



Directorate General of Shipping

SITREP – 30, 1800 hrs on 24/06/2025

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:

The transportation of nurdles from Trivandrum to Kollam Port commenced today with the arrival of the first truck at Kollam Port at 1800 hrs. The consignment was weighed on arrival, recording a gross weight of 18,550 kg. Unloading of the sacks has begun at Zone 5 of the MERC warehouse within Kollam Port premises, following which the truck will return to Trivandrum for the next batch of nurdles. This activity marks the start of the planned systematic transfer of recovered nurdles, supported by close coordination with District Authorities, Port Administration, Customs, Pollution Control Board, and Disaster Management agencies.

Separately, a floating container suspected to be from MSC ELSA 3 was spotted near Alappuzha. Immediate salvage efforts were initiated with two teams mobilised: one offshore team onboard the hired fishing vessel Ann Mary, and a second land-based response team deployed via Thottappally. The container was confirmed to originate from MSC ELSA 3 and contained polymers of ethylene (nurdles), some of which were found floating near the wreck and collected onboard Nand Saarthi. Nand Saarthi remains on site conducting monitoring operations, while efforts to connect and recover the drifting container are ongoing, complicated by weather conditions and visibility constraints.

Meanwhile, the daily beach cleanup continues with intensified efforts across all locations. At Trivandrum, a record 560 volunteers were deployed. MERC is closely coordinating with all authorities to increase volunteer strength, particularly in heavily impacted areas. A trial transport activity of nurdles from Kovalam to Kollam Port has been successfully initiated using fully enclosed, pre-weighed and tarpaulin-lined trucks, ensuring contamination-free movement of materials.

4. Situation Assessment:

The recovery and safe storage of nurdles from the coastal belt is progressing in a phased, controlled manner, with significant support from state and district authorities. However, the sighting of the floating container near Alappuzha, later confirmed as part of MSC ELSA 3's lost cargo, highlights persisting offshore risks. The contents of the container have already begun dispersing, posing renewed environmental challenges both at sea and along the coastline. Immediate containment and recovery of this drifting container is crucial to prevent further spread of nurdles into sensitive marine and coastal ecosystems.

At the wreck site, Nand Saarthi remains deployed for continuous monitoring and response, reporting a light, non-recoverable rainbow sheen around the area, likely from residual oils trapped in engine spaces or machinery components. No significant oil leak has been detected from the sealed fuel tanks, indicating that prior containment measures remain intact. That said, natural dissipation of minor sheens will continue over time and is being monitored by both the salvors and the Indian Coast Guard through surface and aerial surveillance.

MERC has also initiated coordinated sea and land-based operations to secure the floating container, working with local fisheries authorities to overcome challenges posed by fishing restrictions and vessel availability. Additionally, ITOPF has commissioned drift trajectory modelling to predict nurdle dispersion, aiding rapid deployment of cleanup teams to potential landfall sites.

The replacement tug Canara Megh is expected to arrive on site by the 28th, awaiting favourable weather. The transition of oil removal operations to a new contractor is under discussion, with MSC expected to confirm a revised salvage plan and timeline

shortly. Overall, the situation remains dynamic, with offshore response, environmental containment, and onshore cleanup proceeding under close inter-agency coordination.

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



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