

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING
DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO - 2722

ANSWERED ON 04/08/2026

MSC ELSA 3

2722. Shri Hibi Eden:

Will the MINISTER OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has noticed the MSC Elsa 3 incident, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government is aware of the disruption to fishing activities and the economic hardship caused to fisherfolk following the sinking of MSC Elsa 3 off the Kerala coast, if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government is coordinating with scientific institutions and marine experts to assess the long-term impact of these incidents on the quality and safety of edible marine species and the ecological sustainability of traditional fishing grounds, if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) whether the Government has conducted or supported any scientific assessment of the impact of plastic nurdle contamination, hazardous cargo leakage, or ecosystem degradation on fish stocks and breeding grounds and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING

(SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH ALIAS LALAN SINGH)

- (a) The cargo vessel MSC ELSA-3, carrying 643 containers, was wrecked on 24–25 May 2025 approximately 39 nautical miles south of Kochi, Kerala. The Government of Kerala has reported that fishermen, particularly those from Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Alappuzha and Ernakulam districts, were affected between 25 May and 1 June 2025 due to restrictions arising from the incident.
- (b) to (d) The Government of Kerala has further informed that interim relief has been provided to the affected fishermen, including ₹1,000 per family to 1,05,518 marine fishermen families (comprising 78,498 marine fishermen families and 24,020 allied fishermen families) from the SDRF, along with 6 kg of rice per family to compensate for livelihood loss. Additionally, on 25 May 2025, the State Disaster Management Department issued advisories instructing fishermen not to venture within a 20-nautical-mile radius of the sunken vessel.

The Government of Kerala informed that a high-level meeting was convened on 28 May 2025 with the scientists of ICAR-Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT), ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS) and representatives of fishermen to assess possible ecological impacts and identify necessary measures for protecting fishery resources and fishermen's livelihoods. Subsequently, on 19 June 2025, the State Government constituted a Joint Coordination Committee with representatives from KUFOS, ICAR-CMFRI, ICAR-CIFT, State Pollution Control Board, Food Safety Department, National Health Mission, and Coastal Police to undertake sampling and testing of water and fish as per standard protocols. Test results indicated that fish samples were in good condition, with no objectionable smell or flavour, and water parameters (pH, salinity, conductivity) remained within normal ranges. Preliminary analyses revealed no trace of oil, no evidence of hazardous chemicals, and confirmed that fish samples from Ernakulam, Alappuzha, Kollam, and other affected coasts were safe for consumption. No visible oil slicks or tar balls were detected; however, large quantities of plastic nurdles, cotton bales, and container debris were observed along the coastlines, particularly in Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram. No immediate evidence of large-scale chemical contamination in nearshore waters was found during the monitoring period.

Further, as part of its long-term strategy for marine ecosystem conservation and restoration, the Department of Fisheries, Government of India, has approved projects worth ₹13.02 crore under PMMSY for the installation of artificial reefs along the Kerala coast to rejuvenate fish habitats and restore fish stocks.
