

## **SITREP – 3, 1300 Hrs on 25/05/2025**

### **Sinking of MSC ELSA III (IMO no – 9123221, Flag Liberia) 13 nm South West of Kochi**

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

On 24 May 2025 at approximately 1300 hrs IST, the container vessel MSC ELSA 3, operated by MSC Ship Management Ltd., developed a severe starboard list while enroute from Vizhinjam to Cochin, about 30 nautical miles southwest of Kochi Port. By 1515 hrs IST, the list had increased to 30 degrees and stabilized, with no further progression observed.



*Figure 1: MSC ELSA 3 on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2025 AM hours*

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

The Indian Coast Guard promptly responded to the incident by deploying a Dornier aircraft, which conducted aerial surveillance and successfully air-dropped a life raft to aid in crew evacuation. Additionally, surface units have been mobilised and are en route to provide Search and Rescue (SAR) and vessel support. The Indian Navy has also initiated assistance, with one naval vessel

departing from Cochin and another, positioned north of the incident site, being rerouted to offer operational and humanitarian support.

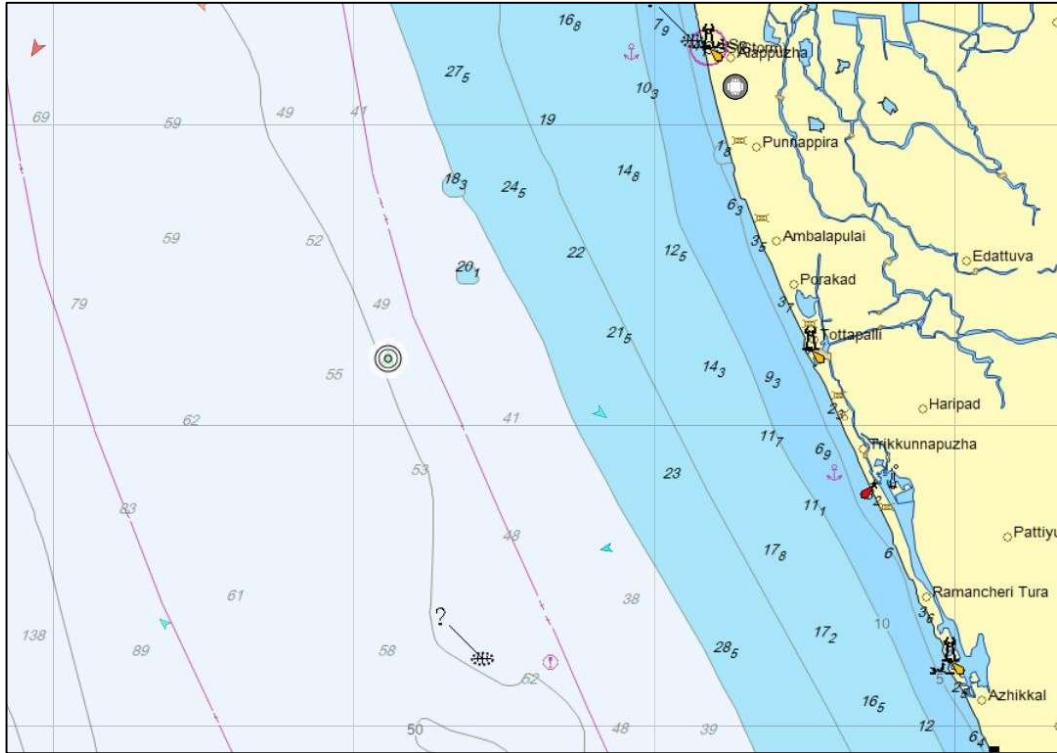


Figure 2: MSC ELSA position at 0700 hrs on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2025

### 3. Present Status:

At approximately 0750 hours, the vessel sank about 13 nautical miles off the Kerala coast. Of the 24 crew members on board (comprising 1 Russian, 2 Ukrainians, 1 Georgian, and 20 Filipinos), 21 were safely evacuated from the liferaft on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2025. The remaining three crew members were subsequently rescued by the Indian Coast Guard on 25<sup>th</sup> morning hours. The Coast Guard has been conducting continuous surveillance of the area, and preliminary observations indicate signs of an oil spill in the vicinity of the incident.

