

## Drifting container with thin plastic carry bags cast ashore at Kampuram beach near Calicut

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One transshipment container (12x5 m) marked TCKU 336399[4] was seen washed ashore at Kampuram beach (11° 16' 773" N & 75° 45' 673" E) near Calicut at 06.00hrs on 1-8-2013 (Fig 1). The container was packed with 12-15 tonnes of thin (below 15 micron) polythene carry bags of 20 litre capacity printed as RUBIN (Fig. 2 & 3). An array of plastic carry bags folded as a long belt was rolled together and packed inside the container. Around two tonnes of these carry bags were found scattered along the entire beach and many were seen floating in the intertidal waters imparting yellow colour to the seawater. On the same day similar containers were also reported to be landed at Thrikkannad beach near Kasaragod (Fig. 4), and at Edakazhiur beach near Thrissur. Sources from the print and visual media reported that these containers were part of the consignment on board the MV *MOL Comfort*. MV *MOL Comfort* sank off 840 nautical miles west of Mumbai at 14° 26' N & 66° 26' E on 27 June 2013 after developing a catastrophic crack to her hull ten days before. This 316 m long container vessel was carrying a cargo of more than 1,700 containers from Singapore to Jeddah. Due to the crack in the hull the ship broke into two before sinking in the Arabian Sea. The outer surface of the container landed at Kampuram beach had settlement of some barnacles confirming that the container was drifting in water for more than 30 days. This information is significant to understand the direction and velocity of the current from the sinking site. It is feared that the ill-fated vessel had 1500 metric tonnes of oil (fuel) besides the cargo containers.



Fig. 1. Container washed ashore at Kampuram beach;  
Fig. 2. Scattered carry bags from the container being collected.



Fig. 3. Plastic covers washed ashore at Kampuram beach (Calicut)



Fig. 4. Carry bags landed at Thrikkannad beach (Kasaragod)