



## **Directorate General of Shipping**

**SITREP – 24, 1800 hrs on 16/06/2025**

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

The contents of this SITREP are based on both written and verbal inputs received from the stakeholders

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

Refer to SITREP – 6

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

Refer to SITREP – 6

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

The salvage operations for MSC Elsa 3 have entered a critical transition phase following the completion of the temporary capping and sealing of all accessible fuel oil tanks by the existing salvage team. The salvage vessel SEAMAC III has returned to Kochi port and repositioned at Berth Q7 under the Safe Berth protocol. Air-diving operations have concluded, with demobilisation of the air-diving equipment currently underway. Some equipment mobilisation faced delays due to berth changes directed by Port Control. Remaining consumables, including Helios gases and other salvage stores, are being inventoried for transfer to the incoming contractor as part of the transition arrangement.

BMC Consultants, acting on behalf of the shipowners and P&I, have finalised the decision to stand down the present salvor and are completing arrangements for the alternate contractor to mobilise for the oil extraction phase considering the criticality of the operation. This transition is expected to be fully confirmed within the next 24 hours. During this interim phase, care-taking operations continue at the wreck site. The tug Nand Saarthi remains stationed at Kochi port due to prevailing adverse weather conditions and will return to offshore guard duty once sea states improve. A replacement guard tug, Canara Megh, has been identified and is scheduled to depart from Mumbai after completion of bunkering and provisioning.

The Control Centre at Taj Malabar Hotel, Kochi, continues to coordinate all activities. Situation Management Report (SMR) #20 has been issued to stakeholders. Daily liaison and coordination meetings have been held with T&T, DG Shipping, P&I, MSC, Indian Coast Guard, and other key parties. Operational planning, cost calculations, and regulatory compliance activities remain ongoing in preparation for the next phase.

Onshore operations continue under MERC and State Authorities. Container recovery efforts are ongoing with four containers pending retrieval. An additional container door was recovered and delivered to port today. In Trivandrum, daily volunteer strength has reached 188, with capacity to increase manpower further to expedite shoreline cleanup. Kanyakumari continues with 120 volunteers engaged. At Rameshwaram, 22 personnel are active, with augmentation planned. Recovered nurdles continue to be stockpiled at temporary storage locations while Customs approvals for disposal remain pending. Coordination with ITOPF is ongoing to finalise waste handling and disposal arrangements.

Indian Coast Guard (ICG) maintains offshore surveillance. ICGS Anagh is currently stationed at the site, scheduled to be relieved by ICGS Abhinav. Daily Dornier sorties equipped with Pollution Surveillance Systems continue to monitor for any oil sheens within a 30 NM radius of the wreck. No surface oil slicks have been observed to date during these reconnaissance flights.

Kanyakumari District Authorities continue to oversee storage transfers of previously collected nurdles to designated harbour facilities. Due to persistent rainfall, shoreline cleaning operations have been temporarily suspended in Kanyakumari over the last two days.

DGS continues to lead and oversee multi-agency coordination, ensuring compliance with all safety, environmental, and operational protocols while enforcing strict timelines for progress reporting. The coordinated response structure remains fully active across offshore, onshore, and administrative sectors.

#### **4. Situation Assessment:**

The present situation remains stabilised following successful capping and sealing of fuel tanks, vents, and sounding pipes onboard the wreck. No fresh oil discharges have

been observed since the completion of these works. The primary environmental risk remains the unextracted fuel oil onboard, requiring controlled removal before further deterioration of conditions.

The protracted delays in commencing fuel extraction remain a key area of concern. Multiple timeline revisions, shifts in contractor mobilisation, and the progression into peak monsoon season have critically reduced the safe operational window. Based on current weather assessments, BMC Consultants have recommended that saturation diving operations for fuel extraction be done only in favourable weather conditions as the activity considering its criticality remains highly weather dependent and should be undertaken when the conditions permit. This approach aims to ensure safer weather conditions and operational feasibility, while minimising risk of secondary spills which could result from hose failure or equipment damage in unstable sea states.

The transition to an alternate contractor is expected to streamline mobilisation, reinforce technical readiness, and facilitate more effective planning aligned with seasonal conditions. Meanwhile, care-taking operations will continue offshore to monitor the wreck and guard against any oil discharges.

Shoreline nurdle recovery remains productive but replenishment continues due to recurring strandings. Waste disposal approvals for recovered nurdles remain unresolved and require expeditious clearance by Customs and Pollution Control Boards. ITOPF continues to provide critical technical support to optimise shoreline recovery and waste management.

DGS remains fully engaged, exercising comprehensive coordination across stakeholders including ICG, MSC, P&I, MERC, State Government, ITOPF, and appointed salvors. The multi-agency operational framework remains active under daily monitoring, with ongoing reporting, decision-making, and enforcement of obligations to ensure timely and effective risk mitigation for the Indian coastline.

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**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



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