

PRESS RELEASE

INDIAN COAST GUARD EVACUATES SRI LANKAN FISHERMAN WITH HEART AILMENT FROM DRIFTING BOAT

New Delhi 06 Apr 2024: Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has evacuated a Sri Lankan fisherman suffering from medical emergency onboard a Sri Lankan fishing boat drifting in Indian waters due to engine failure.

On 01 Apr 24, the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) of ICG at Chennai received alert from MRCC Colombo about a Sri Lankan Fishing boat '**Kalpeni**' that was adrift at sea due to engine failure. The boat had sailed from 'Codbay' harbour in Sri Lanka on 22 Mar 24 with six crew and had ceased all communication from 28 Mar 24.

On receiving information, ICG diverted ships on patrol to the likely area. The Sri Lankan boat was sighted by ICG ship C-449 on 02 Apr 24 about 40 Nm from Puducherry. Coast Guard technical team boarded the boat and attempted to repair the engine but the same was not feasible due to paucity of spares. ICG ascertained status of essential supplies on boat and intimated Sri Lankan authorities about its position for arranging a tow back to base port.

Meanwhile, on 05 Apr 24, one crew on adrift Sri Lankan boat namely PM Sumit Lalitha, Age 44 years developed shortness of breath. By this time, the boat had drifted to 100 Nm from Chennai. ICG ship Rani Abakka was diverted and the patient was evacuated within a few hours. On medical examination, he was suspected to be having a critical heart condition. While ICGS Rani Abakka made way towards Chennai at best speed, a Coast Guard helicopter was launched from Chennai. The helicopter successfully air-lifted the patient from ICG ship and he was brought to Coast Guard Air station at Chennai. The patient was subsequently taken for hospitalization as arranged by Sri Lankan consulate.

Indian Coast Guard continues to be in close communication with the drifting Sri Lankan boat and Sri Lankan authorities so that it can be towed back to base port at the earliest.



