

Colombo ship fire appears under control, no oil spill: Indian Coast Guard

In [intimes.in/2021/05/28/colombo-ship-fire-appears-under-control-no-oil-spill-indian-coast-guard](https://www.intimes.in/2021/05/28/colombo-ship-fire-appears-under-control-no-oil-spill-indian-coast-guard/)

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New Delhi: With firefighting operations on the Container ship MV X-Press Pearl, off the coast of Colombo, entering their fourth day, the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has stated that the fire appears to have reduced in the ship's front and mid region, while the blaze continues in the ship's rear (Aft).

According to an aerial survey conducted by the ICG's Dornier aircraft on Thursday, there is no oil spill.

In the face of inclement weather and rough seas, ICG vessels Vaibhav and Vajra have been fighting the blaze alongside Sri Lankan vessels by spraying sea water and Aqueous Film Forming foam (Fire suppressant) throughout the day and night.

The fire has caused the large container ship to look mangled on most sides, tilting to the right, and the burnt containers to risk falling overboard.

Under these conditions, the ICG vessels have manoeuvred as close to the casualty ship as 40-50 metres for effective firefighting.

On Wednesday, May 26th, the ICG vessel Vajra handed over 4500 litres of AFFF compound and 450kg Dry Chemical Powder to Sri Lankan authorities to help with firefighting operations.

The burning ship was carrying 1486 containers as well as approximately 25 tonnes of hazardous nitric acid and other chemicals. Earlier, the ship's 25 crew members, including five Indians, were evacuated.

On the 20th of May, Thursday, a fire broke out on the said ship, which was quickly brought under control by Sri Lankan port authorities the next day.

However, due to rough weather on Tuesday morning (May 25th), nearly ten containers are said to have fallen overboard following the explosion and subsequent fire.

The 325 metric tonnes of fuel stored in the large container vessel tanks are thought to pose a risk of an oil spill in the area.

Aside from the two ICG vessels on their way to the fire, formations at Kochi, Chennai, and Tuticorin are on standby to provide immediate assistance with Pollution Response.

For the operation, ICG is in constant coordination and communication with Sri Lankan authorities. Aircraft from Chennai and Koch are also being brought to Tuticorin for aerial surveillance and pollution response.

Over the last two weeks, the Indian Coast Guard and Indian Navy have been monitoring, searching for, and rescuing people along India's West Coast, which was hit by cyclone 'Tauktae.'

This cyclone had an impact on the Lakshadweep islands, Kerala, South Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Goa, and Gujarat, where it made landfall.

This week, ICG assets were also deployed for search and rescue in response to Cyclone Yaas's impact on India's East Coast between Odisha and West Bengal.

A major fire broke out onboard the MT New Diamond in September 2020, which was carrying approximately 2.7 lakh metric tonnes of oil and was positioned off the eastern coast of Sri Lanka.

Massive efforts by the Indian Coast Guard, in collaboration with other agencies, ensured that the fire was brought under control with no oil spills.

The ICG has stated that, as an active member of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), it is committed to its responsibilities of protecting the region's ocean environment.

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