



Directorate General of Shipping

SITREP – 25, 1800 hrs on 17/06/2025

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:

As of 16 June 2025, the SEAMAC III has been demobilised and is proceeding to Mumbai. Air-diving equipment is being removed, and the vessel has vacated operations after completing the capping and plugging of the identified fuel oil tanks. Preparations are now underway to transition to the next phase involving saturation diving operations. The alternate vessel to Nand Saarthi (NS), *Canara Megh*, currently stationed in Mumbai, is being readied to take over from NS. Once formalities and bunkering are completed, she will sail to Kochi for mobilisation.

At present, *Nand Saarthi* remains at Kochi port due to prevailing adverse sea conditions. Upon improvement in weather, it will sail to the wreck site. Oil recovery equipment onboard *Nand Saarthi* is to be transferred to *Canara Megh* for the next phase. All accessories and gases remain available and are being held for deployment once the new contractor takes over.

Onshore, MERC has continued container recovery activities at Kollam, focusing on submerged containers using divers. Beach cleanup operations continue across Trivandrum with approximately 160 volunteers deployed. However, cleanup work was slower on the previous day due to intermittent rain. At Rameshwaram, a team of 22 members remains engaged at the site. In Kanyakumari, while weather halted active cleaning, the transfer of collected nurdles to centralised storage continues.

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has conducted aerial sorties using Dornier aircraft equipped with Pollution Surveillance Systems (PSS). No oil slick was observed approximately 60 NM from the wreck site. Additional sorties are planned to continue monitoring the situation.

4. Situation Assessment:

The salvage operations have now transitioned into a standby/care-taking phase pending the mobilisation of the new contractor. The timeline for saturation diving operations is currently under revision, considering the peak monsoon conditions and associated operational and environmental risks. The current weather patterns present a narrow and fragmented working window, making it unsuitable for stable and safe oil extraction efforts. Further delay would provide a more reliable window to safely conduct hot tapping and oil recovery.

T&T has confirmed that critical diving systems and consumables, including Helios gases, are being preserved for transfer to the new platform. DG Shipping has instructed finalisation of alternate contractor onboarding and has directed MSC and P&I Club to submit a revised operational plan with updated and weather-adjusted timelines.

The disposal and handling of plastic nurdles remains a concern. Customs authorities have requested treating the recovered nurdles as bonded cargo. Approximately 65–75 tons are now stored shore-side, awaiting a final disposal decision. The DG Shipping has reiterated the need for an SOP that balances environmental safety with regulatory compliance. ITOPF has confirmed that recovered nurdles include varying polymer grades, posing challenges to standardised disposal methods.

ICG continues to maintain regular surveillance. Satellite imagery from ITOPF is awaited to confirm shoreline and offshore oil traces. The air sorties and continuous coastal vigilance, in combination with onshore cleanup efforts, have been instrumental in monitoring post-wreck environmental impacts.

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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