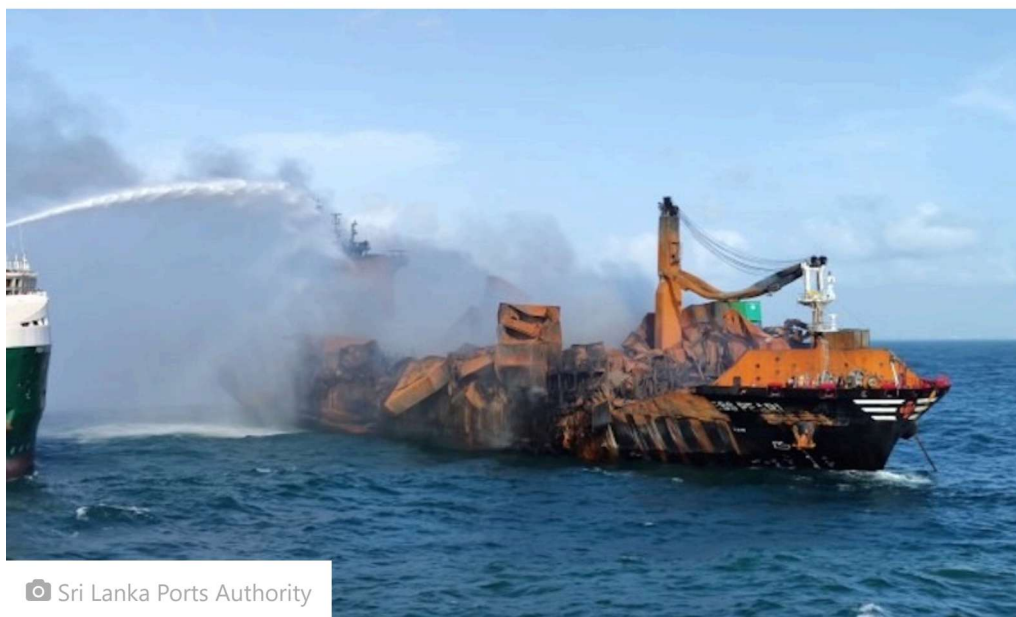


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# X-Press Feeders hits out at long-term detention of master in Sri Lanka



Sam Chambers • November 20, 2024 🔥 1,869 📖 1 minute read



📷 Sri Lanka Ports Authority

X-Press Feeders has hit out at the “bureaucratic and legal hurdles” that have caused severe delays in the case of the *X-Press Pearl*, a boxship that caught fire in 2021 causing one of Sri Lanka’s worst-ever environmental disasters. The master of the ship has not been able to leave the Asian island for the past 1,280 days.

*Splash* reported late last month the new Sri Lankan government will reopen investigations into the *X-Press Pearl* disaster and seek multi-billion dollar payouts from insurers.

X-Press Feeders pointed out in a statement sent to *Splash* today that the company has already paid out nearly \$160m, and the company is keen to get the case concluded and see one of its staff released.

“If the new Sri Lankan government is going to review these proceedings, then we appeal to them to also consider the ongoing legal action against the former captain of the *X-Press Pearl*, Vitaly Tyutkalo,” X-Press Feeders stated, adding: “Vitaly remains trapped in Sri Lanka

under a court travel ban, unable to return home after more than three and a half years because of ongoing lengthy delays in the tabling of evidence in the government's case against him. He has missed a daughter's wedding and his other daughter's graduation and, like many others, continues to suffer because of unreasonable delays."

The then three-month-old, 2,700 teu *X-Press Pearl* containership suffered a fire in May 2021, spilling tonnes of hazardous substances such as nitric acid and microplastic granules into the Indian Ocean with much debris washing up along the island's western coastline.

Even though it has been three and a half years since the disaster, the cleanup is still going on. The *X-Press Pearl* was carrying nearly 1,680 metric tonnes of plastic nurdles and around 200 women are still separating and collecting the nurdles washed ashore by hand. Each woman earns around \$10 a day separating the nurdles.

Plastic nurdles are microplastic beads around 5 mm in size which are melted down to produce plastic items. In the wake of this disaster, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has agreed on draft recommendations for transporting plastic pellets on ships.

[#Sri Lanka](#)[#X-Press Feeders](#) Sri Lanka Ports Authority