

Sri Lanka Ports Authority acknowledges its position regarding the news published on certain newspapers and social media websites on the sudden fire on MV X-Press Pearl off the Port of Colombo.

Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) notifies of its acknowledgement of several misinformation about the SLPA on various social media outlets regarding the fire that broke out on MV X-Press Pearl TEU vessel off the Port of Colombo and therefore, informs all media of the accurate nature of the chain of events took place at the incident.

MV X-Press Pearl was considered a vessel to call at the Colombo International Container Terminals (CICT) of the Port of Colombo scheduled to be operated at the CICT.

The crew on board the vessel through radio on 19th the May 2021, had informed the SLPA controls that the vessel would arrive the waters of the Port of Colombo on mid-night and that she would call at the port control area during early dawn. As the berth was not ready at that time, the vessel was permitted to remain anchored in the harbor waters, as is usually the process during container operations.

At that time SLPA had not been informed of any specific event or occurrence verbally or in writing by the vessel. The vessel was scheduled to be called at the Port after 23 hours.

The Harbor Master only then received an email from the ship's agent requesting permission to unload and reassemble a TEU containing leaking nitric acid.

At noon that day, the port control room was notified that there was smoke inside the ship. A few minutes later, the ship's administration had informed the port control of the SLPA that the vessel itself suppressed the situation. However, then two hours later, the vessel again informed of a smoke out of the ship and Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) taking prompt action at this point, deployed the services of its Fire Brigade at the distressed vessel within a short period of an hour.

The vessel is reported made operations at the port of Hamad in Qatar and another in India but no operations of TEUs with hazardous chemicals are reported.

The Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) regrets the catastrophe that occurred on the vessel before her arrival at the Port of Colombo as her next port of call. The Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) also responsibly states that it has deployed all possible measures to douse the fire on board the ship immediately after relevant information were duly provided to the port and from the time of request for assistance.

Therefore, the Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) strongly rejects all adverse news and reports published on the institution and the Port of Colombo with regard to this in several newspapers, social media and web outlets and hence notifies as above, the accurate chain of events that took place during the incident.

The Port of Colombo, which has achieved a renowned reputation in the maritime sector is therefore, dedicated that it never abdicates its responsibility in the event of such a catastrophe and would continue to perform its duties all the time to the best of its potentials.