipment; it cannot by itself reveal how much was US-bound or why each box moved.

US tariff changes sit in the background of sourcing and shipping decisions, but their timing does not prove they caused the port increase. India's July government account of the US Section 301 action described an additional 10% duty on specified Indian imports, with exemptions for part of the trade. That measure affects particular products and transactions, whereas port throughput mixes directions and cargo types.

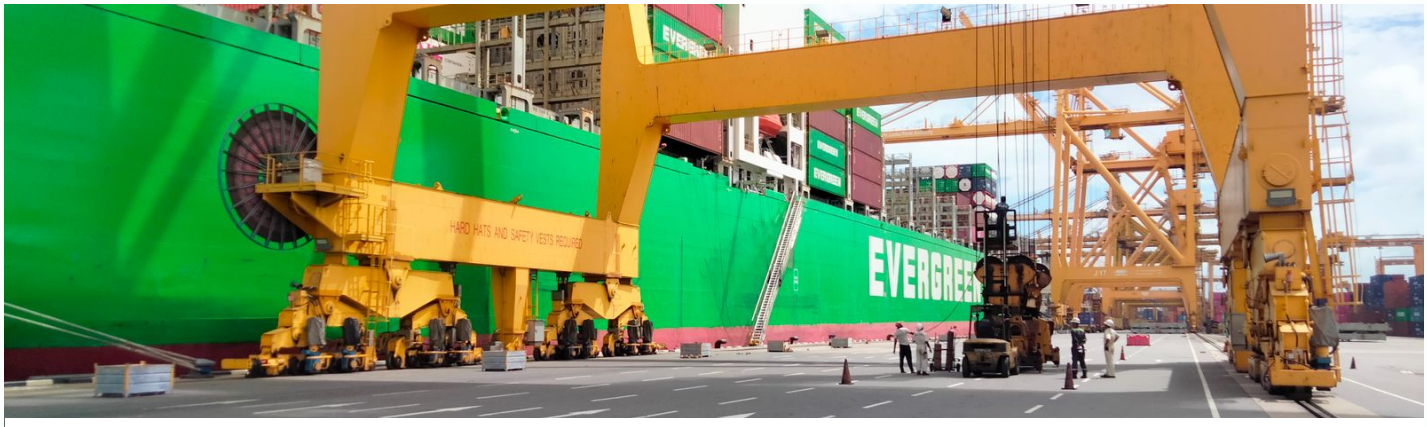
Regional rerouting adds another possible contribution. In May, India's government said disruption in the Middle East had lifted transshipment at JNPA; occupancy reached about 118,000 TEU, or 67% of storage capacity, on 7 May. The port simultaneously had to protect evacuation from its terminals. The May snapshot and September record describe different periods, but together show why volume and space must be considered separately.

A rise in containers is commercial opportunity only if gate, rail and container freight station processes keep pace. The September record merits attention because it tests that system under load. To attribute it to tariffs, readers would need directional, commodity and booking data that the port total does not supply.

JNPA INDIA PIB INDIA PIB

The handoff becomes the story

Pressure at the quay and process changes in air cargo reveal where added volume lands.



COLOMBO PORT / STOCK PHOTOGRAPH; NOT SEPTEMBER OPERATIONS

The late-September carrier snapshot reported yard density above 73% at Mundra and above 72% at Nhava Sheva, with 12-24 hours of delay at each. For Colombo, Hapag-Lloyd cited two to three days at CICT and shorter delays at other terminals, plus a large backlog of inter-terminal transfers. These are carrier-reported operational observations, not a census of every vessel. They nevertheless show the risk of reading throughput growth as frictionless capacity.

Colombo matters because transshipment connects multiple Asian origin and destination markets. When one terminal cannot promptly hand a box to another, a vessel schedule may recover while the cargo does not. The same logic applies at an Indian gateway if container freight stations, road access or rail slots lag terminal handling.

Air cargo provides a different example of the same interface problem. India's aviation ministry reported an August Delhi Airport proof of concept for domestic-to-international transshipment on a Chennai-Delhi-Frankfurt route. It said average end-to-end transit fell from 60 to 20 hours in that trial, with 280 tonnes transshipped. The figures describe a specific pilot and should not be presented as a network-wide improvement.

The reported gain came from changing how cargo is transferred and cleared, rather than claiming a faster aircraft. Scale will depend on repeatable handling, customs and connection performance at other origins. Across sea and air, South Asia's growth story is therefore also an operations story: the next unit of demand has to cross several institutional and physical boundaries before it becomes a delivered shipment.

HAPAG-LLOYD INDIA PIB

METHODOLOGY

How to read this issue

The graph and story units are deliberately kept distinct.

AIR DATA

CTK is cargo tonne-kilometres; ACTK is available cargo tonne-kilometres. IATA cargo load factor is CTK/ACTK. Xeneta dynamic load factor uses its own volume-and-weight approach. Their levels cannot be compared directly.

RELIABILITY

The Sea-Intelligence chart uses its August on-time arrival definition across geographies. Xeneta's 29.4% figure concerns on-time departures under a different sample and should not be plotted on the same series.

AIR PRICES

Xeneta September spot assessments are publisher-defined rates valid for up to one month. The corridor graph uses values from one release; it does not join Xeneta with IATA or another price provider.

OPERATIONS

September public releases are attributed. A trial is not a full deployment; a draft incentive is not an enacted payment; projected time savings and future energy capacity are not current operating results.

OCEAN PRICES

FEU is a 40-foot equivalent unit; TEU a 20-foot equivalent unit. Drewry and Xeneta rates differ in basket and methodology. HARPEX time-charter assessments price vessel hire, not cargo freight.

EDITORIAL

The reported observations were available through 6 October 2026 for this September issue. Analysis, scenarios and interpretations are LogisPicks judgments. Figures are newly drawn from cited public observations.

Sources

Click a publisher entry to open its original release or data page.

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32 JNPA, September performance, 2026

33 India PIB, US tariff response, 25 Jul

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35 India PIB, JNPA transshipment pressure, 7 May

About this issue

LogisPicks draws on publicly available information to inform discussion across logistics and supply chains.

USE AND INTERPRETATION

Figures, charts and commentary should be read with the observation periods, definitions and qualifications stated in this issue. The views and inferences are LogisPicks interpretations of the cited evidence. They are not guarantees of future market conditions or performance.

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