



Directorate General of Shipping

SITREP – 36, 1800 hrs on 05/07/2025

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 coastal cleanup operations continue to be actively undertaken by MERC teams across Trivandrum, Rameshwaram, and Kanyakumari. Field teams remain deployed along the affected stretches, with additional cleaning planned in backwater regions to target hard-to-access areas. Transportation of recovered nurdles from shoreline locations to the designated warehouse at Kollam Port remains ongoing. An estimated 450 to 500 tonnes of nurdles have been collected so far, with an updated and verified figure expected by 6th July.

Meanwhile, the vessel Canara Megh continues patrolling the wreck site under the caretaking phase. No sightings of floating containers, oil sheen, or marine pollution have been reported during recent surveillance operations.

Salvage operations are progressing with necessary preparations underway. SMIT Salvage has confirmed that mobilisation of salvage equipment remains on schedule, with departure set for 24th July and site arrival by 1st August. Diving operations are planned to commence immediately upon arrival. Divers' visa processing and induction formalities are also ongoing with necessary support sought from the Directorate General of Shipping to expedite clearances.

Indian Coast Guard assets, including a patrol vessel and Dornier sorties, continue routine surveillance near the wreck site. No oil sheen, floating debris, or fishing vessel damage has been reported in recent aerial and surface patrols.

4. Situation Assessment:

The overall response remains stable, with progress made in shoreline cleanup, nurdle transportation, caretaker operations, and operational readiness for oil removal and wreck salvage. A comprehensive disposal plan for recovered nurdles remains pending, with coordination required between MERC, Clean Kerala, MSC, and statutory authorities to ensure environmental compliance and safe handling. It is noted that some nurdles washing ashore may still be remnants from the initial spill, highlighting the need for sustained shoreline surveillance and recovery efforts.

On the cargo front, MSC has confirmed that 13 containers on board the MSC ELSA 3 are classified under the IMDG Code. A full legal and technical review is underway regarding hazardous cargo allegations and possible misdeclaration concerns. DGS has emphasised the need for immediate verification of shipper documentation, including bills of lading, packaging details, and multimodal transport declarations to identify any discrepancies. Investigations are also being initiated following complaints from fishermen about containers reportedly affecting fishing nets.

SMIT Salvage has undertaken to define a 1 nautical mile restricted navigational zone around the wreck site, for which coordinates are awaited to facilitate issuance of an official advisory by DGS.

While caretaker operations and coastal cleanup efforts remain effective, close inter-agency coordination is essential to resolve pending cargo-related concerns, finalise disposal protocols for recovered materials, and ensure readiness for the upcoming salvage and oil removal operations under challenging monsoon conditions.

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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