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NATIONAL MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE BOARD, REPORT, 4 JUNE 2012

From the Desk of The Chairman
National Maritime Search & Rescue Board

Maritime search and rescue operations has undergone positive changes with time, which have resulted in improved safety of mariners at sea. Needless to say, the tireless efforts of rescue agencies have also inspired considerable confidence in SAR management amongst seafarers. However, one must remember that despite significant advances in maritime technology and rescue capabilities, sea is a hard task master and perils at sea can never be ignored.

The importance of preventive measures e.g., safety inspections/drills, availability of appropriate communications and lifesaving equipment has contributed effectively in reducing distress incidents at sea. While a number of measures have been initiated towards enhancing safety of fishermen operating in traditional/small craft at sea, there exists a continued need to inculcate safety consciousness through regular interaction and feedback.

The coordination and revalidation of established procedures for M-SAR form a very important aspect of an effective SAR regime. In order to revalidate the existing procedures, a National Level Search and Rescue Workshop and Exercise was conducted at Mumbai on 13-14 Jan 12. In a first of its kind, the exercise witnessed participation of international observers from nine countries. It was indeed very encouraging to notice the synergy amongst all the resource agencies during the exercise. I am sure that lessons learnt and the best practices evolved will be incorporated to make the M-SAR response comprehensive and more effective.

The XIth National Maritime Search and Rescue Board is scheduled to meet on 24 Jul 2012 to deliberate on issues concerning the implementation of National Search Plan and also to facilitate review of progress on earlier meetings. I am hopeful the working groups on technical and legal issues, constituted by the board will submit value based solutions to various problem areas at the meeting.

"VAYAM RAKSHAMAH"

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(MP Muralidharan)
Vice Admiral
Chairman
National Maritime Search & Rescue Board

New Delhi
04 Jun 12

From the Editor's Desk

The search and rescue missions undertaken and the lives saved during emergencies at sea stand testimony to the concerted efforts of Indian Coast Guard with support of all resource agencies in the last six months.

The concerted effort of the ICG during the past six months has resulted in saving of 134 precious lives at sea in 75 missions including 06 Medical evacuations with close coordination with all resource agencies.

The process for revalidation of procedures of M-SAR was undertaken during the National Level Search & Rescue Workshop and Exercise conducted at Mumbai on 13-14 Jan 12. The successful conduct of SAREX-12 revalidated our Maritime SAR Capabilities. I express my deepest gratitude to all NMSAR Board members and resource agencies for extending whole hearted support for the success of SAREX-2012 and I am confident that the cooperation will continue to be extended.

The amendment to the resolution in constitution of NMSARB paved the way for active participation of 13 coastal states (including 04 union territories) as regular members to the NMSARB. Thus, all coastal states will be participating in the annual NMSARB meeting regularly, which will effectively aid in implementation of SAR regime along the coast by the coastal state administration.

Further, through these columns, I request all NMSAR Board members to spare their valuable time to participate in the XIth NMSAR Board meeting scheduled at Chennai on 24 Jul 12 and deliberate emerging issues related to MSAR.

(Pintu Bag)
Commandant (JG)
Dy Director (SAR & CS)

CONTENTS

SAREX-12	... 3-4
SAR News	... 4-9
Medical Evacuation	... 9-11
Piracy	... 11-13
Capacity Building Workshop	... 13-14
MS Notice	... 15-15

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NATIONAL MARITIME SEARCH & RESCUE WORKSHOP AND EXERCISE (SAREX) - 2012

The Indian Coast Guard is the National Maritime Search and Rescue coordinating Authority for executing/ coordinating SAR missions in the Indian Search and Rescue Region (ISRR). Indian Coast Guard SAR response involves multi-mission stations located in all maritime states/UTs. Director General Coast Guard is the National Maritime SAR Coordinating Authority (NMSARCA). Conduct of a National level Maritime Search and Rescue exercise every alternate year is a part of NMSAR Board activity to utilize the resource of NMSAR Board member agencies for responding to any SAR incident.

Participants in the SAREX-12

In series with bi-annual National level search and rescue exercise under the aegis of National Maritime Search and Rescue Board (NMSARB), the Indian Coast Guard conducted a large scale Search and Rescue exercise off Mumbai on 13-14 Jan 12. The exercise with code name SAREX-12 involved participation of 07 Coast Guard ships, 01 Naval ship, 02 Coast Guard helicopters, 02 Coast Guard Dornier aircraft and one Indian Air Force helicopter.

The exercise was witnessed by all Stake holders of NMSAR Board and observers from other resource agencies in India along with

Rescue of Survivor during SAREX-12

observers from 09 Maritime nations (Japan, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Seychelles, Philippines, Bangladesh, Mauritius, Maldives) for the first time.

