

Safe Waters

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From the Editor's Desk

The effective coordination of SAR services not only depends on the efficiency of the SAR administration and the supporting assets/infrastructure but also on the integration into the global maritime SAR system. ICG has consistently worked towards furthering the cooperation with maritime SAR and law enforcement agencies of other nations. The signing of MoU on maritime cooperation by ICG with Korea Coast Guard in Mar 06 has given an impetus to these efforts.

The maritime security situation off the coast of Somalia is continuing to deteriorate and poses a challenge for ensuring safe and secure shipping traffic through the area. The recent spurt in the incidences of hijacking of Indian vessels is an area of concern. This calls for some caution on the part of the ship owners/operators and ensure security of the vessels and crew by avoiding passage through the area in consonance with the advisory issued by the International Maritime Bureau.

The most important aspect during the coordination of SAR while responding to a distress situation is the availability of information which is accurate, comprehensive and reliable. However, despite instruction for mandatory registration of EPIRB fitted onboard vessels and aircraft and intimation on change of ownership, there are instances when precious time is lost in confirming the details of the vessels. The accessibility to the International Beacon Registration Database (IBRD) likely to be available to the MRCCs would definitely provide a fillip to the efforts in timely collection of information for any foreign registered vessels/aircraft.

The measures adopted by all the concerned agencies in supporting ICG efforts need to be continued for ensuring safe and secure seas for all mariners.

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NATIONAL MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE EXERCISE

The National Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise was conducted from 12-14 Dec 05 off Calicut simulating SAR response to a commercial aircraft ditching at sea. The participation from the resource agencies was encouraging and the exercise was effectively used for validating the existing maritime SAR procedures and evaluate any further improvements. The scenario off Mumbai involving IAF aircraft resulted in analysing the detection of distress alert by satellite based system from a fast moving aircraft and was useful in reshaping the existing procedures. The exercise was followed by SAR demonstration for the members of National Maritime SAR Board conducted off Kochi on 15 Dec 05.



INTERNATIONAL BEACON REGISTRATION DATABASE

International 406 MHz Beacon Registration Database (IBRD) has been put up on the internet with effect from 16 Jan 06 by the COSPAS SARSAT Secretariat. A meeting was held at Coast Guard Headquarters on 10 Mar 06 to evolve the policy for Indian Beacons with respect to the registration, accessibility to the database and nomination of

the point of contact. The issue is under discussion and will be decided by the National SAR Board during the V annual meeting. However, COSPAS SARSAT has been intimated not to accept online registration of beacons with India country code from individuals.

PIRACY AT SEA

Hijacking of MSV Safina Al Bisarat

Indian sailing vessel MSV Safina Al Bisarat was intercepted 54 NM off East Coast of Somalia by US Warship USS Winston S Churchill on 21 Jan 06 for indulging in the acts of piracy. Interrogation by the US forces revealed that the vessel was engaged in trade between UAE and Somali ports. The vessel had departed Kismaayo enroute to Dubai when she was taken over by ten Somalian pirates on 16 Jan 06 about 97 NM from the Somalian ports. The US forces rescued the Dhow and escorted her to safety and the pirates were handed over to the Kenyan authorities for prosecution.

Hijacking of MSV Bhakti Sagar

Indian merchant vessel MSV Bhakti Sagar while transiting off the coast of Somalia on 27 Feb 06 was attacked by the pirates armed with weapons using two speed boats in position about 31 NM off Mogadishu. The vessel alongwith all 21 crew members was hijacked by the pirates and taken to Hararadere in the vicinity of a suspected pirates camp. The vessel was later released by the pirates on 29 Mar 06.



MSV Bhakti Sagar

In view of the worsening maritime security situation off the coast of Somalia with an increase in incidences of piratical attacks on ships transiting the Somalian coast, International Maritime Bureau has declared area upto 200 NM from the coast off Somalia as piracy prone area. It has advised the merchant shipping to avoid the area during the voyage as the pirates are reported to be heavily armed and carrying out the attacks much further into the sea and holding crew hostage.

