Scanwell Logistics

# FREIGHT MARKET UPDATE

3 – 9 October 2026

**2–3 days**
Berth delay at Colombo CICT; CWIT and SAGT up to 24 hrs

**110%+**
Yard density across all Colombo terminals

**27 Oct**
SWISS AIR starts operations in Sri Lanka

## OCEAN: RATES & CAPACITY

### Rates and surcharges

Global spot rates eased again this week. Asia–Europe stays weak as capacity returns and more services use Suez.

Rates toward the US East Coast are set to fall.

Carriers still plan higher FAK rates for the second half of October, but spot rates are still falling.

Gulf emergency freight, the per-container Hormuz transit fee and the UAE contract cost-recovery surcharge continue. Gulf-bound rates stay elevated.

### Capacity

Space is set to open toward US West and East ports.

39 blank sailings on major East–West trades for 5 Oct – 8 Nov, out of 710 planned.

Shanghai and Ningbo congestion is easing after the typhoon backlog.

## OCEAN: LANES, SERVICES & SURCHARGES

**FAR EAST EXPORTS**

**4–8 week hold-up**

Exports to the Far East transiting through Shanghai face a 4–8 week hold-up.

**US TRADES**

**Rates down, space opening**

Rates toward the US East Coast are set to fall, and space is set to open toward US West and East ports.

**EUROPE: LOW WATER**

**Surcharges on river ports**

Low Rhine water levels have cut barge capacity between the ARA ports (Antwerp, Rotterdam, Amsterdam) and inland terminals in Germany, France and Switzerland. Low-water surcharges apply on river legs, set by the Kaub, Cologne, Duisburg-Ruhrort and Emmerich gauges, and barge loading cannot be guaranteed at the lowest levels.

**NEW SERVICE**

**Colomb to St. Petersburg**

CMA starts a new service to St. Petersburg.



## COLOMBO: INBOUND CARGO & CALL OMISSIONS

**01**
Gulf cargo is diverted to Colombo as vessels cannot reach the Upper Gulf

**02**
Yards above 110% on every terminal; inter-terminal transfer backlog up to 50,000 TEU

**03**
Calls omitted or moved: carriers shift between CWIT and SAGT; one omits Colombo

**Berth delays:** CICT 2–3 days; CWIT and SAGT up to 24 hrs. Bad weather adds to delays, and window vessels face delays for the next few weeks.

**Port omissions:** a Colombo call on 10 Oct is omitted due to congestion, with cargo transshipped via Salalah. Other calls move to SAGT on 13 and 14 Oct ahead of a CWIT call on 16 Oct.

## CONGESTED PORTS & LANES

**Singapore (SIN)**
**CONGESTED**

**Port Klang (PKL)**
**CONGESTED**

**Tanjung Pelepas (TPP)**
**CONGESTED**

**Colombo**
**HIGH PRESSURE**
CICT worst; yards above 110%

**Shanghai (SHA)**
**EASING**
Typhoon backlog clearing

**Ningbo**
**EASING**
Typhoon backlog clearing

## AIR FREIGHT

Backlogs are easing at airports, so air rates are falling. Capacity to and from the Middle East and South Asia remains constrained, and fuel surcharges stay elevated.

**NEW CAPACITY**

**SWISS AIR**

Starts operations in Sri Lanka from 27 Oct, with direct Colombo–Zurich service and European and North American connections.

**SERVICE SUSPENSION**

**UL ⟶ Riyadh**

UL suspends flights to Riyadh until Sunday (11 Oct).

## CLEARANCE & CUSTOMS

### Digital signature, paperless declarations

Mandatory since 1 Oct for all importers and declarants. Manual declarations are no longer accepted. The system flags any document change made after signing. Declarants must hold a valid digital signature.

### UK DCTS

Sri Lanka is an Enhanced Preference country. Since 1 Jan 2026, apparel (HS 61 and 62) can use 47.5–100% of inputs sourced globally and keep duty-free UK access. Exporters claiming preferences must be registered with Sri Lanka Customs.

Fast Track ended 30 Jun 2026; only AEO companies keep facilitation. Colombo yard congestion remains the main port bottleneck.