

PRESS BRIEF

APPREHENSION OF INDIAN FISHING BOAT WITH UNAUTHORISED CASH INVOLVED IN DIESEL SMUGGLING OFF MAHARASHTRA COAST

New Delhi, 17 Apr 24: Indian Coast Guard Regional Headquarters (West) launched an operation based on tip off from Customs and apprehended an Indian fishing boat 83 Nm northwest off Mumbai on 15 Apr 24. The fishing boat was allegedly reported to be involved in smuggling of diesel and carrying unauthorized amount of Foreign/Indian currency.

The operation involved a sustained search during challenging night conditions amidst considerable fishing and merchant traffic covering an area of 200 square miles including offshore development areas off Maharashtra coast.

In a seamlessly coordinated operation which involved search by 02 ICG Fast Patrol Vessel (FPVs) and one Interceptor Boat, the suspected boat was finally located and boarded in the night of 15 Apr 24. Preliminary investigation revealed that the boat with 05 crew departed Mandwa port at about 2000 hrs on 14 Apr 24 to effect rendezvous with suspected Indian offshore supply vessels with an intent to smuggle diesel. Thorough rummaging of the vessel revealed the boat was operating with modified holds to store fuel up to 20000 liters and operating with false/multiple identities. Correlation with available data on the suspect boat indicated multiple discrepancies in vessel registration also. The rummaging operation and admission by the tandel revealed carriage of INR 11 lakh 46 thousand which was meant to be given to some Indian OSV operating from Offshore Areas in return of smuggled diesel.

The vessel was brought to Mumbai anchorage in the early hours of 17 Apr 24. A joint investigation with DRI, Customs, SIB and State police is being carried out to trace the linkages and further legal actions by respective agencies.



