

## **SITREP – 11, 1800 hrs on 02/06/2025**

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

#### **1. Incident Overview:**

Refer to SITREP – 8

#### **2. Response Actions Initiated:**

Refer to SITREP – 6

#### **3. Present Status:**

##### **SEAMAC Deployment Preparations**

Preparations for SEAMAC III are progressing with ETA of the Diving support vessel indicated as 05<sup>th</sup> June 2025. The details of the diving crew including passport details have been received with a request made by T & T salvage to DG shipping to issue letters for expediting the visa issuance. The team comprises members from multiple countries and coordination is ongoing with DGS to expedite issuance of letters to respective embassies to fast track. The letters will be issued on 03<sup>rd</sup> June 2025. As per T & T, the arrival of the vessel is scheduled around 5<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> June and diving team from 06<sup>th</sup> onwards.

##### **ROV and Dive Equipment Status**

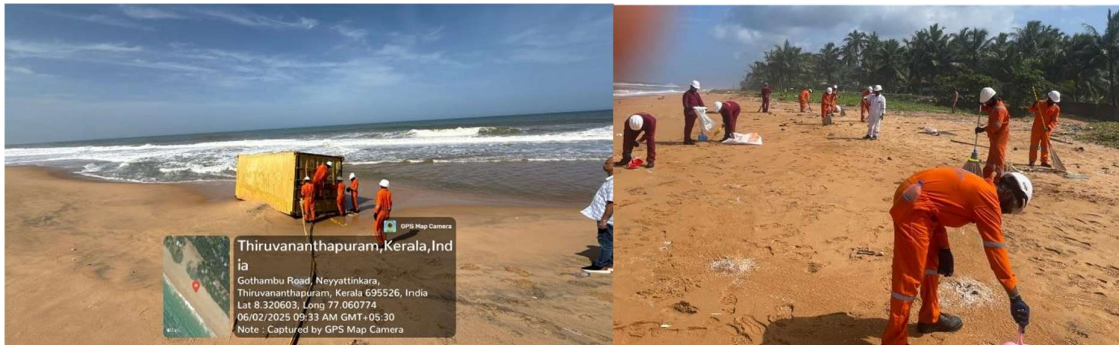
[T&T is coordinating the arrangement of a ROV unit sourced from Singapore.](#) Equipment setup will begin upon arrival, with full diving readiness projected by 9<sup>th</sup> June. The vessel at present does not have sufficient gases on board to sustain the operation for which additional stock is being provisioned from Mumbai which will arrive Kochi. The ETA of "gas stacks" to Kochi is yet to be confirmed by salvors.

## OSR Operations and Oil Sheen Sampling

The tugs Nand *Saarthi* and Ocean *Warrior* remain deployed near the wreck. A visible oil sheen approximately 1.5 km long and 100 m wide has been observed. Sampling was conducted and remains onboard a tug pending transfer to shore. Boom stockpiles are placed ashore near Alleppey for deployment if required.

## Container Recovery at Coastal Sites

MERC has completed container recovery at Mukkam Beach and Thangassery Lighthouse, with all salvaged parts sent to Kollam Port. Work is ongoing at Neendakara and Thirumullavaram. Survey and access preparation is underway at Ozhukkuthode, where three new containers have been located.

