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Asia–US Rate Hike Attempts Falter as Weak Demand and No Peak Season Bite

Ocean carriers are rolling out planned rate increases of \$1,000–3,000 per FEU (forty-foot equivalent unit) for Asia–US routes starting 1 September. However, these hikes have shown little success, with tanked demand and no real peak season dampening their impact.

- Lars Jensen, President of Vespucci Maritime, notes that rate hike attempts have been coming at a bi-weekly cadence but remain ineffective—pushing container rates to “unsustainably low” levels.
- An announcement by President Trump about investigating furniture imports—HS codes 9401 and 9403 accounted for ~6.9% of US imports in Q2—could provide a temporary lift if tariffs are imposed. Still, much of that furniture may have already been frontloaded prior to the tariff move.
- Peter Sand, Chief Analyst at Xeneta, confirms that carriers can drop worries about traditional peak-season charges- “there is no peak season in 2025.” This, combined with growing capacity and muted demand, suggests spot rates will likely slide even further.

Source: ICIS

Evonik Launches Southeast Asia’s Largest Alkoxides Plant on Jurong Island

Evonik has inaugurated a 100,000 tonnes/year alkoxides facility on Singapore’s Jurong Island, the region’s largest, following a mid-double-digit million-euro investment announced in 2023. The plant strengthens supply resilience, supports sustainable industry goals, and meets rising biodiesel and chemical recycling demand in Southeast Asia. Company leaders highlighted its role in enhancing supply security and aligning with Singapore’s sustainability vision.

Source: ICIS

Kao Launches U.S. Tertiary Amine Facility, Sealing Global Production Network

On August 22, 2025, Kao Corporation opened a new 20,000-ton/year tertiary amine plant in Pasadena, Texas, strengthening its North American presence and global supply network. The 45-hectare site enhances supply chain resilience, supports future derivative product development, and aligns with Kao’s Mid-term Plan 2027. Local production is also expected to boost efficiency and cut transport-related CO₂ emissions.

Source: Indian Chemical News

EPA Seeks Public Comment on Proposed Fluoxapiprolin Fungicide Registration

Today’s Cost Avoidance Builds Tomorrow’s EBITDA

Companies often prioritize visible savings,

On August 19, 2025, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) opened a public comment period for the proposed registration of fluoxapiprolin—a broad-spectrum fungicide offering a new tool in managing diseases such as downy mildew, late blight, and Phytophthora blight, across a wide range of crops including brassicas, bulb, cucurbit, fruiting, leafy, grape, and potato varieties. The proposal covers both a technical formulation and an end-use product.

Source: Indian Chemical News

such as securing bulk purchase discounts, but this narrow focus can cause them to miss hidden rising costs that offset those gains. In an environment shaped by tariffs and inflation, organizations need to look beyond short-term savings and embrace cost avoidance strategies that prevent future expenses. Cost avoidance is not just defensive—it actively supports long-term financial health. By preventing unnecessary spending, companies protect margins and improve resilience.

Source: Supply Chain Brain

Clean Data + AI = Smarter Factories: Quietly Revolutionizing Manufacturing

How AI-driven innovation is stealthily transforming asset-intensive manufacturing and supply chains. Key takeaways:

- Despite manufacturing and supply chain operations remaining largely manual, AI tools like ChatGPT are empowering teams to swiftly access actionable insights and enhance profitability.
- Data quality remains a hurdle—studies show that nearly 55% of AI/ML projects in production and maintenance fail due to poor upstream data.
- Ironically, AI can help fix these data quality issues by detecting anomalies, correcting sensor or master-data errors, and harmonizing siloed information across ERP and EAM systems.
- Concrete benefits are emerging: McKinsey–MIT research reveals that manufacturing leaders using AI with robust data strategies achieve 4× better results in half the time compared to laggards.
- Examples include Priestley’s Gourmet Delights in Australia launching a \$53 million AI-powered “smart” facility, and Caterpillar adopting AI to rethink machine-human interactions and boost maintenance and manufacturing processes.

Source: Supply Chain Brain

Transforming Chemical Sourcing with the APAC Business Portal

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How it helps customers:

- Ease of Access – Buyers can search and explore 7,500+ products (with 189+ already listed) spanning solvents, APIs, intermediates, and specialties, all in one place.
- Verified Supplier Network – The platform connects users with 500 premium suppliers and 3,000+ verified suppliers, ensuring compliance, quality, and global delivery support.
- Custom Sourcing Requests – Over 12,000 RFQs have already been raised. Buyers can post new RFQs directly, and the global sourcing team identifies suitable suppliers and negotiates favourable terms.
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