



Directorate General of Shipping

SITREP – 29, 1800 hrs on 23/06/2025

Sinking of MSC ELSA 3 (IMO no. 9123221, Flag Liberia) South West of Kochi

The contents of this SITREP are based on both written and verbal inputs received from the stakeholders

1. Incident Overview:

Refer to SITREP – 6

2. Response Actions Initiated:

Refer to SITREP – 6

3. Present Status:

Tug Nand Saarthi remains deployed at the wreck site, carrying out patrols and monitoring operations. The latest reports confirm the presence of a light rainbow sheen around the wreck, covering an approximate area of 1 kilometre by 50 metres. The sheen is observed to dissipate naturally beyond this range, and no significant changes have been reported in the past 48 hours. SEAMAC III departed Kochi port this morning and is currently en route to Mumbai for off-hiring, with arrival expected by 24 June 2025.

The replacement tug, Canara Megh, departed Mumbai this morning following weather-induced delays. The vessel is expected to reach Kochi by 28 June 2025, where MERC personnel will board and the vessel will take over caretaking duties from Nand Saarthi, subject to operational readiness and favourable conditions.

Onshore, agreements have been finalised with relevant authorities for the storage of recovered nurdles at Kollam Port and Vizhinjam Port. Shifting of approximately 190 tonnes of nurdles from Trivandrum beaches to port storage facilities will commence from 24 June 2025 under the supervision of Customs and the Pollution Control Board. Cleanup efforts continue along affected shorelines with increased volunteer mobilisation. Trivandrum District Administration and disaster management agencies

have facilitated the deployment of 500 volunteers across key locations, including Trivandrum, Kanyakumari, and Rameshwaram.

Indian Coast Guard continues daily aerial surveillance over both the MSC ELSA 3 wreck site and WAN HAI 503 area using Dornier aircraft. Patrols remain in place, and today's sortie was launched at 1000 Hrs, with updates awaited.

4. Situation Assessment:

The consistent light rainbow sheen observed near the wreck site is attributed to residual contaminants from enclosed compartments such as the engine room, machinery spaces, and structural components with trapped oil or lubricants. These residual discharges are minor and dissipate naturally due to sea conditions, with no evidence suggesting active fuel leaks from sealed tanks. Available underwater inspections during the earlier capping operations confirmed the tank openings are secure and no major hull deformation has been detected.

Given the ongoing light sheen, continuous observation is being maintained by Nand Saarthi at the site, complemented by aerial surveillance from the Indian Coast Guard. Experts have assessed that this type of light contamination is expected to persist intermittently until complete natural flushing occurs, which may take several weeks depending on sea conditions.

The offshore response is in a transition phase, with SEAMAC III demobilised and the replacement vessel, Canara Megh, expected to take over patrol and monitoring responsibilities by the end of June. Preparations for oil removal operations are underway, with Brand Marine Consultants and SMIT Salvage working on finalising a comprehensive removal and caretaking plan. However, no formal revised plan for oil extraction or wreck removal has been submitted by MSC as yet. DG Shipping has reiterated the requirement for immediate submission of a firm operational plan.

Onshore, the nurdle recovery and storage operation has been stabilised, with temporary storage solutions at port facilities secured and logistics commencing imminently. Volunteer participation has improved, though continued replenishment of nudles on beaches requires sustained cleanup and monitoring efforts. Disposal and recycling solutions for the recovered nudles are under discussion between Customs, the Pollution Control Board, and other relevant authorities.

Ongoing coordination between DG Shipping, State Authorities, MSC, Salvors, Indian Coast Guard, and other stakeholders continues to ensure environmental risks are mitigated and offshore operations resume promptly.

5. Environmental Risks:

Refer to SITREP – 6, 1800 hrs on 28/05/2024

6. Coordination Measures

Refer to SITREP – 6 for the overall coordination measures being undertaken