The exercise involved one day Workshop and Table top exercise on 13 Jan 12 followed by sea exercise off Mumbai on 14 Jan 12. During the sea exercise, an air crash scenario was simulated, wherein, one air craft with 100 passengers on passage from Mumbai to Muscat crashed at sea due to technical snag. The aircraft ditched close to a merchant vessel which lost steerage way and consequently collided with fishing boat.

On receipt of the incident, ships and aircraft were diverted from patrol and additional ships and helicopters were deployed for large scale rescue operation. Contingency plan of all resource agencies were revalidated during the rescue and evacuation of casualties to shore based hospitals in addition to medical facilities onboard Naval and Coast Guard ships.

Extinguishing fire during SAREX-12

The successful conduct of National Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise, reiterated India's Maritime Capabilities besides building confidence in National and International Maritime fraternity while operating in Indian waters.

Beacon Exercise

Beacon exercise was conducted on 30 Mar 12 in coordination with INMCC, Bangalore and resource agencies to check the efficacy of COSPAS-SARSAT system and capabilities of maritime and aeronautical distress response management systems. One EPIRB from ICG ship off Port Blair and two PLBs of IAF, one from West and other from North East of India were activated for the beacon exercise. The maritime distress management system responded immediately and established communication with distress unit at sea.

SAR NEWS

Assistance to adrift Indian Fishing Boat 'Sri Kodiyar Bhakti'

Indian Coast Guard Ship Vijit on patrol along Indo-Pak IMBL sighted one Indian fishing Boat Sri Kodiyar Bhakti (GJ-11-07426) with 05 crew drifting in position 49 n miles South West off Mitha Port at 0745 hrs on 04 Nov 11 due engine failure since 02 Nov 11. Coast Guard District Headquarters 1 (Gujarat), at Porbandar informed the owner of the boat and the Secretary Porbandar Fishermen Association to arrange/provide towing assistance to the disabled boat. However, the owner/Fishing Association could not arrange for towing the boat.

The Fishermen were exhausted without food and water and surviving on ice water for two days. The ICG ship provided food and drinking water to fishermen and took the disabled fishing boat under

Assistance to Indian fishing boat

tow on 12 Nov 11. ICGS Vijit towed the boat till off Jakhau and thereafter handed over to ICGS C-135 for towing and berthing the vessel inside harbour. ICGS C-135 along with the boat and crew entered Jakhau harbour at 2120 hrs on 12 Nov 11.

Assistance to Stranded Indian Fishing Boat

On 17 Nov 11, ICGS Avvaiyyar whilst on patrol in Palk Bay located one Indian fishing boat (Reg. no. PK/06/M/094) stranded with three crew in position 17 n miles South East off Manamelkudi Point due machinery break down.

The ICG ship took the disabled boat under tow and shaped course for Jegathapatinam. While on passage to Jegathapatinam, ICG ship located another fishing boat (Reg. No. TN/06/MFB/911) which was deployed by owner for assisting the stranded boat.

The disabled fishing boat along with three crew were handed over to the fishing boat deployed by the owner for towing to Jegathapatinam. The stranded boat with crew brought safely to Jegathapatinam on 17 Nov 11.

Assistance to Distressed Vessel MSV AVE Maria

On 26 Nov 11, MV CMA CGM Otello relayed a distress message regarding flooding onboard MSV AVE Maria in position 88 n miles South-West of Vizhinjam light. The disabled vessel was on passage from Tuticorin to Male with 11 crew onboard.

On investigation it was revealed that the MSV AVE Maria encountered bad weather in area, lost steerage way due to loss of rudder and was flooded. The distressed vessel was abandoned in position 90 n miles South-West of Vizhinjam.

Disabled MSV AVE Maria

On receipt of the distress message, MRCC Mumbai established communication with the master of MV CMA CGM Otello which was one n mile away from the adrift vessel and requested her to investigate/render necessary assistance. On receipt of request from MRCC, Mumbai MV CMA CGM Otello rescued all 11 crew from MSV AVE Maria and shaped course for Vizhinjam.

Subsequently, ICGS C-134 was sailed from Vizhinjam at 1430 h on 26 Nov 11 to take over

Rescued crew from MSV AVE Maria

the rescued crew from MV CMA CGM Otello. ICGS C-134 effected R/V with MV CMA CGM Otello on the same day and embarked all the rescued crew from MV CMA CGM Otello for passage to Vizhinjam. ICGS C-134 with the rescued crew entered Vizhinjam harbour at 1900 hrs on 26 Nov 11. Rescued crew were provided care and handed over to Coastal Police.

