Safe Waters

NEWSLETTER

On Maritime Safety and Security

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NATIONAL MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE BOARD

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

The Safety and Security scenario in the maritime domain has been a continuously evolving phenomenon. Integration of the world economy has further increased the dependence on the seas and oceans for trade and commerce. India is strategically located astride the numerous trade routes linking the East and the West. These routes have witnessed quantum increase in shipping traffic, which consequently demands an effective and robust Search and Rescue mechanism and infrastructure.

Saving lives at sea is a challenging proposition. Promptness of response is vital for success of any Search and Rescue mission and could make all the difference between 'life and death'. Over the years, the Indian Coast Guard has been able to establish an effective SAR regime with the whole hearted support of all the resource agencies. As the designated agency for coordinating Search and Rescue in the Indian Search and Rescue Region, the Indian Coast Guard has resolutely attempted to impart maximum momentum for improving SAR infrastructure, services and in strengthening the cooperative mechanism between various resource agencies. The successful handling of the fire onboard MV Amsterdam Bridge off Mumbai in Sep 2012, is an indicator of effective coordination amongst resource agencies.

The proactive support from DG Shipping in terms of circulars and directives and assistance from ISRO in satellite aided Search and Rescue has effectively prevented many potential threats to lives of mariners and aviators. The operationalisation of National Automatic Identification System (AIS) Network and Coastal Surveillance Network (CSN) would supplement shore based distress monitoring mechanism and will aid in improving the SAR system along the Indian coast.

The issue of training of personnel manning MRCCs and RCCs is being addressed through a biannual training capsule, which is being worked out in co-ordination with Airport Authority of India and Indian Mission Control Centre, Bangalore. In addition to training of personnel at rescue centres, it is essential that seafarers, especially our fisher folk adhere to safety regulations and carry adequate safety equipment whilst proceeding to sea. Indian Coast Guard in coordination with Indian Navy and coastal State Governments/UT administration has been organising community interaction programmes for the fishing community on regular basis, to bring in awareness about safety issues at sea. I would urge, fisheries departments of coastal states/Union Territories to emphasise on the issue of embarkation of safety equipment, by fishermen while proceeding to sea.

The amendment to the resolution in constitution of NMSAR Board has now paved the way for participation of all the thirteen coastal states including four Union Territories as regular members in all future NMSAR Board Meetings, which will aid in effective implementation of SAR regime along the Indian coast. The National SAR Plan 2003 is under revision and the draft revised SAR Plan has been circulated to all NMSAR Board members. I would request all NMSAR Board members to forward their valuable comments to enable early promulgation of revised National SAR Plan so as to enhance our SAR capabilities and thus help in minimizing the loss of life and property in our Search and Rescue Region (SRR).

"VAYAM RAKSHAMAH"

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

New Delhi
12 Dec 12

From the Editor's Desk

The Search & Rescue response by Indian Coast Guard within the Indian Search & Rescue Region has been gaining from strength to strength with the able support of the maritime community and resource agencies. The response by merchant marine community towards Coast Guard request to render assistance to the distressed ships in their vicinity, has indeed been overwhelming. The promptness & alacrity with which many ships have carried out Search and Rescue missions at sea is noteworthy. The recent rescue of 18 crew of MV Saigaon Queen, which sank subsequently on 30 Oct 12, in position 135 n miles East South East of Trincomalee, is an apt example. The concerted effort of the ICG during the past six months has resulted in saving of 81 precious lives at sea in 67 missions including 16 Medical evacuations with close coordination with all resource agencies.

The most important aspect during the coordination of SAR is the availability of information which is accurate, comprehensive and reliable. However, despite instruction for mandatory registration of EPIRB/ELT/PLB fitted onboard vessels & aircraft and intimation on change of ownership, there are instances when precious time has been lost in confirming the details of the vessels. EPIRB/ELT/PLB which are not in use, are not de-activated thus, resulting in inadvertent activation of distress messages. INMCC has already launched a new 'online beacon registration' portal on INMCC website to make it more flexible in terms of handling username/password related issues automatically.

The resolve and determined approach with priority being accorded towards achieving the common goal of safer seas in the Indian SRR was evident during the XI National Maritime SAR Board Meeting. The measures adopted by all the concerned agencies in supporting ICG efforts was note worthy and I request that the same be continued for ensuring safe and secure seas.

