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### **M.V. "INTERASIA TENACITY"**

A fire broke out on the vessel on last Thursday Morning (12<sup>th</sup> June 2025) while enroute from Port Kelang to Nhava Seva, India

The fire broke out on single deck with stowed containers, the flame was arrested by the crew members, the Indian Coast Guard responded quickly.

The vessel had 1387 TEUs & had 21 Philipino crews. At present she is continuing her journey to Nhava Seva Port, under close vigilance from Indian Coast Guard.

This is 3<sup>rd</sup> such incident in the same region within days. This is a concern for Maritime fire incident, container safety and cargo handling protocols. As maritime activities continue to rise especially around major Indian ports, such incidents are a critical reminder for the need of robust safety measures, transparent cargo declaration & enhanced coordination between ship operators & maritime authorities.

Oceans are vital to life on earth, producing around 50% of our oxygen, regulating temperatures, storing carbon, and supporting billions through fisheries and ecosystems. Despite their importance, international waters – which account for nearly two-thirds of the ocean – remain largely unregulated. Pollution, resource extraction, and climate pressures have pushed these regions toward ecological crisis, demanding collective global action. Against this backdrop, the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3), held from June 9-13, 2025 in Nice, France, emerged as a milestone in global marine governance.

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### **A global gathering with historic stakes**

Co-hosted by France and Costa Rica, UNOC3 brought together over 15,000 participants, including more than 60 heads of state, scientists, diplomats, and civil society leaders. The summit delivered over 800 voluntary commitments and culminated in the adoption of the Nice Ocean Action Plan, a two-part document comprising a political declaration and a broad range of pledges addressing ocean conservation, treaty ratification, ecosystem protection, and marine innovation.

**Notable commitments** included the European Commission's pledge of €1 billion for marine protection, French Polynesia's creation of the largest marine protected area (MPA) to date, and Germany's €100 million programme to clean underwater munitions. Spain added five new MPAs, and Indonesia, in collaboration with the World Bank, launched an innovative 'Coral Bond' to fund reef restoration. These announcements stressed both the urgency and the ambition of the global response.

Yet, the conference's centerpiece was the renewed focus on the High Seas Treaty, formally known as the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) agreement.

### **Shipping disasters: An overlooked threat to ocean health**

While international treaties aim to secure long-term protections for marine biodiversity, recent events off the Indian coast indicate how fragile ocean ecosystems remain in the face of maritime accidents. These incidents, often sudden and severe, can undo years of conservation gains.

The Kerala coast has witnessed two serious shipping accidents within just 15 days, raising alarm over navigational safety and preparedness. The first involved the Liberian-flagged MSC ELSA 3, which sank off the coast before a full assessment of the environmental risks – including possible oil leaks – could be completed. Before authorities could contain the fallout, a second accident occurred when the Singapore-registered cargo vessel M.V. Wan Hai 503 caught fire approximately 88 nautical miles off Kozhikode.

The back-to-back nature of these incidents has heightened fears of potential oil spills and longer-term threats to Kerala's sensitive marine zones. Though containment efforts are underway, environmentalists have expressed concern over gaps in spill response capacity, and the cumulative impact of such events on coastal fisheries and marine biodiversity. These episodes highlight a growing vulnerability in ocean governance: even as global frameworks like the BBNJ Treaty are being advanced, critical gaps remain in operational enforcement and maritime safety. For countries like India – bordering busy sea lanes –strengthening coastal surveillance, emergency response, and ecological risk assessments must go hand-in-hand with treaty ratification and international cooperation.