Rescue of Fishing Vessel - Arman

On 28 Nov 11, fishing boat Arman, was adrift due to engine failure in position 19 n miles West of New Mangalore.

On receipt of the information, ICGS Lakshmibai was deployed on 28 Nov 11 from New Mangalore for rescue operations. ICGS Lakshmibai took the disabled boat under tow and arrived New Mangalore port at 2030 h on 28 Nov 11. The rescued boat alongwith crew were handed over to the Deputy Director of Fisheries, New Mangalore.

SAR assistance for Marooned Personnel on Barren Island

On 19 Dec 11, Survey Vessel RV Samudra Manthan informed MRCC, Port Blair regarding stranding of a boat with approximately 90 personnel onboard at Barren Island. The boat was ferrying Bangladeshi (37) and Myanmarese (48) nationals to Malaysia.

Myanmarese crew stranded near Barren Island

On receipt of the information, ICGS Bhikhaiji Cama was sailed from Port Blair at 1700 h on 19 Dec 11. The ICG ship arrived the datum at 2330 h. CG Dornier was also launched at 1745 h on the same day. The ICG ship rescued 85 personnel and took the boat under tow and arrived Port Blair AM 21 Dec 11.

Rescue of Bangladesh/Myanmarese Nationals

Preliminary investigation revealed that 90 persons embarked in two boats from Bangladesh on 10 Dec 11. One boat sank enroute on 17 Dec 11 and five persons reportedly died at sea. The remaining 85 persons embarked the other boat which drifted to Barren Island on 17 Dec 11.

Rescue of Bangladeshi Fishermen by Indian Fishermen

Indian fishing boat 'Shiva' sighted two Bangladeshi fishing boats drifting in position 115 n miles off Srikakulam on 04 Jan 12. The Bangladeshi crew frantically waved for help and subsequently three crew swam towards fishing boat Shiva for assistance.

The master of the fishing boat Shiva requested two more Indian fishing boats for assistance. All 19 Bangladeshi crew were dehydrated/ injured crew were rescued and embarked to Indian fishing boats. Three Indian fishing boats with 19 rescued Bangladeshi

Rescue of Bangladeshi Fishermen onboard Indian Fishing Boat

crew arrived off Donkuru village of Itchapuram Mandal, Srikakulam District on 05 Jan 12.

Assistance to Drifting Vessel MSV Sea Prince

On 24 Jan 12, Coast Guard Regional Headquarters (West) received information from MV Humboldt Express regarding drifting of sailing vessel MSV Sea Prince with eight crew onboard. The sailing vessel was drifting since 24 Jan 12 in position 58 n miles North-East of New Mangalore due engine breakdown.

On receipt of the information, ICGS Kasturba Gandhi on patrol was diverted to render assistance. The master of the vessel informed ICG ship that the vessel was adrift due engine failure, all crew were safe & requested technical assistance for rectification of engine.

The technical team of ICG ship boarded the vessel to rectify the defect. However, the attempt proved futile. The Vessel was taken under tow by ICG ship and brought to Old Mangalore Port at 1100 h on 26 Jan 12. The disabled sailing vessel and crew were handed over to Marine Police.

Assistance to Indian Fishing Boat

On 01 Feb 12, Coastal Security Group, Chennai informed MRCC (Chennai) that Indian fishing boat 'Vasanthammal' (Reg. No. TN-06/MFB/1238) along with 05 crew adrift in position 09 n miles South-East of Pt Calimere and requested Coast Guard assistance.

On receipt of the information, ICGS Vigraha and ICGS Priyadarshini on patrol were diverted for rendering necessary assistance. On arrival, ICGS Vigraha sighted another fishing boat in distress in position 12.5 n miles South-West of Pt Calimere on 02 Feb 12.

The adrift boat was towed by ICG ship to Nagapattinam and handed over to fisheries authorities. Subsequently, the fishing boat 'Vasanthammal' (Reg. no. TN-06/MFB/1238) was also spotted by another fishing boat and towed to Kottaipattinam.

Collision of Indian Fishing Boat with Merchant Vessel off Kerala Coast

At about 0100 h, on 01 March 12, Mechanised Fishing Boat 'Don – 1' sank due to collision with a merchant vessel 19 n miles South West of Kochi. Out of 07 fishermen onboard the illfated boat, 02 fishermen died, 02 were rescued by IFB 'Saint Anthony-1' and 03 were reported to be missing. 02 dead bodies and 02 survivors were recovered by another fishing boat 'St Anthony – 1'.

On receipt of information, at about 0400 h on 01 Mar 12, a coordinated search and rescue operation was launched to rescue the survivors of the ill-fated boat and to locate the suspected ship.

