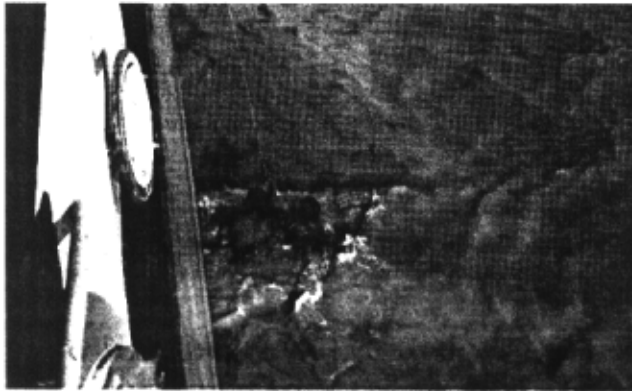


## HEROIC ACT ON SEA:

## MV OEL RESCUES A LOCAL FISHING VESSEL, ALL THREE CREW MEMBERS SAVED

The vessel MV OEL Singapore, a Cellular Container Vessel of GRT 9990, NRT 4285 and UMS Class, was on a voyage from Chittagong, Bangladesh to Singapore on Sunday, 15th of January 2012. Owned by M/S Liberty Navigation Pte Ltd., Singapore and flying the Singaporean flag, the vessel is under the management of Orient Express Ship Management, Mumbai.

On 15th January, the vessel had sailed from berth at 13:00 LT (Local Time) and dropped off pilot at 14:06 LT and commenced her sea passage at 14:42 LT. Around 16:00 LT in position 21 50.2N 091 35.8E, Watch Officer on Bridge (2nd Officer Mr. Aung Pyi Soe, a Burmese National) sighted a fishing boat (FJ Nijdum 3) about one-point-five nm (nautical miles) nearly abeam to vessel's



portside with some people aboard it, waving makeshift flags and shouting frantically. OOW initially was under the impression that MV OEL was in the path of the fishing nets of FJ Nijdum 3, making the boat's crew wave flags and shout. However, thorough checks by OOW and the AB (Mr. S. Dutta, an Indian National) could not find any nets close to the container vessel. OOW carefully observed the fishing boat through binoculars and noticed an unusually low freeboard. Visibility was around two nm at this time. Suspecting the Nijdum 3 to be in some kind of problem, OOW immediately called the Ship Master and alerted him of the situation. OOW also informed ER that vessel may be slowing down for emergency. Ship Master (Capt. Anil Tickoo, an Indian National) came to the Bridge immediately and took control of vessel from the OOW.

At 16:03, a general emergency alarm was sounded followed by announcement on the Public Address system describing the nature of the emergency. Simultaneously, MV OEL's speed was reduced and ER informed to keep ECR manned by 2nd Engg. (Mr. D.C. Das, an Indian National). An order to hand over helm to Port was given to bring back the vessel on a reciprocal course. Extra lookouts were placed for sighting the fishing boat suspected to be in distress. A rescue party under Ch. Officer (Mr. Hein Htut Kyaw, a Burmese National) was initially grouped for launching a rescue boat. However, due to prevailing weather conditions (Northerly Winds Force 4 on Beaufort Scale and a strong flood tide nearly 3.7 knots setting North with visibility under two nm and atmospheric temperature around 18 degree C) it was decided not to lower the rescue boat and manoeuvre MV OEL itself to as close proximity of the foundering fishing boat as could be safe and practicable for rescuing the people in distress.

Meanwhile all necessary communications were carried out with the Chittagong port authorities with a request to inform the Bangladeshi Navy and Coast Guards as soon as it could be possible. Also the Managers (S & Q), the owners and charterers were apprised about the situation through the communication channels.



A rescue party under Ch. Officer was mustered on main deck port side with heaving lines, scrambling nets, lifebuoys with lifelines, first aid kit, stretcher etc. The vessel was manoeuvred towards the fishing boat in distress. Around 16:15 LT, MV OEL came within one nautical mile from the fishing boat which was around three points on port bow. On approaching closer it was observed that the fishing boat was almost fully submerged in water with only the bow portion being visible. Seeing MV OEL approaching the fishermen jumped into the water abandoning the sinking fishing vessel.

The container ship was manoeuvred to around 10-15 metres close to the fishermen in water, keeping them on the port side. The rescue party on deck side threw lifebuoys with lifelines towards the distressed fishermen and assisted in hauling them close to the pilot ladder helping them climb aboard one after another. Three people were rescued by 16:28 LT, which according to them was the full complement on board the ill fated fishing boat.

Once the rescued people were safely on board, they were given necessary first aid, fresh clothing and food and were made comfortable. Later they gave statements detailing the cause of the mishap.



After the rescue, MV OEL liaised with the Chittagong port control, the Bangladesh Navy and the Bangladeshi Coast Guard for disembarking the rescued fishermen.

The CG vessel doublebanked on starboard side and at 18:12 LT, the rescued persons disembarked and formalities for handing over were completed at 18:15 LT. At 18:24 MV OEL was able to turn back and resume her intended voyage after getting necessary permission from the concerned authorities.

The Chittagong port authorities along with the Bangladeshi Coast Guard and the Bangladeshi Navy were extremely grateful to the crew of MV OEL for their immediate and prompt response to an impending casualty.