

## **SITREP – 8, 1800 hrs on 30/05/2025**

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

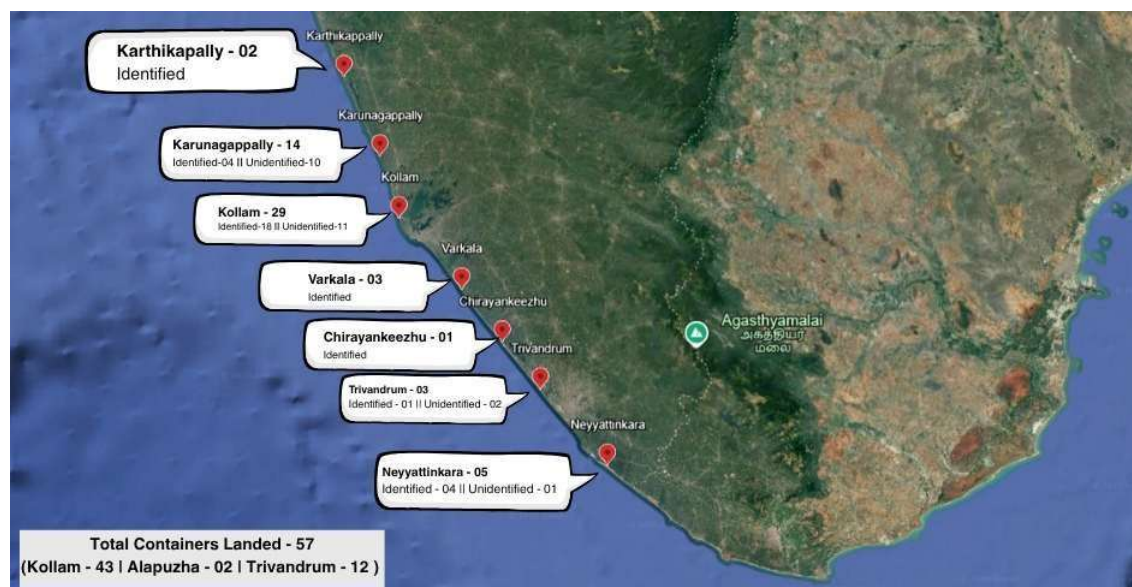
#### **1. Incident Overview:**

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 Kochi, about 30 nautical miles southwest of Kochi Port. By 1515 hrs IST, the list had increased to 30 degrees and stabilized. On the morning of 25<sup>th</sup> May, at approximately 0750 hrs, the vessel sank about 13 nautical miles off the Kerala coast, as a result of which, all deck containers went adrift in the surrounding waters and the containers in the cargo hold submerged with the vessel.

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

Refer to SITREP – 6

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



*Figure 1: Containers recovered on the Coastline and adrift*

A total of 57 beached containers have been identified by Kerala State Disaster Management Authority along a 120 km coastal stretch, with personnel being mobilized accordingly. Plan of Action of for the salvor's team on 30/05/2025 for Kollam:

**Site 1: Mundakkal Beach**

At Mundakkal Beach, operations will focus on the recovery of the reefer container and the paper rolls from the shoreline. In addition, efforts will be made to secure floating cotton bundles to prevent further dispersal and damage.

**Site 2: Shaktikulangara**

**Of the 6 containers remaining at the site**, 1 will be loaded onto a trailer and transported to Kollam Port. This operation is scheduled to begin at 0800 hrs. The remaining 5 containers, which are damaged, will be dismantled and sent to Kollam Port today via trucks.

**Site 3: Alappad**

**Out of the 2 containers at the site**, the reefer container currently located on the beach is scheduled for transportation to Kollam Port. Loading will begin as soon as the trailer arrives on site. The second container, which is damaged, will be cut and transported to Kollam Port later today.

