

SITREP – 15, 1800 hrs on 06/06/2025

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 completed the initial phase of multibeam seabed mapping covering a 1 NM radius around the incident site. Support vessels Nand Saarthi and Offshore Warrior continue prop wash activities, with a visible sheen of approximately 1000m x 50m reported. SEAMAC III is in port, with the diving system being prepared. The ROV, its operators, and the decompression system are scheduled to arrive in Kochi by the morning of 07 June.

T&T has confirmed that the air diving team will comprise divers from Kochi and Mumbai, with safety system setup, including Dive Decompression Chamber (DDC) integration, requiring four days. The vessel remains committed to mobilisation on 09 June. Barrels recovered from shorelines have begun reaching port, with 11 delivered last night and an additional 6–8 this morning. Customs clearance for essential diving equipment is underway, with MSC seeking support from DGS for expedited processing.

Onshore recovery continues, with 45 containers delivered to port and 3 more scheduled within 48 hours. MERC teams are actively deployed in Kollam, Trivandrum, and Kanyakumari, alongside over 250 volunteers. Salvage operations continue for 10 inaccessible containers, and surveys are ongoing for 5 containers with uncertain or unidentified locations. Shoreline nurdle collection is active, and coordination with

Pollution Control Board and ITOPF is underway for finalising a disposal and storage strategy.

4. Situation Assessment:

The salvage operation is at a critical junction, with the start of 'Air' diving operations fixed for 09 June. While preparations are progressing, concerns have been raised by KSDMA over the continued absence of divers onboard and the lack of a fully mobilised plugging operation. With deteriorating weather forecasted, the margin for delay is minimal. **DGS has reiterated that if all safety and system checks are completed, diving may begin on 08 June itself.**

Uncertainties remain regarding the international diving team. While air diving is being prioritised, specifics about agency coordination and visa status remain unclear. Stakeholders have urged the salvors to engage alternate Indian-based diving resources as a contingency. **Switching to saturation diving is being retained, but readiness will depend on weather and offshore conditions and also the arrival of divers and the equipment.**

Multiple containers that were recorded as “under-deck” in the manifest have been found onshore, raising questions about initial stowage accuracy. MSC is coordinating with the loading team for verification. Immediate attention is also required for identifying and marking appropriate buoy locations, as coordinated through DGLL and P&I.

The response onshore has been swift, particularly with regard to newly located barrels. However, the requirement for a separate nurdle storage site has been emphasised by KSDMA. A dedicated disposal plan is expected to be finalised in a meeting scheduled later today between ITOPF, PCB, and MSC.

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