SECOND MEETING OF HEADS OF COAST GUARD AGENCIES OF ASIA

Second meeting of heads of Coast Guard Agencies of Asia was conducted at Kuala Lumpur from 20-23 Mar 05. The meeting was attended by the Director General Indian Coast Guard where high level discussions were held on effective measures in the maintenance and enhancement of maritime security related to the unlawful acts at sea.

USER STATES CONFERENCE ON ENHANCEMENT OF SAFETY, SECURITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN THE STRAITS OFF MALACCA AND SINGAPORE

The user states conference on enhancement of safety, security and environmental protection in the straits off Malacca and Singapore was conducted at Alameda, California from 15-17 Feb 06 with an aim to identify possible assistance to the three littoral states – Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore for capacity building, training, technology transfer etc. The Indian delegation was led by the Deputy Director General, Indian Coast Guard.

[Assistance to Fishing Vessel TF-101](#)

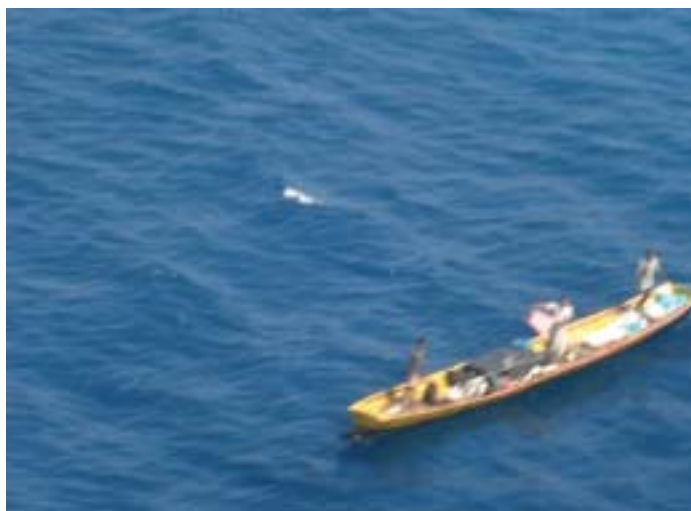
The fishing vessel TF-101 sailed from Chennai on 15 Sep 05 for Kochi. While the vessel was proceeding to Kochi, it experienced very rough weather and exhausted all available fuel. Due to this, the vessel lost communication and started drifting. On 04 Oct 05 a request was received by Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (Chennai) from M/s Allina Shipping Corporation for assistance to the said fishing vessel which was not in communication with the owner since 26 Sep 05. The last known position of the vessel was reported to be about 120 NM North East of Trincomalee in Srilankan Search and Rescue Region. On receipt of information, MRCC (Colombo) was intimated about the incident and International Safety Net message was activated requesting vessels transiting the area to render necessary assistance. On 06 Oct 05, at about 2255 hrs MV Maharashtra on passage to Chennai located the vessel in position about 290 NM east of Car Nicobar in A&N Islands. The vessel was provided water and provisions by the merchant vessel. As the vessel continued to drift, ICG Dornier aircraft was launched from Port Blair at about 0830 hrs on 11 Oct 05 for assistance. ICG ship Bhikhaiji Cama was also sailed from Campbell Bay (A&N Islands) AM 12 Oct 05 for assistance. The Dornier aircraft was launched again on 13 Oct 05 and sighted the vessel at about 1350 hrs in position about 150 NM west of Car Nicobar. ICG ship Bhikhaiji Cama also



arrived the area PM 13 Oct 05 and supplied water and provisions to the crew. The ICG continued to monitor the situation and activated ISN messages at regular intervals resulting in three merchant ships viz. MT Spring Glory, MV Hebei Arrow and MV Mykali being diverted for providing food and water to the crew on humanitarian grounds. On 25 Oct 05, information was received from the Harbour Master, Port Blair that TF-101 requested for assistance as the vessel had exhausted the water and provisions for the crew. ICG ship Samar enroute to Port Blair was diverted to assist the vessel. The ship arrived the area PM 28 Oct 05 and provided water and provisions to the vessel. ICG ship Akkadevi finally towed the vessel to Port Blair on 31 Oct 05 ending the one and a half month ordeal in choppy seas for the crew.