**Site 4: Neendakara**

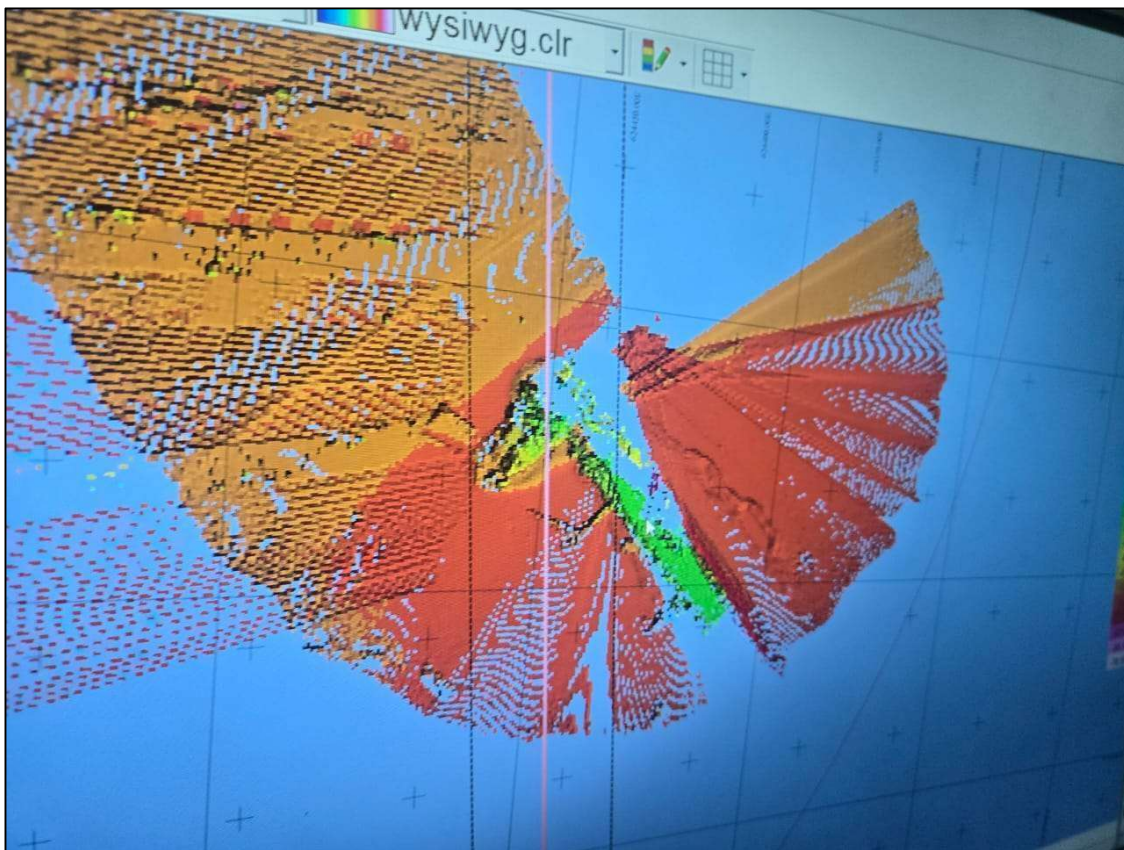
**Out of the 5 containers at the site**, work will be carried out today on 3. Operations will begin at 0800 hrs, starting with the 20-foot container near the church. For the 2 40-foot containers near the hospital, a JCB has arrived at 0600 hrs to level the ground, allowing the crane to access them. The remaining 2 containers are currently inaccessible, and work to create an access path will also commence today.

Parts of a refer container have washed off at Kovalam beach. The salvors team is trying to find whether accounted for in present list. Salvage and shifting of the piece of the container to a safer place will be planned and executed soon.



*Figure 2: Part of reefer container beached*

A multibeam survey of the wreck site had been completed using Tug 'Ocean Pioneer' on 29.05.2025, evening hours and have positioned the vessel at Lat 09, 18' 50.022N, Long 76, 07' 58.967 E. The highest point of the vessel has been identified at 33m with the maximum depth being approximately 51m.



*Figure 3: Position of the vessel as identified the multibeam survey*

The readiness of DSV SEAMEC III is being assessed for mobilisation. The vessel is equipped to carry out diving and capping operations, which are expected to commence within seven days, subject to favourable weather. Discussions with the operator are underway regarding diving gear, saturation divers, and onboard personnel.

Nand Saarthi is scheduled to arrive by midnight and will mount oil spill response (OSR) equipment for immediate deployment by tomorrow morning. Offshore Warrior is also expected to arrive by 31.05.2025, morning hours and will conduct surveys for loose containers at the incident site. Both Nand Saarthi and Offshore Warrior will be equipped with OSR gear but are not capable of performing capping operations.

The salvor has confirmed that a sufficient quantity of oil booms is available and ready for deployment as soon as the required locations are identified. These booms are currently distributed across Kollam and Alleppey.

The Kerala State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) recommended deploying oil containment booms around the incident site to prevent further spread of oil towards the shore. However, the technical feasibility of laying buoys in the prevailing rough weather conditions is under examination and will be confirmed shortly.