Three ICG Ships were deployed for search operations and interdiction of the merchant vessel. 01 CG Dornier was launched from Kochi with first light at 0640 h to carry out surveillance in area and expeditiously report position of various merchant vessels in a radius of 100 n miles. One Indian Naval Ship which was engaged in survey was also diverted to join the search and rescue efforts. Further, 01 more Indian Naval ship was also deployed PM 01 Mar 12 to intercept and investigate another suspect vessel MV Great Praise 72 n miles South of Kochi. ICG ships arrived area early in the morning and commenced search for the missing fishermen.

To locate the unknown vessel, ICG obtained the surface plot of probable ships in area at the time of

incident and 06 ships were identified. One merchant vessel MV Kota Nebula which was close to the incident, was boarded by ICG ship at 1050 h on 01 Mar 12.

The other suspect vessels entering foreign ports were directed to maintain Voyage Data Recorder (VDR) records of passage from 0001 h upto 0600 h on 01 Mar 12 for investigation by Maritime Agencies.

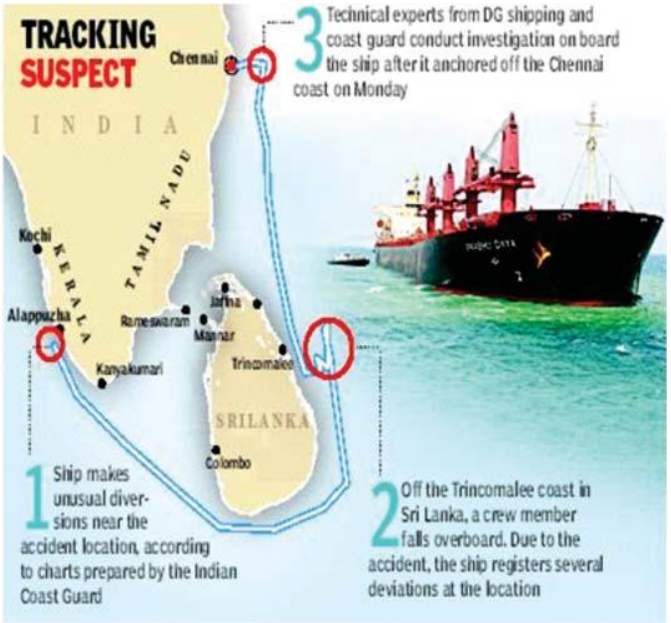
Further, additional information/position updates of vessels which could have transited close to the incident area on night of 29 Feb/01 Mar 12 from various resources were obtained. Correlation of the position updates of various vessels was undertaken with Indian Search and Rescue Ship Reporting System (INDSAR) /Long Range Identification and Tracking (LRIT) / Automatic Identification System (AIS) Satellite based plots. The vessels entering Indian ports were planned to be investigated on arrival. Maritime Rescue and Coordination Centre (Mumbai) informed DG Shipping to direct foreign flag vessels to cooperate in the investigation.

MRCC (MB) investigated MV Lal Bahadur Shastri which transited close to the incident area. During investigation, it was revealed that **MV Prabhu Daya** was in vicinity of MV Lal Bahadur Shastri.

MV Prabhu Daya

ECDIS snap shots were requested from the suspect vessel and analysis done. Based on the available inputs, this vessel was found to be the most likely suspect and DG shipping was requested by ICG to direct the vessel to enter nearest Indian Port for marine causality investigation.

DG(Shipping) directed the vessel to enter nearest Indian port at 1930 h on 02 Mar 12. Accordingly, the vessel proceeded towards Chennai. However, while enroute, the ship reported man overboard in position about 80 n miles South East of Trincomalee at 0843 h on 03 Mar 12. The second officer, Mr. Prasobh Sugadhan was reportedly sighted last at 0430 h.

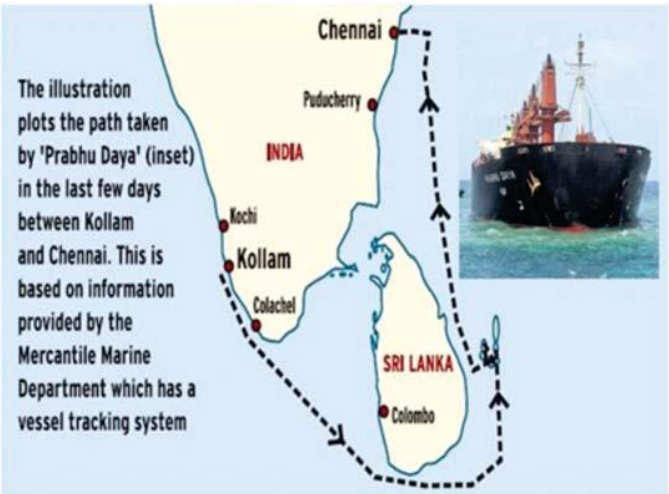


On receipt of the information, MRCC(Mumbai) activated the International Safety Net (ISN) message requesting vessels transiting the area to render necessary assistance. MRCC(Colombo) was requested by ICG to coordinate SAR as the position of man overboard was in Sri Lankan SAR Region. Two Sri Lankan Naval Fast Attack Crafts (FAC) were deployed for search.

