

Six presumed dead in Baltimore bridge strike



The crew of the container vessel Dali prevented further casualties by issuing a mayday signal as the ship lost power and control on the approach to the Francis Scott Key Bridge.

Gary Howard | Mar 27, 2024

Video of the incident from a fixed camera covering the bridge shows all lights on the vessel going dark for as long as 60 seconds as it neared the bridge support. The lights came back on and smoke can be seen from the engine as it fired up in the moments before the collision.

The crew issued a mayday signal and traffic was prevented from entering the bridge in the crucial minutes before the impact. President Biden said this action saved lives and the Governor of Maryland hailed the crew as heroes.

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The search continues for six workers who were part of a crew repairing potholes on the bridge's road surface; the missing people are now presumed dead due to the depth of water, cold water temperature, and the length of time since the incident. "At this point we do not believe that we are going to find any of these individuals still alive," said USCG Rear Admiral Shannon Gilreath.

The search and rescue mission will continue as a search and recovery mission, with divers returning to the water as conditions allow.

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Two members of the road repair crew were rescued in the immediate aftermath of the bridge collapse, one walked away and the other was taken to hospital in a critical condition.

The 22 Indian crew of Dali are reported as safe, as are the two pilots who were onboard at the time of the collision. The ship remains at the scene with part of the bridge structure and roadway laying across the bow. Damage can clearly be seen to the foremost stack of containers and there is a hole at deck level at the bow, but the ship is afloat.

The 299 m-long Dali is on time charter to Maersk but the shipping giant said none of its personnel were onboard. The ship is flagged in Singapore, operated by Synergy Marine Group, and owned by Grace Ocean Investment.

President Biden said he had instructed his team to "move heaven and earth to reopen the port and rebuild the bridge as soon as humanly possible."

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