

SITREP – 9, 1800 hrs on 31/05/2025

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:

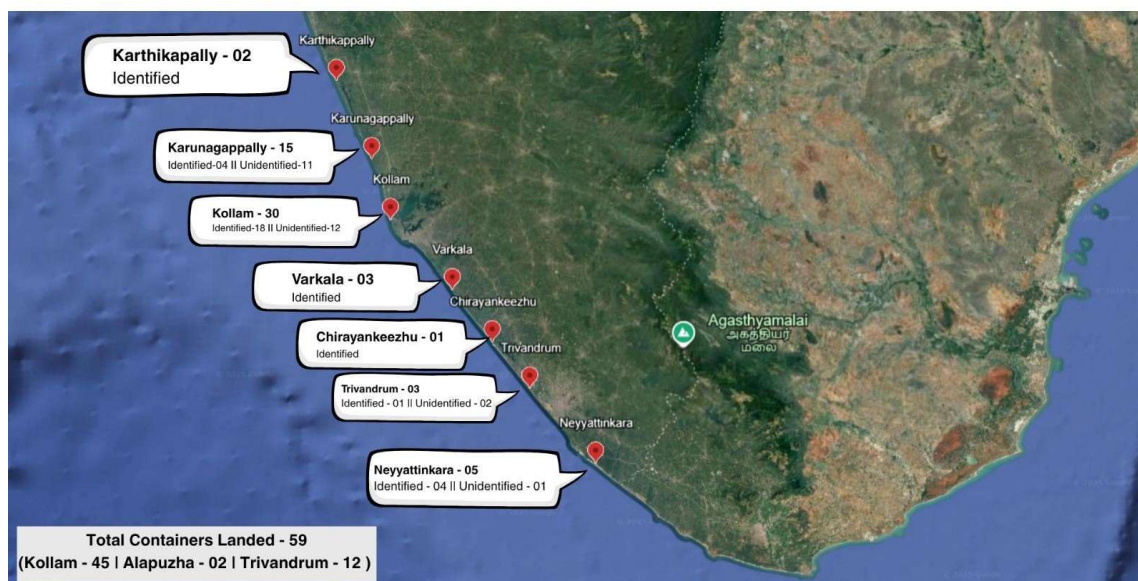


Figure 1: Containers recovered on the Coastline and adrift

A total of 59 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 31/05/2025 for Kollam:

Mundakkal site: In the morning, the MERC team resumed clearance operations at the Mundakkal site, focusing on the recovery of paper bundles and other debris.

At 1345 hrs, a trailer arrived at the location for loading the reefer container. However, due to limited access and space constraints at the site, the container could not be directly reached by the trailer. The container itself was maneuvered and positioned onto the trailer. The loading was successfully completed by 1430 hrs, and the container was then dispatched to Kollam Port. At 1650 hrs, the loading of remaining rolls onto a small pickup and another truck was started and it will be delivered to Kollam Port by the end of the day.

Alappad: The final reefer container, was successfully loaded onto a trailer with the assistance of 2 hydra cranes. The operation was completed by 1810 hrs, following which the container departed for Kollam Port. With this, all operations at the Alappad site have been completed, and the site has now been concluded.



Figure 2: Final reefer container at Alappad

The salvage and containment operations off the Kerala coast are progressing across multiple domains. Offshore, T&T Salvors continue activities with key vessels including Nand Saarthi—en route from Kochi with oil spill response gear and expected to rendezvous with an ICG vessel—and *Offshore Warrior*, due to arrive by 1700 hours today for OSR gear loading. Alleppey site boom installation has encountered issues due to floodgate operations, causing a 50-meter section to part; recovery efforts are underway.

Port pilot boarding delays have affected loading timelines, prompting a request to DG Shipping for enhanced coordination. POMMD Kochi has been asked to issue a standing directive to expedite all vessel and personnel movement tied to salvage operations.

The salvors report partial completion of the multibeam survey (depth: 51m, wreck on starboard side, embedded 5m into seabed). The Capping & Oil Containment Plan (Rev3) has been circulated, with DSV and ROV deployment. Two tugs and the ETV Water Lily remain on standby, with coordination in place with operators and stakeholders.