The survivor was later rescued by the Sri Lankan fishing boat Ranjan Putha at about 1345 h on 03 Mar 12 in position about 91 n miles SE of Trincomalee. The survivor was subsequently transferred to Sri Lankan FAC and brought to

Trincomalee for hospitalisation. MV Prabhu Daya after handing over the documents of the survivor proceeded towards Chennai and arrived at 2342 h on 05 Mar 12.

The preliminary investigation prima facie revealed the vessel had scratch/ rubbing marks one meters above water line extending upto 30 meters on its port side.



Chief Engineer during investigation confirmed no such marks existed prior departure from Goa. Log and ECDIS track of the vessel confirms vessel crossed over the wreck position of MV Don-1 at 0050 h on 01 Mar 12. Master also admitted possible collision considering the evidences.

Search efforts by ICG/IN ships and aircraft continued from the date of occurrence of the incident till 10 Mar 12. The diving team ex-INS Sarvekshak found body of one missing fisherman entangled in the fishing nets of the sunken boat on 04 Mar 12.

The diving team ex-INS Sarvekshak also found the body of one more missing fisherman of sunken fishing vessel 'DON-1' on 10 Mar 12. The body of remaining missing fisherman was washed ashore near Alleppy on 10 Mar 12. **Thus, out of 07 fishermen, onboard the illfated fishing boat, 02 survivors and 05 dead bodies have been accounted for.**

The Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre, Mumbai not only utilized the technological inputs available with its own high-tech equipment but also proactively obtained the surface plots of ships in area from the leading ship reporting systems of the world e.g. United States Automated Vessel Reporting System (AMVER).

Further, the inputs of the Satellite based Automatic Identification System (AIS), Long Range Identification & Tracking (LRIT) and the plots of Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS) of vessels transiting the area were carefully evaluated, analyzed and correlated to identify the vessel suspected to be engaged in collision. **The professional handling of the situation by MRCC (Mumbai) through obtaining information and its accurate analysis resulted in not only examination of suspect vessels within few hours of the reporting of the incident but also finally locating the most suspect vessel MV Prabhu Daya.**

MEDICAL EVACUATION

MT Desh Rakshak

On 10 Dec 11, MT Desh Rakshak, while on passage from Basrah to Chennai, requested for Medical Evacuation of one crew, in position 195 n miles West of Dwarka. The patient was suffering from Facial Paralysis.

Evacuation of patient by ICGS C-143 from MV Desh Rakshsk

On receipt of the information, MRSC, Porbandar, contacted master of the vessel and advised to shape course towards Porbandar. In the mean time, telephonic medical advice was also provided by the District Medical Officer. ICGS C-143 was sailed from Porbandar at 0600 h on 11 Dec 11 and evacuated the patient at 0815 h. The patient was handed over to local agent for further medical care.

MV Seeb

On 26 Dec 11, Coast Guard Headquarters received message from IHQ, MoD(Navy) regarding medical evacuation of one crew member from an Iranian flagged vessel MV Seeb in position 245 n miles South West of Prongs Lt. The patient was suffering from internal bleeding.

On receipt of the information, MRCC Mumbai established communication with the master of the vessel at 1835 h on 26 Dec 11. The vessel was advised to close Mumbai with best possible speed for early evacuation.

In the mean time, constant communication with MV Seeb was maintained by MRCC (MB) to obtain regular update on position of the vessel and state of the patient.

At 0635 h on 27 Dec 11, Indian Navy Seaking helicopter was launched for Medical Evacuation. The ailing patient of MV Seeb was evacuated and air lifted to INS Shikra at 0730 h on 27 Dec 11. Thereafter the patient was shifted to INHS Asvini for further medical care.

MV Maersk Lebu

At 2100 hrs on 24 Jan 12, MRCC, Mumbai received information from MRCC, Falmouth, UK regarding medical emergency on board MV Maersk Lebu in position 380 n miles South-West of Goa and requested for medical evacuation.

On receipt of the information, MRCC, Mumbai contacted the vessel and obtained the status of the patient. Further, the vessel was directed to close Mormugao port with best speed. The CG medical officer provided telephonic medical assistance to the master for managing the patient.