Assistance to FV Tsunami Express

Directorate of Fisheries (A&N) intimated MRCC (Port Blair) on 19 Dec 05 about a fishing boat FV Tsunami Express missing since 15 Dec 05 with 03 crew onboard and requested ICG assistance. ICG Dornier aircraft was immediately launched and sighted the boat at about 1230 hrs in position 1.5 NM east of North Sentinel Island. ICG ship Gangadevi was also sailed from Port Blair to provide assistance. The ship took the boat under tow and entered Port Blair harbour safely on 20 Dec 05.



Assistance to Myanmar Dinghy

On 15 Feb 06, Port Control, Port Blair informed Coast Guard Regional Headquarters (A&N) about sighting of one Myanmar Dinghy with approximately 30-35 persons onboard adrift off Barren islands. ICG ship Bhikhaiji Cama was immediately sailed on 15 Feb 06 for rendering necessary assistance. ICG Dornier was also tasked in the area and sighted the Dinghy off Barren islands. ICGS Bhikhaiji Cama intercepted the dinghy on 15 Feb 06 and transferred the boarding party for investigation. It was further revealed that all the 46 passengers paid money to the boat crew for illegal immigration to Thailand. The seven boat crew escaped into the Barren islands and were hiding on the southern side of the island since 13 Feb 06. The ship searched for the seven crew in Barren island and located the missing crew in the early hours of 16 Feb 06. All the 53 Myanmar nationals were taken on board and the dinghy was towed back to Port Blair on 16 Feb 06.



Assistance to stranded person in Rocky Creeks

ICGS Ganga Devi whilst on patrol in North Andaman area on 16 Feb 06 noticed a man waving for help from Craggy Island Eastern Edge (4 NM off Diglipur Island). On sighting the stranded man, the ship dispatched a boarding party in Gemini Boat for rendering necessary assistance. The boarding party evacuated the stranded person from rocky creek of

Kalipur beach and administered first aid. It was ascertained that the rescued person was swimming and got stranded in rocky creek due to surf/strong currents and thus could not return. He was advised to follow safety norms and abstain from venturing alone in the Islands.

Assistance to Dhow Fateh Salamat by Pakistan MSA

On 27 Feb 06, a distress alert was received by Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (Mumbai) from Indian Dhow Fateh Salamat with 12 crew onboard in position about 291 NM west of Okha (170 NM South West of Karachi). As the position of the vessel was in Pakistan Search and Rescue Region, MRCC (Mumbai) requested MRCC (Pakistan) to coordinate necessary assistance to the distressed vessel. It was intimated by the owner of the vessel that one reporter and one cameraman of Slovakian nationality were also embarked onboard the vessel for shooting a documentary film. The vessel experienced engine failure and needed assistance. Meanwhile, MRCC (Pakistan) diverted Pakistan Maritime Security Agency ship MSS Rehmat which was operating at sea at that time to provide assistance to the vessel. MSS Rehmat effected R/V with the distressed vessel on 28 Feb 06 and provided the crew with food and drinking water. As the engine of the boat was out of order and could not be repaired at sea, MSS Rehmat towed the vessel upto IMBL and handed over the tow to ICGS Tarabai PM 28 Feb 06 for onward passage to Porbandar. ICGS Tarabai arrived Porbandar PM01 Mar 06 alongwith the distressed

vessel. The assistance rendered by Pakistan MSA in providing SAR to Indian Dhow strengthens the spirit of mutual cooperation on the humanitarian cause.

Assistance to FB Vikrant

On 28 Feb 06 a request was received by Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (Mumbai) for a fishing boat adrift due to engine failure since 20 Feb 06 at about 55 NM South West of Dwarka. ICG ship C-142 was immediately sailed for rendering necessary assistance. ICG ship Kamla Devi was also sailed to augment SAR efforts. ICG Dornier aircraft was launched for sea-air coordinated search and sighted the boat in position about 93 NM South West of Porbandar on 03 Mar 06. The boat was taken under tow after the ICG boarding team provided first aid to the crew and brought to Porbandar on 04 Mar 06.

