

19th HEADS OF ASIAN COAST GUARD AGENCIES MEETING **AT ISTANBUL, TÜRKIYE**

New Delhi, 08 Sep 23: Indian Coast Guard being the key member of the Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting (HACGAM) is participating in the 19th HACGAM High Level Meeting from 05-08 Sep 23 at Istanbul, Türkiye. The 04 member ICG delegation is led by DG Rakesh Pal, PTM, TM, Director General Indian Coast Guard. This meeting is an annual event hosted by one of the members in rotation and ICG had hosted the last edition (18th) of HACGAM at New Delhi in 2022. HACGAM is an independent forum with 23 member Coast Guard Agencies and 02 associate members in the form of ReCAAP and UNODC.

This multilateral forum is an offshoot of the Japanese initiative to promote cooperation amongst regional Coast Guards, after the capture of the pirated vessel MV Alondra Rainbow by the Indian Coast Guard in Nov 1999. HACGAM primarily focuses on fostering cooperation between the Coast Guards of the member Asian states to ensure and promote safe, secure and clean seas in the region. HACGAM comprises of four Working Groups to enable focused and goal oriented approach towards coordinated response and synergy towards common maritime issues. Indian Coast Guard is the chair of Search and Rescue (SAR) Working Group and a proactive member of the other Working Groups which include Environmental Protection, Controlling Unlawful Acts at Sea and Information sharing.

During the ongoing High Level Meeting being conducted for three days, various issues of significance, such as maritime law enforcement, safety and security of life at sea, marine environment protection, illicit trafficking of drugs, weapons and humans at sea etc is being discussed and avenues for further cooperation are being explored through framing of agenda. This platform will go a long way in enhancing maritime cooperation between the Asian Coast Guards. The meeting is witnessing participation of heads of Coast Guards of all member nations.



