

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA AT ERNAKULAM
PRESENT**

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE EASWARAN S.

Tuesday, the 12th day of August 2025 / 21st Sravana, 1947

IA.NO.1/2025 IN ADML.S. NO. 17 OF 2025

APPLICANT/PLAINTIFF:

T B SATHEESAN, AGED 60 YEARS, S/O BALAKRISHNAN, THAYATTUPARAMBIL HOUSE, LAKSHAMVEEDU COLONY, AYYAMPILLY P.O, KUZHUPPILLY, ERNAKULAM KERALA- 682501, India.

RESPONDENTS/DEFENDANTS:

1.OWNERS AND PARTIES INTERESTED IN THE VESSEL MV MSC PALERMO (IMO: 9964223) FLYING FLAG OF LIBERIA, TOGETHER WITH HER HULL, TACKLE, ENGINES, GEARS, PLANT, MACHINERY, ARTICLES, THINGS, APPAREL, EQUIPMENT, STORES AND OTHER PARAPHERNALIA ON BOARD, PRESENTLY LYING AT PORT OF ADANI VIZHINJAM PORT PVT LTD. IN INDIAN TERRITORIAL WATERS

2. ADANI VIZHINJAM PORT PVT LTD., PORT OPERATION BUILDING, MULLOOR, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,KERALA-695521 REPRESENTED BY ITS MANAGING DIRECTOR (EMAIL ID- project.vizhinjam@adani.com,prakash.pillai@adani.com, sherly.francis@adani.com)

Application praying that in the circumstances stated in the affidavit filed therewith the High Court be pleased to grant an ex-parte order of arrest of the 1st respondent vessel/Defendant Vessel along with her hull, tackle,engine,machinery spares, gear, apparel, paraphernalia,furniture etc., presently anchored/berthed in the Adani Vizhinjam Port Pvt Ltd, Vizhinjam within the jurisdiction of this Court until an amount of INR 34,79,536/- (INR Thirty Four Lakhs Seventy Nine Thousand Five Hundred and Thirty Six Only) due to the plaintiff is deposited before this Court or until further orders of this Hon'ble Court, in the interest of justice.

This Application coming on for orders upon perusing the application and the affidavit filed in support thereof, and upon hearing the arguments of SRI.V.J.MATHEW (SR.)M/S. MERLINE MATHEW, VIPIN P.VARGHESE, ADARSH MATHEW, ANIRUDH G. KAMATH, AGUSTHO NORBERT, MEGHA MADHAVAN, Advocates for the petitioners, SRI. PRANOY K. KOTTARAM(BY ORDER), Advocates for R1, SRI. ROSHAN D. ALEXANDER (BY ORDER),Advocates for R2 the court passed the following:

EASWARAN S., J.

Adml. Suit No.17 of 2025

Dated this the 12th day of August, 2025

ORDER

I.A. No.1 of 2025

Heard Sri. V.J. Mathew, the learned Senior counsel appearing for the petitioner/plaintiff, assisted by Adv. Merline Mathew, Sri. Pranoy K. Kottaram, the learned counsel appearing for the 1st respondent/owner and Sri. Roshen D. Alexander, the learned counsel appearing for the 2nd respondent/port.

2. The Admiralty Suit is one filed under Section 4(1)(d) of the Admiralty (Jurisdiction and Settlement of Maritime Claims) Act, 2017 seeking for recovery of an amount of Rs.34,79,536/- (Rupees Thirty Four Lakhs Seventy Nine Thousand Five Hundred and Thirty Six only) for the loss caused to the plaintiff's fishing vessel directly in connection with the operation of MSC Elsa 3 owned and operated by the 1st respondent. Going by the averments contained in the application, it is seen that MV.MSC Elsa 3 capsized and sank approximately 13.4 nautical miles southwest of the coast of Kochi due to operational and technical faults. Due to the aforesaid incident, 643 containers were onboard the vessel and thrown into the sea. It is further alleged that on 30.6.2025, the plaintiff's

fishing boat, along with its crew ventured into sea for fishing activity near Cochin Estuary and when the boat reached approximately at 9.50 degree (north) of Cochin Estuary, due to the floating containers and its sharp debris which were sunken underneath the sea, substantial damage was caused to the vessel of the plaintiff.

3. The claim is supported by documents, including the report of the surveyor. The sustainability of the claim will have to be looked into by this Court in the suit.

4. The plaintiff now seeks the arrest of the 1st respondent's vessel MV MSC PALERMO flying the Liberian flag and requires the 1st respondent to furnish security for the plaint claim before the vessel leaves the Vizhinjam port.

5. The learned Senior counsel for the plaintiff brought to the notice of this Court the order passed by this Court in a similar case, Admiralty Suit No.10 of 2025 dated 18.6.2025. Rule 19 of the Kerala High Court Admiralty (Jurisdiction and Settlement of Maritime Claims) Rules, 2019 provides for arrest irrespective of the lodging of caveat by the respondent. Although there is no caveat, in view of the voluntary appearance of the owner of the vessel before this Court, this Court is of the view that no prejudice would be caused to the 1st respondent if a conditional order of

arrest is ordered till the furnishing of the security by the 1st respondent. It is not denied before this Court that the vessel is at present stationed within the jurisdiction of this Court and is presently docked at the 2nd respondent Port.

6. In view of the above, this Court is of the view that the appellant has made out a prima facie case and hence the following order is passed.

a. The vessel of the 1st respondent by name MV MSC PALERMO Flying Flag of Liberia, along with her hull, tackle, engine, machinery spares, gear, apparel, paraphernalia, furniture, etc., presently anchored at the 2nd respondent port is ordered to be arrested until an amount of Rs.34,79,536/- (Rupees Thirty Four Lakhs Seventy Nine Thousand Five Hundred and Thirty Six only) is deposited by the 1st respondent in this Court or until security for the said amount is furnished by the 1st respondent to the satisfaction of this Court.

b. It is ordered that the 2nd respondent shall execute the Warrant and effect the arrest, seizure and detention of the said vessel, MV MSC PALERMO, along with her hull, tackle, engines, machinery, boards, bunkers, equipment, peripherals, and other appurtenances as ordered above.

c. It is made clear that the Warrant of Arrest would be withdrawn and the conditional order of arrest would automatically be vacated once the amount is deposited or security is furnished by the 1st respondent before this Court, without any further order from this Court.

d. It is further made clear that the deposit/security made by the 1st respondent shall be without prejudice to its contentions in the suit.

e. It is made clear that the aforesaid deposit shall be made without prejudice to any of the claims of the 1st respondent.

f. This order, however, will not stand in the way of the owner of the vessel from loading and unloading the cargo of the vessel.

Sd/-
EASWARAN S.
JUDGE

NS