Rescue of stranded fishermen

ICG helicopter during routine surveillance mission near Little Andaman Island on 02 Mar 06 sighted one Dinghy with five fishermen in distress off North West coast of Little Andaman. The fishermen were waving desperately towards the Helicopter for help. It was found that the engine of the dinghy had broken down and the crew was stranded for the last two days. The fishermen were weak and in dehydrated state. Two of these fishermen required immediate medical attention and were airlifted to their village VK Pur (Little Andaman) by ICG helicopter. As the



remaining three fishermen did not want to leave the boat, the ICG team provided them with sufficient food and water and arranged assistance for repairs of the boat through the owner.

[Assistance to Indian dhow Al-Makhdoom Shah by Pakistan Maritime Security Agency](#)

On 15 Mar 06, MRCC (Pakistan) at Karachi received a request for assistance on VHF channel-16 from an Indian Dhow Al-Makhdoom Shah experiencing heavy flooding at anchorage in Ormara East Bay (Pakistan) 120 Nm East of Karachi. The dhow with 16 crew onboard was enroute from Mundra (Gujarat) to Dubai. Pakistan Maritime Security Agency responded to the request and provided necessary assistance to the dhow for carrying out repairs. The dhow successfully rectified the defect on the propeller shaft and sailed PM 15 Mar 06.

MEDICAL EVACUATION

[MT British Robin](#)

A request was received by Maritime Rescue Coordination Sub-Centre, New Mangalore on 21 Oct 05 from M/s GAC Shipping for medical evacuation of one Indian crew reportedly unconscious onboard MT British Robin in position 10 NM off New Mangalore. ICG Ship C-131 was immediately sailed from New Mangalore and successfully evacuated the patient. The patient was brought to New Mangalore and was admitted in Colaco Hospital.

[MV Yellow Fin](#)

A request was received by Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (Mumbai) from the Fisheries Survey of India on 26 Oct 05 for medical evacuation of a scientist, Mr Amod Tamhane ex-MV Yellow Fin who had suffered a paralytic attack in position about 114 NM

west of Mumbai. ICG Ship Durgabai Deshmukh was sailed from Mumbai with medical officer embarked onboard for rendering necessary assistance. The ship evacuated the patient and provided first aid. The Scientist was handed over to the Fisheries Survey of India at Mumbai.

[MV Prabhu Parvati](#)

A request was received from MV Prabhu Parvati by Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (Mumbai) on 18 Jan 06 for medical evacuation of a crew onboard MV Prabhu Parvati in position about 60 NM North West of New Mangalore. The patient was suspected to have suffered collapsed lung or mild heart attack. ICG ship Annie Besant sailed from New Mangalore for Medical Evacuation of the patient. The vessel was meanwhile advised to head towards New Mangalore to enable early evacuation. The ship effected RV with the vessel at midnight on 18/19 Jan 06 in position about 28 NM North West of New Mangalore. The patient was transferred onboard the ICG ship and was brought to New Mangalore after administering first aid.



[MV Sampaquita](#)

A request was received by Coast Guard Headquarters from Japan Coast Guard on 26 Jan 06 for an urgent medical advise for MV Sampaquita in

position about 390 NM West of Mumbai. The ship reported that a patient had a severed left palm due to an accident onboard and there was considerable loss of blood. ICG ship Sarojini Naidu on patrol in the area was immediately diverted to render necessary assistance. International Safety Net message was also activated requesting vessels transiting the area to provide medical assistance to the patient. ICG ship Sarojini Naidu arrived area at about 0045 hrs on 27 Jan 06 and a medical party was embarked on the vessel in position about 145 NM west of Mumbai. The patient was provided first-aid and limited medical assistance to stop bleeding and recouping of body fluids through IV drips. The ship escorted the vessel towards Mumbai harbour and transferred the patient onboard Tug Kishan Kanhaiya at 1200 hrs on 27 Jan 06 arranged by ICG through the local agent. The patient was later admitted to hospital.