#### **4. Additional Support:**

DGS has advised that virtual markers be implemented and coordinated through DGLL. These markers will be visible on AIS and should be communicated effectively to the local fishing community. **The area surrounding the wreck, initially identified as a 500-meter exclusion zone, will now be extended to a 1-kilometer no-fishing and no-sailing zone by State authorities.**

Further, suggestion was also received from State authorities that heavy containers located on the seabed must be individually marked with surface buoys to warn local fishermen of their presence. Sorbent pads must be placed along the Kerala coast, with particular attention to fish landing centres between Ernakulam and Thiruvananthapuram.

Furthermore, the salvors must arrange for additional oil booms to be deployed at the mouths of rivers and lakes to prevent inland contamination in the event of further leakage.

The local government and district administrations have engaged volunteer for cleanup activities in Trivandrum. In Kanyakumari, preparations for nurdle cleanup have been initiated in consultation with the TNDMA and the district collector. MERC Teams are en route to commence field activities in Kanyakumari.

The customs department is also fully engaged in the operations of recovery of containers and its content. All recovered cargo is to be routed through Kollam and Vizhinjam Port under their supervision. Discussions are ongoing regarding the separation and processing of nurdles from sand and subsequent handover to customs.

The ICG has also been engaged in discussions on diving operations and a decision will be made based on the result of the multibeam survey.

Divers for SEAMEC III are to be brought directly to Kochi from South Africa, with visa facilitation to be expedited by DGS, if necessary at the request of salvors.

## **5. Situation Assessment:**

The vessel has been located through multibeam sonar imaging and is confirmed to be resting on its starboard side. A preliminary survey has provided sufficient data for the salvage team to begin preparing for capping and containment operations. Despite challenges posed by rough sea conditions, initial assessments indicate that weather windows can be optimised to carry out critical salvage activities in the coming days.

ETV 'Water Lily' has also arrived at the incident location on 30<sup>th</sup> AM hours and is coordinating with ICG in datum position and carrying out search for adrift containers and also available for further assistance.

Survey and response assets are actively being mobilised. Diving and capping activities are sought to be handled by SEAMEC III tentatively, which has sailed from Chennai and is expected off Kochi by 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> June. The DSV is to be assessed for its readiness

for suitability in the present operation, and discussions are underway with operators to ensure that diving personnel and equipment are made available in time.

While there is no immediate large-scale oil spill, minor traces of oil sheen have been observed, and proactive containment is deemed essential. Light oil continues to ooze out from the wreck site producing an oil sheen which is being tackled by the ICG surface assets by using oil dispersants and surface action for dispersion. Booms have been prepositioned and are available for deployment across Kollam and Alleppey, though feasibility assessments are ongoing due to adverse weather

Each agency engaged on ground has been asked to submit Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) capturing their respective areas of responsibility and progress by end of each day. Clarity is sought based on the result of the multibeam survey, enabling a more decisive course of action, particularly for oil containment and submerged container salvage which as per salvors will be undertaken by 'Offshore warrior' (Multi Beam survey) and 'Nand Sarthi' (OPR) in coming 2-3 days.

## **6. Environmental Risks:**

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

## **7. Coordination Measures**

A series of coordination meetings since the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2025, chaired by DG Shipping with participation from ICG, IFC-IOR, MSC, T&T Salvage, P&I Club, ITOPF, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), port authorities, and state agencies, and, on 28.05.2025 a meeting was convened in hybrid mode under the chairmanship of the Director General of Shipping, with the presence of state authorities in Kochi, focused on streamlining the response to the MSC Elsa 3 incident. Key directives are focused on mobilisation of salvors for salvage of containers that are ashore as well as adrift, and the plan for pollution mitigation, and regular six-hourly updates from the shipowner.

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



### **Annexure 1**

<b>Containers List 30-05-2025 , 6.00 pm</b>				
Sl No	District	Taluk	Container Details	No.of containers
1	Kollam	Kollam	Unidentified	11
2	Kollam	Karunagappaly	Unidentified	10
3	Kollam	Kollam	Identified	18
4	Kollam	Karunagappally	Identified	4
5	Alappuzha	Karthikappally	Identified	2
6	Trivandrum	Trivandrum	Identified	1
7	Trivandrum	Varkkala	Identified	3
8	Trivandrum	Neyyattinkara	Identified	4
9	Trivandrum	Trivandrum	Unidentified	2
10	Trivandrum	Chirayankeezhu	Identified	1
12	Trivandrum	Neyyattinkara	Unidentified	1
<b>Total Containers landed</b>				<b>57</b>
<i>Kerala State Disaster Management Authority</i>				