Subsequently, ICGS C-148 was sailed at 0430 h on 26 Jan 12 for evacuation of the patient. MV Maersk Lebu arrived off Goa at 0630 h on 26 Jan 12. ICGS C-148 effected R/V with the vessel at 0630 h and evacuated the patient safely at 0640 h. ICGS C-148 entered Marmugao harbour at 0720 h on 26 Jan 12 and patient was handed over to the agent for admittance at Salgoakar Medical Research Centre (SMRC), Goa.

MV Roshita

At 2300 h, on 02 Feb 12 ICGS Okha received telephonic information from master of MV Roshita, anchored off Okha regarding one of her crew being unconscious due high blood pressure and requested for immediate medical assistance.

On receipt of the information, ICGS C-136 was sailed at 0015 h on 03 Feb 12 and evacuated the patient. The ICG ship along with patient entered Okha harbour same day at 0145 h.

Patient Being Evacuated by C-136 from MV Roshita

The patient was administered primary treatment by the Principal Medical Officer of INS Dwarka. Subsequently, the patient was shifted to Guru Govind Singh hospital, Jamnagar by local agent for further medical care.

PIRACY

Firing Incident by MV Enrica Lexie

The Italian Navy armed guards onboard Motor Tanker Enrica Lexie opened fire on fishing boat "St Antony" on 15 Feb 12, suspecting it to be a pirate skiff which led to two casualties.

On receipt of information, ICGS Samar on patrol off Vizhinjam coast was diverted and ICGS Lakshmibai was sailed from Kochi at 1935 h on 15 Feb 12 (with 04 police personnel embarked) to the most probable area for search and interdiction of the suspected merchant vessel.

Further, Coast Guard Dornier ex-747 Sqn (CG) was launched for sea-air coordinated search. MRCC (MB) was concurrently directed to analyse the AIS and LRIT plot and correlate with available inputs to identify and track the suspected merchant vessel.

At about 1825 h on 15 Feb 12, MRCC(MB) analysed space based AIS (AIS-SB) plot and identified four probable merchant ships which could have transited from the incident position.

MT Enrica Lexie

The appreciation led to suspicion on MT Enrica Lexie. The updated position of the suspected vessel was immediately passed to ships at sea and CG Dornier.

The vessel was in position 243 Kochi Lt 37 n miles, about 34 n miles from the incident position and directed to alter course and proceed to Kochi anchorage for further investigation. The master also informed that 06 Italian Navy Guards were present onboard the vessel and did not intimate about the attack to any authority in India.

UKMTO confirmed of having received a message from MT Enrica Lexie. At 1950 h on 15 Feb 12, CG Dornier located MT Enrica Lexie and vectored ICG ships for interception. CG Dornier also directed the vessel to proceed to Kochi anchorage for investigation. ICGS Lakshmibai intercepted MT Enrica Lexie at about 2045 h on 15 Feb 12 and escorted the vessel till Kochi anchorage.

MT Enrica Laxie escorted to Kochi by ICGS Lakshmibai and ICGS Samar

Meanwhile, the ill fated fishing vessel St Antony entered Neendakara harbour, Quilon at about 2315 h on 15 Feb 12 and it was confirmed by the police that the boat had a total crew of eleven fishermen and two were killed during the firing incident.

The preliminary investigations, documentary evidence correlated with the events clearly bring out

Indian Fishing Boat St. Antony

that MT Enrica Lexie did not have a response plan against piracy and failed to resort to graduated use of force. In fact, use of force by MT Enrica Lexie is illegal since the fishing vessel St Antony was at 100 mtrs from the vessel and was not making attempts for boarding the vessel and there was also no threat to life onboard MT Enrica Lexie.

Presently, two Italian armed guards are in police custody for judicial proceedings.

Issue of Advisory to Mariners

In the light of recent incidents of merchant vessels transiting very close to Indian west coast to avoid piracy attacks by Somalian pirates leading to their transgression over the fishing zones utilized by Indian fishermen, ICG has apprised various Information Sharing Centres dealing with the piracy issue in the region about the fishing activities off the Indian coast and requested to issue advisory for merchant vessels transiting the area to be careful about small fishing boats.

The International Maritime Bureau (IMB) Piracy Reporting Centre based at Kuala Lumpur has already issued such advisory on the request of the MRCC (Mumbai). The UKMTO has also included such information in the monthly/weekly advisory issued by them. Navigational Warning 'NAVAREA', which is issued for advising the mariners at sea about significant marine information, has also been issued by the Chief Hydrographer to the Govt. of India.

Extract of IMO Circular on Carrying of Armed Guards

IMO vide circular MSC.1/Circ.1405/ Rev.1 dated 16 Sep 11 have issued revised interim guidelines to ship owners, ship operators and ship masters on the use of contracting Armed Personnel onboard ships in the high risk areas. The rules for use of force as mentioned in the relevant circular of IMO are enumerated in succeeding paragraphs.