MV Rageeb I

A request was received by Indian Coast Guard District Headquarters at New Mangalore from Port Signal Station, New Mangalore on 04 Feb 06 for medical evacuation of the master of MV Rageeb I off New Mangalore who was reportedly unwell. ICG Ship C-131 was sailed for providing necessary assistance and effected R/V with the vessel at about 2110 hrs on 04 Feb 06. The patient was transferred onboard the ICG ship and brought to harbour. The patient was thereafter admitted at AJ Hospital, Mangalore and diagnosed as suffering from peniculitis and epididymoarchitis on the right side.

NATURAL CALAMITY/ DISASTER RELIEF

SAR Assistance to Fishing Boats Stranded/Missing during Cyclonic Storm off Gujarat coast

A well marked low pressure area concentrating into a depression was reported over South Gujarat coast



with its center lying about 134 NM South West of Porbandar on PM 14 Sep 05. Subsequently strong winds gusting to 50 knots were reported in Porbandar / Saurashtra area till 16 Sep 05 with torrential rains and squally weather. In view of the impending weather conditions, Coast Guard District Headquarters at Porbandar alerted the State Government and State Fisheries Department to direct fishermen against proceeding to sea. The local fishing community at Okha, Jakhau and Porbandar were also similarly advised by the ICG personnel. 80 in number fishing boats who were presumably already at sea were reported missing from Porbandar, Veraval, Mangrol,



Valsad and Daman. Seven boats were also reported to have sunk/grounded between the coast of Porbandar and Okha and a total of 20 fishermen were reported missing by the fisherman association with other

crew members reaching safely ashore in the boats

operating in the vicinity. ICG Dornier aircraft ex-Daman was launched on 17 Sep 05 to search and locate the missing boats/personnel. A large number of boats were sighted by the aircraft inside fishing harbours at Mahua, Pipavav Bandar, Jaffarbad, Nawabandar, Diu, Muldwarka and Veraval. International safety net (ISN) was also activated requesting vessels transiting the area to render necessary assistance to the boats in distress. ICG ship Veera on patrol was diverted to the area for SAR assistance. Two more ICG ships were also kept standby. ICG ship C-136 was sailed from Okha on 18 Sep 05 for providing SAR assistance off Mithapur and Dwarka. ICG ship Tarabai was also sailed from Pipavav Bandar on 18 Sep 05 for SAR. ICG Dornier aircraft ex-Daman was launched again on 18 Sep 05 while ICG helicopter was also launched ex-Daman. Four fishing boats were located off Daman and were directed to enter Daman harbour. Two more boats were located off Mangrol and directed to enter harbour. ICG ship Vivek deployed off Mumbai for SAR cover during Ganesh immersion processions was also diverted PM 17 Sep 05 for providing SAR assistance to the missing boats. Due to the immediate response of ICG, all the 80 boats missing from Gujarat Coast, returned safely to various harbours.

[SAR assistance to Fishing Boats stranded/missing during cyclonic storm off Orissa/Andhra Pradesh coast](#)

The deep depression which had developed in Bay of Bengal on 17 Sep 05 intensified further into cyclonic storm on 18 Sep 05 with its center about 26 NM Southwest of Paradip (Orissa) and moving in South westerly direction along the coast. The coast of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh experienced very heavy rainfall with surface winds up to 40 knots. On 19 Sep 05, a total of 15 fishing boats were missing off Puri (Orissa) coast as reported by Asst. Director (Fisheries), Puri. ICG Dornier aircraft was launched ex-Kolkata on 19 Sep 05 to search and locate the missing boats. ICG Ship Jijabai was sailed from Paradip on 19 Sep 05 for SAR assistance. Six crew of unknown boats were rescued on 18 Sep 05 by ONGC Rig Discoverer Seven Seas (DSS) in position about



22 NM South of Puri. ICG aircraft was launched again on 20 Sep 05 for search and rescue. ICG ship Jijabai continued the search for the missing boats. Due to immediate response by ICG, all missing boats returned harbour safely and six survivors rescued by ONGC Rig Discoverer Seven Seas (DSS) were transferred by ONGC helicopter to Bhuvneshwar.