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

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XI NATIONAL MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE BOARD MEETING AT CHENNAI ON 24 JUL 12

The XI Meeting of the National Maritime Search and Rescue Board was held at Chennai on 24 Jul 12. The meeting commenced at 1000 h with inaugural address by the Chairman, Vice Admiral MP Muralidharan, AVSM, NM, Director General Indian Coast Guard (DGICG), followed by a presentation by Director (SAR), CGHQ on report on SAR Activities for the year 2011-12. Captain Deepak Kapoor, Nautical Surveyor-cum-DDG (Tech), presented a report on "Working Group-Legal for policy decisions on issues related to Safety and Seaworthiness, Provisioning of Basic Life Saving Equipments, etc." and Mr. NK Shrivastava, Manager, INMCC, Bangalore delivered a presentation on "Working Group-Technical for policy decisions on issues related to VHF Network, Communication Centres, DATs and Satellite Aided SAR etc".

XIth NMSAR Board Meeting

The Chairman highlighted various initiatives of Indian Coast Guard for improving Search and Rescue infrastructure, services and support. He also stressed on the need for strengthening the co-operation mechanism between various resource agencies for efficiently undertaking Search and Rescue in the Indian Search and Rescue Region.

Further, he expressed his concern on non registration of Beacons with INMCC, Bangalore, which needs to be addressed by all. The Chairman expressed his satisfaction on the keenness and promptness with which many merchant ships carried out Search and Rescue missions at sea. The Chairman appreciated all NMSAR Board Members for proactively participating in the National SAR Exercise (SAREX-12) held at Mumbai on 13-14 Jan 12.

MSV Safeena was awarded the ICG SAR Award for Merchant Vessel in recognition of its efforts for rescuing two dinghies with 09 lives. The award was received by Mr. M Amin Moosa, Senior Executive Manager of M/s Ellon Hinengo Limited, on behalf of **MSV Safeena**. The ICG SAR Award for Fisherman was awarded to Fishing Boat **Seven Star** for saving 04 lives in distress. The award was received by Shri Ragu Kumar, the owner and tandel of the fishing boat **Seven Star**. M/s Essar SAR Award was presented to the Commanding Officer, **842 SQN(CG),** Mumbai by Mr. Anoop Kumar Sharma, CEO, M/s Essar Shipping Limited, for saving 15 lives from a sinking ship at sea.

Chairman, NMSAR Board presenting SAR Award to Best Fisherman

The Chairman appreciated both the Chairpersons of Working Group Legal and technical for their concerted efforts to resolve the outstanding maritime issues. The Chairman expressed hope that these two Working Groups would continue to work diligently so that more time can be dedicated in the future SAR Board meetings for drawing up of a road map for the growth of National Maritime Search and Rescue in India.

The Chairman noted that interactive session has been very useful, which will pave the way for resolving numerous outstanding issues. This will not only give more comprehensive outlook to our M-SAR contingencies, but also will go long way in establishing safer seas. The Chairman stated that SAR Plan-2003 is being revised and requested distinguished members for inputs in the revised SAR Plan. Further, the Chairman requested Working Group (Legal) to address the legal issues and forward suggestions/recommendations for enhancing Maritime safety and for effective SAR legislation.

SAR NEWS

Rescue of 09 fishermen off Car Nicobar Island by MSV Safeena

On 03 Apr 12, Station House Officer (SHO), Car Nicobar requested Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC), Port Blair for locating two Out Board Motor (OBM) mounted fishing dinghies with 09 fishermen. Search and Rescue operation was initiated including aerial reconnaissance by MI-8 aircraft of Indian Air Force from Car Nicobar and

MSV Safeena

seaward search by local fisherfolk. Indian Navy Dornier was also launched from Port Blair which sighted two boats in position 37 n miles South West of Car Nicobar. The position of boat was passed to local police. The Superintendent of Police, Nicobar requested Shri Wilson Amose MD, M/s Ellon Hinengo Ltd., Port Blair to provide services of MSV Safeena, berthed at Car Nicobar. MSV Safeena departed Car Nicobar at 1710 h on 03 Apr 12 with police team embarked. At 0015 h on 04 Apr 12, MSV Safeena located two missing dinghies alongwith 09 crew in position 35 n miles South West of Car Nicobar and towed the boats in extreme weather conditions.

Chairman Presenting SAR Awards to Best Merchant Vessel MSV Safeena

MSV Safeena with both the dinghies along with the rescued fishermen arrived Car Nicobar at 0945 h on 04 Apr 12. MSV Safeena was awarded with the ICG SAR award in the category of 'Best Merchant Vessel' by the Chairman, NMSAR Board during the NMSAR Board Meeting held at Chennai on 24 Jul 12 for exhibiting the spirit of a true mariner in rescuing 09 stranded Nicobari fishermen.