### 4. Additional Support (Initial):

MSC SILVER III, an MSC-operated vessel, had been deployed from Cochin to provide assistance at the incident site. M/V HANE YI remained on standby, maintaining communication and offering coordination support. Meanwhile, MSC Ship Management Ltd. has activated its emergency response protocols and is

actively coordinating with MRCC Mumbai and relevant regional authorities to manage the situation.

#### 5. **Situation Assessment:**

The vessel sank approximately 13 nautical miles off the coast of Kerala at 0750 hours on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2025 in position **09 Deg 18.75N 076 Deg 08.16E**. As a result of the incident, all deck containers have been reported adrift in the surrounding waters. Among these are 13 containers classified under IMDG (International Maritime Dangerous Goods) Class 4.3, which are known to contain Calcium Carbide — a hazardous substance that reacts violently with water, releasing flammable gases. The uncontrolled drift of these containers presents a serious risk to maritime safety, posing immediate navigational hazards to passing vessels in the busy sea lanes off the Kerala coast. Prompt tracking, marking, and retrieval of these containers is critical to prevent collisions, environmental contamination, and potential threats to human life and property at sea.



*Figure 3: Aerial view of Oil Spill (source : Indian Coast Guard)*

#### 6. **Environmental Risks:**

The adrift containers not only pose a navigational hazard but also represent a significant environmental threat, particularly given the nature of the cargo involved. The vessel was carrying approximately 367 tonnes of Heavy Fuel Oil (HFO) and 84.4 tonnes of Diesel Oil at the time of the incident. With the wreck located in close proximity to the Kerala coastline (approximately 13 nautical miles), there is a heightened risk of an oil spill. Such a spill could have serious

ecological consequences, including damage to marine biodiversity, coastal ecosystems, and local fisheries. Immediate containment and recovery measures are essential to mitigate the potential impact on the environment and nearby coastal communities.



*Figure 4: Aerial view of Oil Spill (source : Indian Coast Guard)*

## **7. Coordination Measures**

An online meeting was held on 24 May 2025 at 2000 hrs regarding the MSC Elsa III vessel incident, attended by officials from DGS, MMD Kochi, Indian Coast Guard, Indian Navy, Kochi Port, MSC, and other stakeholders. Key outcomes included directions to owners for immediate mobilisation of salvors, appointment of an expert agency, and implementation of pollution prevention measures. Owners were instructed to ensure crew evacuation due to deteriorating weather, and to provide details on overboard containers, vessel condition, and cargo particulars. Two-hourly updates from ship-owners were mandated to ensure close monitoring and coordinated response.

[A follow up coordination meeting was held with stakeholders<sup>1</sup> on 25 May 2025 at 1100 hours to assess the evolving situation and issue necessary directives. During the discussion, MSC was instructed to coordinate proactively with all](#)

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<sup>1</sup> DG Shipping, MMD Kochi, Indian Coast Guard, Kochi, IFO-IOR, Home Department, Kerala, Deputy Collector, Kochi, Harbour Master, Kochi Port, DCP, Kochi, MSC, India, MSC, Geneva, T&T Salvage, North Standard P&I

relevant stakeholders, including state authorities, to ensure a unified and effective emergency response. It was emphasized that MSC and the appointed salvors (T&T Salvage) must immediately establish contact with the Indian ICG in Kochi and initiate coordinated pollution control measures. The state government is to be integrated into all operational efforts, with local correspondence channels to be established for the formulation of a detailed action plan. DG Shipping will share necessary local contact details with MSC and supervise the implementation of pollution mitigation strategies and drift analysis. The ICG will continue aerial and surface surveillance of the area, provide regular SITREPs, and support containment and retrieval operations in collaboration with the salvors.

To streamline efforts, a unified communication channel involving MSC, state authorities, DGS, and the ICG will be created. Additionally, the salvors are to urgently prepare a comprehensive response plan in consultation with the International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation (ITOPF) and the P&I Club. Particular attention must be given to the immediate extraction of oil—especially the heavy fuel oil—from the wreck to prevent further environmental damage.

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