



Directorate General of Shipping

SITREP – 26, 1800 hrs on 18/06/2025

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 tug *Nand Saarthi* remains in Kochi, monitoring the wreck site. No oil sheen or leakage has been observed in the vicinity. The air-diving operations have concluded, and all fuel oil tanks onboard MSC Elsa 3 have been successfully capped. SEAMEC III is being demobilised and is scheduled to depart Kochi Port for Mumbai on 19 June, following the offloading of equipment and scheduled bunkering.

Canara Megh, the designated replacement tug, remains anchored off Mumbai due to adverse weather. Bunkering and provisioning have been delayed, and efforts are being made to find alternate sheltered locations to expedite operations. The estimated timeline for *Canara Megh's* arrival in Kochi is 24–26 June, subject to weather improvement and successful fuelling. The tug will be deployed for guarding and response duties during the upcoming saturation diving operations.

Onshore, cleanup activities are ongoing in Trivandrum, Kollam, and Rameshwaram. At Kollam, submerged container recovery is underway, with diving teams mobilised to retrieve four remaining containers. One additional container door was recovered and delivered to port. In Trivandrum and Kollam, volunteers continue shoreline cleaning operations, while in Rameshwaram, senior MERC personnel have been deployed to coordinate efforts. Re-stranding of nurdles continues to be observed, with MERC

proceeding under the assumption that these are associated with the MSC Elsa 3 incident.

4. Situation Assessment:

The salvage operation has now entered a transition phase. T&T Salvage is demobilising assets, and a new contractor is being onboarded by MSC and the P&I Club to undertake the critical phase of oil extraction. BMC Consultants confirmed that the draft contract with SMIT Salvage has been received and is under final review, along with the caretaker plan for the wreck site. Once finalised, these will be shared with all stakeholders. The transition is expected to be completed within the next week, subject to weather and asset readiness.

Given the onset of peak monsoon conditions and forecasted sea state, stakeholders have advised deferring full-scale saturation diving operations. This decision has been made to minimise risk to divers, prevent secondary pollution during extraction, and ensure the integrity of fuel transfer hoses from depth. Temporary storage of Heliox gases and diving equipment has been arranged in Kochi, with intent to repurpose these for the upcoming operations.

The Directorate General of Shipping continues to lead coordination efforts through daily reviews, inter-agency liaison, and regulatory oversight. Close cooperation is ongoing with the Indian Coast Guard, which confirmed via aerial sorties that no new oil sheens were observed. ITOPF is continuing to support technical assessments and has committed to sharing satellite imagery of the affected coastline for monitoring purposes. The P&I Club remains engaged in supporting the transition logistics and claims management.

A final disposal mechanism for the recovered plastic nurdles is pending confirmation. Discussions between MERC, Customs, and ITOPF are underway to determine whether the material will be treated as cargo to be returned to the owners or processed through authorised recycling channels. A formal SOP is being developed in this regard.

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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