[Flood Relief operations in Tamil Nadu coast](#)

A well marked low pressure over South West Bay and adjoining South East Bay concentrated into a cyclone on 20 Nov 05 and lashed the southern coast of Tamil Nadu between Pamban and Nagapattnam on PM 24 Nov 05. Post cyclone, damage assessment was undertaken by tasking ICG Dornier air craft along the south Tamil Nadu coast on 24 Nov 05. The cyclonic storms of 24 Nov 05 and 03 Dec 05 in the Bay of Bengal caused incessant rains in Chennai and south Tamil Nadu coast resulting in over flowing of most of the rivers and heavy floods. ICG ships with helicopters embarked and Dornier aircraft ex Chennai under took



search and rescue and relief operation in the flood affected area. The following relief efforts were undertaken by ICG :-

- (a) Relief team ex CGS Mandapam were engaged in connecting link across river in Pernngulam, Ramnad district and evacuated 69 personnel.
- (b) Cumulative efforts by two ICG Helo, ICG Dornier, ICG ship Vikram, ICG ship Varaha and ICG ship Habba Khatun resulted in air dropping of 16500 food packets in affected area and rescue/evacuation of 194 personnel from flood affected area.
- (c) Six member team from state government were air lifted to Trichi and Madurai for flood damage assessment by ICG Dornier.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

ICG- KCG MoU on Maritime Cooperation

The interaction between the Indian Coast Guard and Korea Coast Guard has been formalized with the signing of Memorandum of Understanding on 13 Mar 06 in the field of maritime cooperation. The MoU calls for cooperation between the two agencies in the field of SAR and combating transnational crimes at sea including piracy and armed robbery etc.



ICG MoU with Pakistan MSA on setting up of communication link

The exchange of high level visits between Indian Coast Guard and Pakistan Maritime Security Agency led to evolving of mutual cooperation between the two agencies. This finally culminated



into signing of MoU for setting up of communication link between the two agencies. This would facilitate exchange of information on Search and Rescue at sea, natural disaster in coastal areas and maritime crimes.

Joint Exercises by ICG with Japan, Korea and Philippines Coast Guard on SAR and Anti Piracy measures.

ICG Ship Samar visited Japan, Korea and the Philippines from 30 Oct to 09 Dec 05 and



ICGS Samar entering Manila Harbour



Joint Exercise with Japan Coast Guard



ICG-KCG Exercise off Busan

participated in the combined exercises to develop mutual cooperation on SAR and anti piracy measures. During the visit of the ship, high level interaction were also undertaken towards working out framework of maritime cooperation. This also included the maiden visit by an ICG ship to South Korea.

[Joint Exercises by ICG with Bangladesh Coast Guard on SAR and Anti Piracy measures](#)

Bangladesh Coast Guard Ships visited Haldia from 22-25 Jan 06 for joint exercise with Indian Coast Guard. High level interaction were also undertaken by the Director General Bangladesh Coast Guard during his visit to CGHQ. It provided an opportunity for mutual cooperation and

coordination between the two agencies to enhance capabilities and working out SOPs on SAR and anti piracy measures.

[Joint Exercises by ICG with Maldives, NSS \(Coast Guard\) on SAR and Anti Piracy measures](#)

ICG ships Vighraha and Annie Besant visited Male, Maldives from 20 Dec to 25 Dec 05, to participate in the VIIIth combined exercise between the ICG & National Security Service (Coast Guard) of Maldives. The visit further strengthened the cooperation between the two agencies in the field of SAR and antipiracy measures.



Joint Exercise with Maldives, NSS (Coast Guard)

CHANGE IN SAR TELEPHONE NUMBER

The department of telecommunication/BSNL has implemented a new scheme of numbering for telephones and is in the process of discontinuing four digit numbers and replacing them with the six digit numbers. In line with this policy, a new Coast Guard SAR number 155211 has been allotted in place of existing no. ie 1718. The change in number is presently being implemented in phased manner in all the coastal states.



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