The primary function of Armed Security personnel embarked onboard merchant vessels is to prevent boarding using minimal force. Vessel embarking armed security personnel need to have a response plan against piracy and the response plan should cater for graduated use of force.

Armed security personnel are required to undertake reasonable steps to avoid use of force. In no case use of force to exceed the necessity and has to be proportionate to threat.

Armed Security personnel are not to use firearms against persons except in self defence or defence of others against imminent threat of death or serious injury, or to prevent the perpetration of a serious crime involving grave threat to life.

"Success in anti piracy operation through relentless efforts"

At the end of a year in which the World Maritime Day theme of "**Piracy: orchestrating the response**" we can look back on 12 months of relatively good progress that have laid the foundations for cautious optimism about the future.

Recently compiled statistics show that the number of ships and seafarers held captive by Somali pirates have reduced from a peak of 33 and 733 in February 2011 to 13 and 265 respectively, at the end of 2011. The number of reported attacks has also declined from a high of 45 per month in January 2011 to 14 in a month towards end of 2011; and the proportion of successful attacks has been reduced from 20 per cent in January 2011 to just 7 per cent towards end of 2011.

Throughout 2011, IMO engaged at the political level (mainly through the UN Security Council) to bring about a solution to the piracy problem and thus facilitate and expedite the release of seafarers and any other persons held hostage.

In addition, IMO intensified its work to strengthen the protection of persons (seafarers, fishermen and passengers), ships and cargoes in piracy-infested areas and also preserve the integrity of shipping lanes of strategic importance and significance, such as the Gulf of Aden.

Improvements were made to the accessibility and distribution of IMO guidelines and industry best management practice guidance; steps were taken to ensure that ships' crews are aware of how to access naval protection and implement effectively the preventive, evasive and defensive measures recommended by IMO and the industry.

The Organization also addressed the issue of carriage of privately contracted armed security personnel aboard ships and developed guidelines on the subject, involving, in this particular instance, flag, port and coastal States.

IMO helped promote greater levels of co ordination among navies, and further co-operation between and among States, regions and organizations.

Information-sharing, the coordination of military and civil efforts and the development and implementation of regional initiatives, such as the IMO-led Djibouti Code of Conduct, were the main thrust in this direction.

The establishment of information sharing centres in Dar-es-Salaam, Mombasa and Sana and the laying of the foundation stone of the building set to house a regional training centre in Djibouti were significant, tangible steps towards building regional capability to counteract piratical activities.

During the year, IMO maintained close co-operation with the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) and communicated with the Executive Head of the World Food Programme (WFP) concerning the potential for chartering bigger, faster ships to deliver food aid to Somalia, and shortening the distances they are required to run through pirate-infested waters.

Capacity Building Workshop Jointly Organised by Indian Coast Guard and ReCAAP ISC 15-17 Nov 11

The Indian Coast Guard along with the Regional Cooperation Agreement for Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ship in Asia (ReCAAP), Information Sharing Centre (ISC) co-hosted the Capacity Building Workshop at Goa from 15–17 Nov 2011.

Capacity Building Workshop

The ReCAAP is the first government to government instrument, which deals with the issue of combating piracy and armed robbery. Based on the three pillars viz information sharing, capacity building and cooperative arrangements amongst the Contracting States the agreement aims at facilitating smooth flow of information on incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia. Being the

DGICG adressing at Capacity Building Workshop

fifth in the series, the workshop was attended by 39 participants from 21 countries including, International Maritime Organisation and Project Implementation Unit, Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC). This is the first time the workshop was held in India.

In an effort to build up the capacity of its Focal Points and share best practices for development of compatible standard operating procedures, ReCAAP ISC conducts Capacity building Workshop every year. Representatives of the Focal Points, Member State Agencies, shipping industry, observers from international bodies including IMO are invited to the workshop to refine the process of existing information flow mechanism for expeditious and prompt delivery of response to an incident.

During the opening address, Vice Admiral MP Muralidharan, AVSM, NM, Director General Indian Coast Guard, who is also the Indian Governor to the ReCAAP ISC Governing Council, recognized the efforts of ReCAAP ISC towards developing the cooperative framework to address the menace of piracy and armed robbery and facilitating information exchange between the various stake holders. He also highlighted the Indian efforts in combating piracy and armed robbery against ships in Indian waters. Early, this year based on the information received through ReCAAP ISC, the Indian Coast Guard, which is also the ReCAAP Focal Point of India, successfully carried out anti-piracy operations leading to apprehension of 121 pirates and rescue of the crew, who were held hostage for many months.