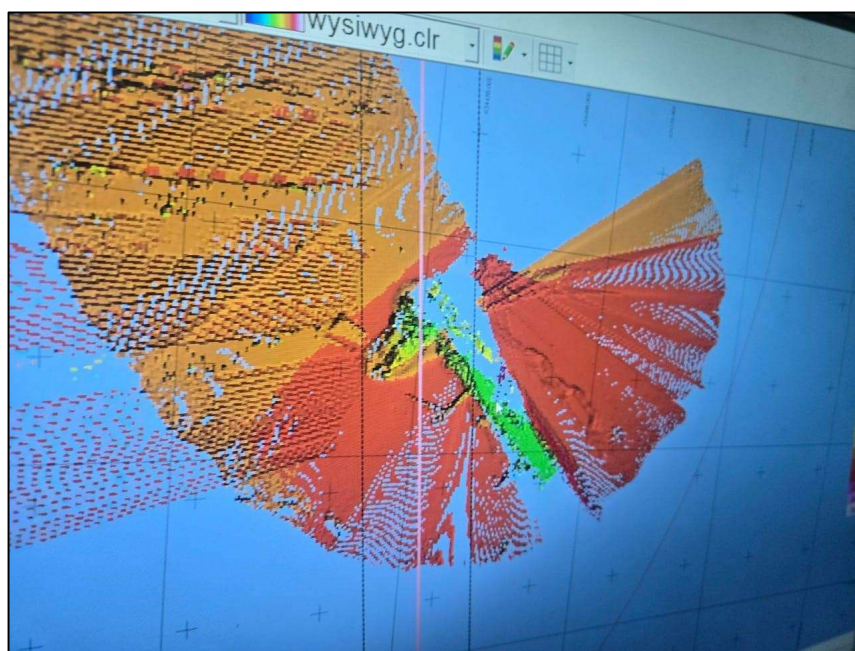


Figure 3: Position of the vessel as identified the multibeam survey

4. Additional Support:

Key dependencies include expedited visa clearance for the South African dive team. The DSV SEAMEC III is expected to arrive on June 5th, with ROV equipment reaching a day earlier from Singapore, critical for enabling the capping and oil removal process. Ensuring synchronization of these arrivals is vital to avoid operational delays. DGS has instructed the salvors to inform in case any assistance is required to expedite VISA clearance and customs clearance for divers and ROV respectively.

DGS also emphasized rapid clean-up of plastic pellets (nurdles) along Kerala's coast. MERC, Kerala PCB, and local bodies are coordinating beach clean-up and segregation of sand-pellet mixtures, with storage coordination proposed in Kanyakumari. Cleanup teams are active in Kollam and Vizhinjam, and DGS has asked MERC to provide a detailed plan to TNSDMA for sieving and disposal.

Kerala SPCB and KSDMA continue to address site marking amid monsoon constraints. Proposals favour robust wreck buoys over temporary ones, with supplementary options like virtual GPS markers, patrolling vessels, and notice-to-mariner coordination under active review. A fishing ban around the MSC Elsa 3 wreck site is in force, and a 1-km restricted zone is proposed for formal approval by the Chief Minister.

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) confirms containment operations continue, with Samudra Prahari monitoring a 3-cable wide oil sheen. Aerial support and ship rotation (OTR) are ongoing, and collision response teams are stationed in Kollam and Trivandrum.

5. Situation Assessment:

Diving Operations: The arrival of the South African dive team is awaited. DSV SEAMEC III is currently scheduled to arrive on June 5th. Diving equipment and umbilical dispatched from Mumbai are expected in time, but the availability of qualified personnel is the primary constraint which will arrive from South Africa.

ROV Deployment and Capping Readiness: The ROV shipment from Singapore is scheduled to arrive by June 4th, ahead of the DSV's arrival. Integration and testing are planned for June 5–6, with capping operations projected to begin on June 7th.

Environmental Conditions: The onset of the southwest monsoon brings unstable sea conditions, affecting diver safety, boom stability, and wreck site accessibility. The parted boom section at Alleppey and challenges at Kollam indicate that temporary oil containment systems are vulnerable under current tidal and weather patterns.

Oil Sheen and Pollution Control: ICG Samudra Prahari has contained the visible oil sheen to a 3-cable radius. However, further bunkering leakage is expected once oil tank capping begins. The Capping and Oil Containment Plan – Rev3 has been circulated, but execution depends on successful survey interpretation and coordinated vessel readiness.

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

Annexure 1

Containers List 31-05-2025 , 6.00 pm				
Sl No	District	Taluk	Container Details	No.of containers
1	Kollam	Kollam	Unidentified	12
2	Kollam	Karunagappally	Unidentified	11
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
Total Containers landed				59
<i>Kerala State Disaster Management Authority</i>				