



Press Release

Wreckage of the sunken fishing vessel removed from the navigational channel

The wreckage of the fishing vessel, which was sunk in the navigational channel of Cochin Port Trust, has been removed fully on 29.09.2017 and the channel has been opened for vessels up to 14.5metre draft from 30.09.2017. Immediately after the incident the hydrographic survey team of Cochin Port Trust located the wreck and determined the safe depth in the channel. Thereafter experts from the Indian Navy carried out bottom scanning of the area and confirmed the position of the wreckage and the location was marked with a buoy.

The fishing vessel was sunk while it was being towed in to the harbour from outer sea by some fishing boats engaged by the Fisheries Department, Govt. of Kerala. It is learnt that the towing was initiated by the department on receipt of message from the vessel which had developed leakage while at sea.

Though in the morning on 19.09.2017 the Fisheries Department had intimated the Port that they would remove the wreckage from the channel only a day after the department intimated the Port that they are unable to carry out the salvaging for want of required equipments. It was on 21st afternoon the Port could initiate action for salvaging operations. M/s Lots Shipping was engaged for removal of the wreckage on 21.09.2017 who after mobilization of equipments and experts on 22.09.2017 started salvaging operations on 23.09.2017. Foul weather was an impediment to the salvaging operations in the initial days. Though the strong points in the vessel were hooked by the crane due to the poor condition of the vessel which was corroded at several places those hooked parts came off while lifting the vessel from the bottom. Ultimately, after several such attempts the hull of the vessel could be lifted and removed from the channel on 29.09.2017 evening. Thereafter a survey was carried out by the hydrographic team to confirm the removal of wreckage and suitability of the channel for navigation. Normal vessel operations has commenced at the Port with effect from 30.09.2017.

It may be noted that the absolute recklessness with which an unseaworthy vessel was brought into the navigational channel of the Port has caused immense loss to the Port. Movement of such unseaworthy vessels is prohibited as per the ISPS Code and the notifications of Director General of Shipping, Govt. of India. It is surprising to note that such corroded unseaworthy vessels were given licence renewals and allowed to run posing danger to everyone. This incident point fingers to the fact that allowing such irresponsibly handled unseaworthy condition vessels could be a cause for security hazards in future and hence proper registration and monitoring system has to be implemented by registering authorities.

Though the direct loss incurred to the Port for salvaging the sunken vessel is Rs. 29.5 lakhs, the indirect loss due to cancellation/diversion of ships during the last 11 days is huge. In the above circumstances the Port is constrained to approach the offices who have caused the incident to make good the huge loss incurred by the Port. (30.09.2017)