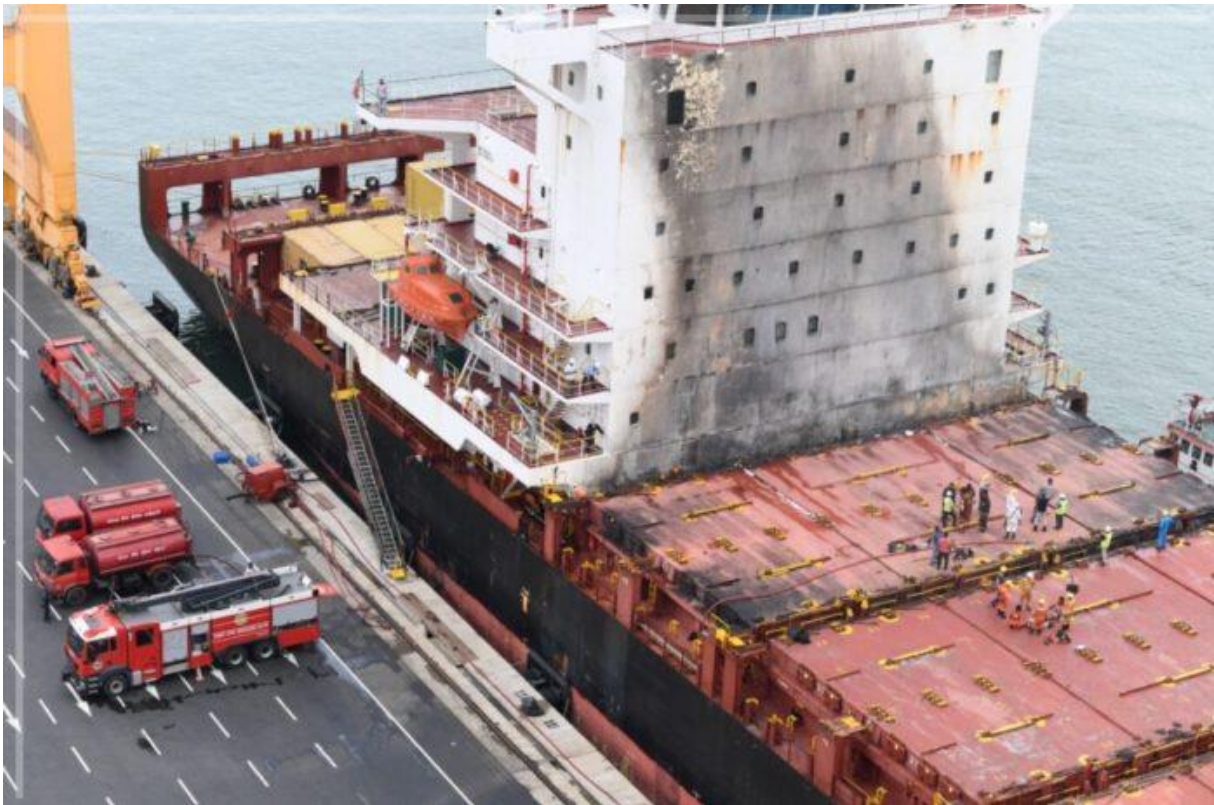


MSC vessel suffers blast in Colombo port

August 13, 2024



MSC Capetown III

One of MSC container ships caught fire after an explosion in Sri Lanka's Colombo port on 11 August.

The incident of the 2006-built, 2,824 TEU MSC Capetown III occurred in Colombo's Jaya Container Terminal around 1 am local time.

MSC Capetown III, which serves MSC's East Africa Service or South Asia – East Africa Service (Dar Es Salam Service), was discharging 995 boxes and loading 880 boxes at the time of the incident. The ship had just arrived from Singapore and many of the containers were to be transhipped to Tanzania and other African countries.

The incident occurred in the 41/43 hatch area, where a fire started from among 100 under-deck containers and 60 on-deck boxes. The fire eventually escalated into an explosion.

Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) port operations director, HJKU Kumara, said, "The vessel berthed at our terminal showed no prior signs of fire. However, during operations, our team identified the precise location from which the smoke was originating, leading to an explosion. Our firefighters, led

by the harbour master and in collaboration with other port services, acted swiftly to extinguish the fire and safely remove the affected cargo.

“Our timely and decisive actions prevented what could have been a catastrophic event. Investigations into the cause of the fire and the status of the cargo are ongoing.”

All crew on the ship were evacuated promptly.

S&P Global’s vessel-tracking data shows MSC Capetown III is now anchored in Colombo and is listed to be carrying Category B hazardous cargo, which are dangerous goods in solid bulk form.

SLPA chairman Keith D. Bernard told local media that the cargo hatches have been removed from MSC Capetown III and the cause of the fire is being investigated. Bernard noted that one container carrying dangerous cargo was listed on the cargo manifest, but this container was placed above deck, while the fire began under-deck. He added that MSC would be held accountable and SLPA intends to seek compensation.

MSC did not respond to *Container News*’ requests for comment.

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