

# Shipwreck: CMFRI to study impact on marine ecosystem

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Kochi:** Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) has launched a study to assess the changes in the marine environment following the shipwreck of the vessel MSC ELSA 3 off the coast of Kochi on May 24.

CMFRI, which is based on Kochi, is the country's premier institute for research in marine fisheries. The study is currently being conducted by four-member teams in the coastal areas of Ernakulam, Alappuzha, Kollam, and Thiruvananthapuram districts.

CMFRI officials said that their teams are collecting water, phytoplankton, and sediment samples from 10 stations in these districts at regular intervals for the investigation. They are examining water quality parameters, including dissolved oxygen content, pH, and nutrients.

File Photo



The study will be conducted in Ernakulam, Alappuzha, Kollam and T'puram districts

The presence of oil and grease in the water and soil is also being studied to detect any potential oil spill. Benthic organisms in the coastal soil are also being collected and tested.

Although an on-board survey was initiated, sampling from in and around the accident site was not possible due to adverse weather conditions. This will be undertaken once the conditions improve. Ongoing adverse weather has also prevented the testing of fish samples, as fishing activities are currently not possible. Benthic orga-

nisms in the sea will also be collected using grabs for analysis.

CMFRI director Grinson George said that the study aims to understand various types of marine pollution associated with the shipwreck. They will formulate guidelines for future management measures based on the output of the study, which will be provided to relevant agencies, he added. He mentioned that the monsoon period is a critical breeding time for pelagic fishes, and it could have lasting consequences depending on the amount of leakage that occurred from the cargo.

CMFRI officials said that marine species are sensitive to oil smothering as the oil can block the breathing of fishes when it gets attached to the gills. "The bigger species will move away while several others can go deeper. But the surface-level species will be impacted."