LTC (Retd.) Nicholas Teo, Deputy Director ReCAAP ISC in his opening remarks recognized the steps taken by Indian Agencies including Indian Coast Guard to ensure safe and secure seas for the seafarers. He also conveyed that information sharing is a shared responsibility of the governments and the shipping industry and the purpose of information sharing would be better served if it is accurate and timely.

The delegates at the workshop shared various perspectives on dealing with the scourge of piracy and charted a way ahead for enhancing the response to deal with incidents of piracy and armed robbery in Asian waters. The workshop culminated with an anti-piracy exercise held off Goa by ICG ships and aircraft, which provided firsthand experience to the participants on conduct of anti-piracy operations at sea and real time flow of information from the scene of incident.

Delegates at Capacity Building Workshop at Goa

MS Notice No. 7 of 2012

Navigation off the Indian Coast-Transgressing of Fishing Nets Mistaking Fishing Boats with Pirate Skiffs

¨ Shipping traffic closer to western Indian coast has been observed to be steadily increasing during recent times as merchant ships appear to prefer planning their passage closer to Indian coast as against the straight courses across the Arabian seas.

¨ There are over 300,000 fishing boats in operations off the Indian coast. Fishing off the coast of state of Kerala and Karnataka is particularly intense during post South West monsoon and extends up to 50 n miles from the coastline. Generally in these waters, FRP Fishing boats with 04-05 crew with outboard motors operate and engage in fishing activity with long lines and purseine gear.

¨ Increasing shipping traffic closer to the Indian coast causes the merchant ships to, at times, transgress the fishing nets. On observing the approaching merchant vessel onto their fishing nets/gear, it is common for the fishing boats to raise alarm and to 'sail towards' the merchant ship to attract attention so as to avoid damage to their nets.

¨ Reports are being received where merchant ships have mistaken the fishing boats to be 'pirate skiffs'. In one such recent incident off the coast of West coast of India, Kerala, a merchant ship fired on the fishermen, killing two of the fishermen. The ship's security guards had assumed the innocent fishermen to be the pirates. In addition, there has been report of another report of firing of warning shots on Indian fishermen.

¨ In another case, a merchant ship collided with a fishing boat. This resulted in sinking of the boat and loss of life of three fishermen while two of the fishermen are still missing. These unfortunate accidents have resulted in the detention of the suspected vessels and their crew members/security guards involved. In addition to these two instances, there have been numerous reporting of near miss collisions of fishing vessels with merchant ships off the west coast of India.

¨ It has been reported that merchant ships are transiting very close to the coast to avoid the High Risk Area (HRA) which starts at 12 n miles from the Indian coast. When the merchant ships navigate close to the coast, they do have close encounters with the fishermen. This interface may result in either a collision with the fishing vessels or at times merchant ships mistaking the fishermen to be pirates, fire upon the innocent fishermen. Such close encounters may result in the adverse consequences for the fishing vessels as well as the merchant ships.

¨ While the ships are advised to maintain best management practices as per the advice of IMO, while navigating in the high risk area, it is clarified that continuing heightened vigil of Indian Navy and Indian coast Guard has ensured that no cases of incidents of piracy have occurred in the Indian EEZ (up-to 200 n miles from the Indian coast) since June 2011.

¨ Therefore, all merchant vessels are advised:-

- ✰ To take note of dense fishing traffic on Indian coast, the possibility that they may be approached by these boats for safeguarding their nets/lines and should not mistake these fishing boats for 'pirate skiffs, or PAGs and navigate with extreme caution when approaching up-to 50 n miles from the Indian coast, and

- ✰ To take cognizance of IMO circular MSC.1/1334, dated 23 Jun 2009 with regard to appreciating sufficient grounds for suspecting the fishing vessel to be a Pirate Action Group (PAG)

- ✰ To report sightings of any suspicious craft within Indian EEZ to Indian Coast Guard on contact details mentioned under para 7 below.

¨ All merchant ships are further advised to report the presence of armed Guards on board to Indian Navy (email: wncmocmb-navy@nic.in fax: +91 22 22661702)/Indian Coast Guard (email:mrcc-west@indiancoastguard.nic.in or indsar@vsnl.net, or icgmrcc_mumbai@mtnl.net; Telephone: +91 22 24388065, 24316558, fax: +91 22 24316558, +91 22 24333727) in compliance to para 3.8 of IMO Circular MSC.1/Circ 1405/Rev.1 dated 16 Sep 11 and para 7.6 of Ministry of Shipping, Govt. of India Circular F. No.SR-13020/6/2009-MG(pt) dated 29 Aug 11.

¨ This is issued with approval of Director General of Shipping.

Safe Waters

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