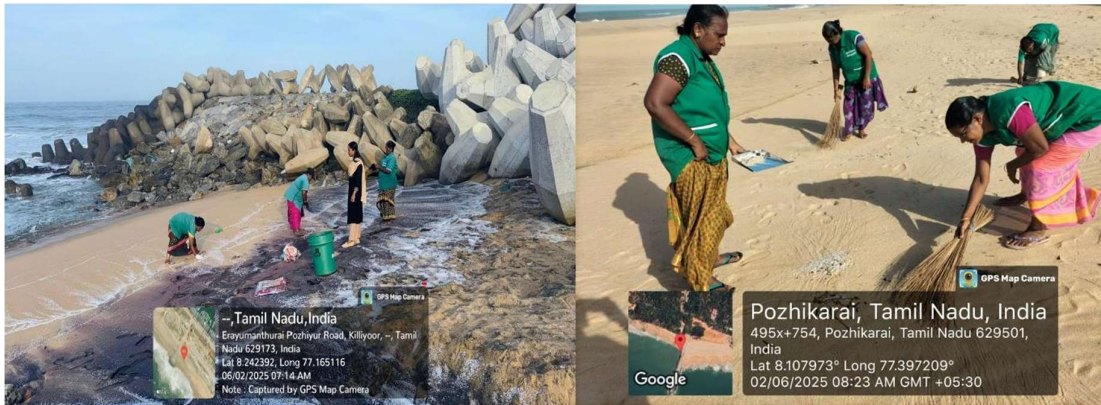


## Logistics and Port Movement

Multiple container parts from Neendakara and Thangassery arrived at Kollam Port on 1st June via trailer. Unloading operations were carried out in sequence and recorded with timestamped arrivals. Site-to-port connectivity remains active. Altogether 25 containers have been despatched to the dedicated site for the container recovery.

## Kanyakumari Nurdle Recovery Drive

Beach cleaning and nurdle (PPE pellet) collection have officially commenced at five Kanyakumari coastal villages, including Melakurumpanai and Erayumanthurai. Volunteers mobilised by the state authorities are operating under the supervision of MERC teams.



## Data Reporting and Coordination Mechanisms

Daily reporting has been streamlined across T&T, MERC, and MSC. Container location records have been updated and realigned with KSDMA via shared tracking sheets. Reporting compliance is being monitored by MERC and KSDMA.

## VDR Recovery Planning

MSC has confirmed that divers will be required to extract the S-VDR unit. The backup VDR from *Silver II* is available. Crew members have been instructed not to disseminate any information to media while the investigation is underway to avoid misinformation and speculation.

## 4. Additional Support:

### ETV Water Lily

The ETV *Water Lily* was berthed at Kochi for commissioning of multi beam survey equipment and the installation was expected to be completed by end of today. The ETV would thereafter commence conducting a multi beam survey in about 1-nautical-mile radius survey around the wreck location to identify submerged containers from 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025 onwards.

## 5. Situation Assessment:

### ROV Uncertainty and Contingency Gaps

The uncertainty around the operational status of SEAMAC's onboard ROV remains a key vulnerability. It was confirmed after the meeting from the DSV operator regarding

the ROV, there is no ROV onboard the vessel and will need to be imported from Singapore. The lack of clarity on readiness may lead to delays in diving and salvage operations.

### **Visa Processing**

Diver mobilization is currently contingent on timely visa processing, flagged as a critical bottleneck. Although efforts are being made with DGS support, any administrative delay beyond 3rd–4th June may derail the projected diving start date of 9th June.

### **Container Salvage in Difficult Terrain**

In multiple coastal sites, mechanical access remains the biggest operational hurdle. Hydra and excavator deployment has been ineffective in some locations due to narrow access roads. Cutting containers onsite for removal is a time-consuming workaround and is being used only where unavoidable. The fact that the partially submerged containers are also subject to tidal window for working, considerable efforts have been put by MERC team and the state authorities.

### **Onshore Pollution Management**

According to assessments by ITOPF and the ICG, the thin oil sheen observed near the wreck does not require chemical dispersants.

Current oil spill response is being carried out by tugs using propeller wash to break up the sheen. However, this method would not be sufficient if thicker oil patches begin to appear.

### **Prioritisation and Manpower Constraints**

Containers with cargo and those located in populated areas are being prioritized for removal. However, with only 12–15 personnel per site and about 50 total staff deployed, the manpower resources can be further augmented. DGS has called for immediate augmentation of resources and faster turnaround.

### **Risk of Escalation in Nurdle Contamination**

While nurdle recovery has begun, the effort remains manpower-limited. Villages along the Kanyakumari coastline face escalating ecological exposure if the current rate of collection is not increased. ITOPF has warned that natural dispersal will not resolve accumulations in populated beaches.

### **VDR Extraction and Technical Ambiguity**

There is ambiguity over the nature and location of the onboard VDR system. Until divers access the wheelhouse, retrieval planning remains speculative. This delays progress on securing incident data, which could inform liability, insurance, and investigatory processes.

### **Weather Dependency and Critical Window**

The current weather window is favourable but narrow. Operators have stated that a minimum of three full working days is required post-equipment commissioning to begin effective underwater operations. DGS has stressed that delays must be curtailed before the next weather system develops.

## **6. Environmental Risks:**

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

## **7. Coordination Measures**

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