

KS.15. Wan Hai 503 Finally Berths In UAE After Deadly Explosion & 13-Week Ordeal At Sea – Mis declared Cargo the cause



The fire-damaged containership Wan Hai 503 has finally found refuge in a safe port, ending a four-month struggle at sea following a deadly explosion off India's southwest coast.

The 2005-built, 4,333-TEU vessel, flagged in Singapore and operated by Wan Hai Lines, berthed at DP World's Jebel Ali port in the UAE on September 11, after being denied entry by several countries.

Wan Hai confirmed that the Dubai Ports Authority and DP World had approved the vessel to berth as a port of refuge. A salvage team boarded the ship upon arrival in the Gulf of Oman, carrying out inspections and taking measurements of its holds and compartments.

The team reported that there was no smoke, no new container displacement, and the ship's stability and structural strength remained secure, with no immediate risks identified.

Mis-declared Cargo – A huge challenge for Carriers

The World Shipping Council (WSC) will combine the power of AI with ordinary inspection standards to reduce the numbers of fires and cargo accidents caused by mis-declared freight.

According to the Allianz Safety and Shipping Review 2025 ship fires have reached their highest levels in a decade and mis-declared dangerous cargoes are the major causes of these fires.

Shippers can mis-declare freight intentionally to avoid paying premium freight rates, or unintentionally not realising that the freight that they have packed can heat up as the ship sails across the ocean.

“We have seen too many tragic incidents where mis-declared cargo has led to catastrophic fires, including the loss of life,” said Joe Kramek, president and CEO at the WSC.

Kramek went on to say that the programme will combine, “shared screening technology, common inspection standards and real-world feedback to reduce risk.”

The AI powered screening tool has been developed by the National Cargo Bureau (NCB) giving shipping lines the ability to scan bookings with a view to picking up trade patterns to identify risks.

The system has the capability to scan millions of bookings in real time using keyword searches and AI-driven algorithms raising alerts with carriers who are then required to review the bookings, which can be verified through “targeted physical inspections”, when necessary.