

SITREP – 13, 1800 hrs on 04/06/2025

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:

The ETV Water Lily has been prepared for seabed mapping operations and is scheduled to depart from Kochi Port by 1600 hrs today. A mechanical winch was loaded onboard following rain-induced equipment delays. The vessel will conduct a multibeam survey within a 1 NM radius of the wreck site. The Nand Saarthi continues operations near the wreck, while the Ocean Warrior remains deployed carrying out monitoring approximately 10 NM by 3 NM from the incident area.

SEAMAC III is due to arrive in port tomorrow at 1200 hrs. Air diving gear is arriving in split shipments from Dubai, with the first consignment yet to be dispatched. T&T has confirmed that additional components are being sourced both locally and internationally, with full assembly expected by 12 June. In the interim, a Plan B Air diving system is being considered using SEAMAC III, with a setup time of four days. This allows air diving to begin by 9 June, focused primarily on temporary capping operations. An ROV unit has departed from South Africa and is expected on site by 5 June.

50% of required gas cylinders have been produced, with transportation from Mumbai to Kochi underway. **Although, it has been found that the supplier has not been contacted to coordinate logistical needs as of now.**

MERC has delivered **36 containers to port so far—29 in Kollam, 6 in Vizhinjam, and 1 in Kanyakumari**—with three more en route. 19 container recoveries are

ongoing, including 10 critical cases where tailored salvage plans are under preparation. Cleanup efforts continue in Trivandrum, Kanyakumari, and Kollam, with substantial personnel contributions from state and civil defence agencies.



MSC is coordinating immigration and entry formalities for divers and equipment, while also assisting T&T in resource mobilisation. Container manifest data has been shared with authorities.

4. Situation Assessment:

Operational timelines remain a sensitive matter as delays have been observed from the salvors. The diving gear, arriving in parts from outside India, is expected to be fully available only by 12 June, however, the same indicates an extension of the anticipated timeline.

There is a consideration for a backup Diving Support Vessel (DSV), which, if required, could be mobilised by 20 June. However, that remains an issue as the saturation diving operation was expected to be commencing on 9th June, hence, DGS concerns regarding these avoidable delays have been conveyed to the ship-owners (MSC) and P&I Club.

Air diving, though viable in the short term, offers limited underwater time per dive (15–20 minutes) due to safety constraints, making it less efficient for deeper or prolonged operations. DGS is not satisfied with the change in operations which has been conveyed as the desired objective of Oil extraction cannot be achieved with Air diving operations

There are also concerns about visa processing delays. While some applications may have been done, confirmations of visa application are still pending for personnel from Namibia and the Philippines as indicated by the Indian High commission and embassy in these countries.

Realignment of diving team deployments is in progress to account for staggered arrivals. DGS has advised exploring local mobilisation options via SEAMAC's technical head to bridge this gap.

Environmental surveillance continues, but key questions remain unresolved. Despite visible oil sheen and ongoing boom deployment along 16 km of coastline near Alleppey, the source of the oil discharge is yet to be confirmed.

The current survey systems are not capable of determining the precise location or pathway of the oil release. Detailed assessment will only be possible once dive operations commence.

The coordination team has emphasised that beach cleanup and container recovery activities must proceed in tandem to avoid further delays.

Port formalities and access passes for incoming teams are also being actively managed. While proactive measures are in place, the situation remains tightly timed and any further slippage may impact the recovery window.

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