



## **Directorate General of Shipping**

**SITREP – 27, 1800 hrs on 19/06/2025**

### **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:**

Monitoring and surveillance efforts at the wreck site of MSC ELSA 3 continue. Tug *Nand Saarthi* remains deployed at the wreck position and has reported the presence of a light rainbow sheen in the vicinity of the vessel, approximately 50 metres wide and 1 kilometre in length, dissipating naturally thereafter. No recoverable oil has been observed. Based on prior dive inspections, all fuel oil tanks and vents have been capped and sealed. No structural damage or significant deformation was noted on the vessel hull during the earlier operations. The current light sheen is assessed to be the result of residual contamination from mechanical spaces such as the engine room or crane assemblies, and is expected to continue dissipating naturally over time due to flushing by sea action.

The air diving phase has been formally concluded, with *SEAMAC III* departing Kochi Port at 0930 hrs today for Mumbai. The saturation diving system equipment and gases have been safely offloaded and stored. The replacement tug *Canara Megh*, which is to take over guard and response duties at the wreck site, remains anchored off Mumbai due to adverse weather. Following intervention by DGS, Mumbai Port has agreed to allow the vessel to berth for bunkering. Once weather permits and bunkering is complete, the tug is expected to depart for Kochi, with an ETA of 4–5 days.

Shoreline clean-up operations continue at Trivandrum, Kollam, and Kanyakumari. Submerged container retrieval is ongoing at Kollam under challenging weather conditions. Diving teams have been deployed to attach rigging to submerged broken containers during low tide windows. A total of 61 containers have been recovered to port to date, with 4 submerged containers under active salvage. Trivandrum continues to face a shortage of volunteers, with only 190 presents against a minimum requirement of 250. Efforts are being made to address this shortfall with the local administration.

A formal SOP has been issued, in coordination with Customs, for temporary storage of nurdles. Approximately 450 bags have been deposited in a designated warehouse at Kollam Port. The nurdles are being treated as cargo and will be handled accordingly under customs oversight.

Indian Coast Guard continues aerial surveillance over the wreck site. A sortie undertaken on 18 June at 0930 hrs reported no significant oil sheen. Another surveillance flight was scheduled for 1700 hrs today. No ICG surface assets are currently stationed at the wreck position, but vessels are on standby at Kochi.

MSC and the P&I Club have confirmed that formal arrangements are being finalised for transitioning to a new contractor for saturation diving and fuel extraction. The tentative start date for oil recovery operations will be communicated at the earliest, with detailed plans and a revised timeline to be submitted by MSC/Brand Marine Consultants within 48 hours.

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

The light sheen observed around the MSC ELSA 3 wreck continues to be monitored. It is not associated with any active fuel leakage from sealed tanks, and is likely the result of residual contamination from engine spaces or machinery areas. Natural dissipation is expected, and no immediate intervention is warranted at this stage. Continued surveillance will be maintained by *Nand Saarthi* and periodic aerial sorties by the ICG.

The demobilisation of *SEAMAC III* marks the completion of the initial phase of capping and air diving. Preparations are underway to bring in *Canara Megh* as the new tug under charter from MERC, with fuel extraction operations to commence under a new

salvage contractor. The situation remains stable, but continued delays in operational mobilisation pose reputational and environmental risks, especially with monsoon intensifying.

Onshore, MERC is progressing with clean-up and recovery under weather constraints. The clean-up operations at affected beaches are continuing, but the shortfall in volunteer mobilisation remains a concern. Deployment of dedicated resources has helped sustain momentum. Temporary storage arrangements for recovered nurdles have been established in consultation with Customs, and formal handovers are being coordinated.

Daily inter-agency coordination led by the Directorate General of Shipping continues, involving all key stakeholders including MSC, P&I, MERC, ICG, ITOPF, and salvage consultants. Efforts remain focused on maintaining on-site surveillance, ensuring smooth contractor transition, and sustaining coordinated response operations both offshore and onshore.

#### **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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