Assistance to Missing Indian Fishing Boat- Vidial Jesus

On 13 Jul 12, Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC), Chennai received an information from Superintendent of Police, Coastal Security Group, Chennai intimating about missing of one fishing boat Vidial Jesus (Reg No TN/02/FB/01305/2011) with 10 crew since 12 Jul 12. Upon receipt of the information, MRCC, Chennai established communication with the owner of missing boat who intimated that the boat had drifted to Srilankan waters due to engine failure. In the meantime, Srilankan Fishing Boat St. Sebastian provided food and water to crew of the Indian Fishing Boat in distress. ICGS Ahalyabai was deployed from Tuticorin at 1435 h on 14 Jul 12 for search and rendering assistance to the missing boat.

FB Vidial Jesus being Taken under Tow by ICG Ship

FB Vidial Jesus under Tow of ICG Ship

ICGS Ahalyabai arrived at the datum at 0200 h on 15 Jul 12 and located the missing boat in position 67 n miles South East of Manappad. The disabled

boat with 10 crew was taken under tow by ICG Ship and brought to Tuticorin. Subsequently, the boat and crew were handed over to Asst. Director (Fisheries), Tuticorin at 2250 h on 15 Jul 12.

Rescue of 04 fishermen off Aarnala Fort

At 2200 h on 04 Aug 12, a message was received at Coast Guard Regional Headquarters, (West) from the Executive Magistrate, Thane, regarding capsizing of fishing boat Daya Sagar with 06 crew near Arnala Fort. It was also reported that 02 crew swam ashore safely. However, the balance 04 crew were reported to be missing. The position of the incident was approx 04 n miles from Arnala coast. On receipt of the information, the Coast Guard ship on patrol was diverted and Coast Guard helicopter at Mumbai was launched with the first light on 05 Aug 12. On arrival, the Helicopter carried out

Survivor being winched up from sea by ICG Helicopter

extensive search in area and located 04 persons clinging onto fishing buoys and thermocol pieces near the coast. The pilot in command took split second decision of winching up all 04 fishermen from the choppy seas despite bad weather. The Coast Guard air crew diver was lowered in the sea for safe winching up of remaining 04 fishermen. The rescue operation was completed at 0715 h on 05 Aug 12. The helicopter then disembarked all four rescued fishermen at Arnala coast prior returning to base.

The fishermen community was overjoyed to receive the separated fishermen and was thankful to Coast Guard for saving four precious lives. Various fishing organizations/committees also appreciated Coast Guard efforts.

Assistance to Adrift Sri Lankan Vessel

At 1120 h on 14 Aug 12, Coast Guard Dornier on routine surveillance sortie in the North Andaman, located a boat in distress. On sighting Coast Guard Dornier, the crew waved hands to attract attention and one person even climbed to the mast of the boat waving a white flag for help. The boat and crew appeared to be in immense distress requiring immediate assistance in the monsoon sea conditions.

Adrift Sri Lankan Vessel with Immigrants

MRCC, Port Blair swiftly coordinated the rescue operation. Coast Guard Interceptor Boat, ICGS C-145 was immediately sailed from Diglipur for rendering assistance to the distressed boat. Battling the rough seas with the waves of 2-3 meters height and winds more than 20 knots, the Coast Guard Ship located the distressed boat at 2125 h on 14 Aug 12. Preliminary investigation revealed that the boat was illegally migrating Srilankan nationals to Australia and had encountered technical snag and was adrift since 28 Jul 12. The boat was left with some fuel, limited food and provisions onboard.

Srilankan Fishing Boat under Tow of ICG Ship

In the meantime, another Coast Guard Ship, ICGS Durgabai Deshmukh was also diverted for assistance. The ship, on arrival, provided food, water and necessary medicines to the distressed crew. Thereafter, the distressed boat was taken under tow by ICGS Durgabai Deshmukh at 0100 h on 15 Aug 12. The ship with the distressed boat (MV Petrel, Regn No IMUL A 0457) and 49 crew members arrived Diglipur at 1945 h on 15 Aug 12. All the 49 Sri Lankan nationals and distressed vessel were handed over to the Station House Officer, Diglipur at 2300 h on 15 Aug 12.

Rescue of Fishermen from Capsized Fishing Boat

At about 2040 h, on 22 Aug 12, Indian Coast Guard Station, Kakinada received information from the President, Fishing Association, Kakinada, intimating about capsizing of one fishing boat (Sri Durga) with 07 crew at the confluence of Vasistha Godavari River (Narsapur Pt). Upon receipt of information, Coast Guard Interceptor Boat, ICGS C-151 was sailed with dispatch and ICGS Vigraha on patrol was also diverted for Search and Rescue operation. Helicopters of Coast Guard and M/s Cairn Energy Ltd. were also tasked AM 23 Aug 12 for search. Sea-air coordinated search resulted in rescue of six (06) fishermen by Interceptor Boat ICGS C-151 in co-ordination with local fishing boats.

Assistance to MV Saigon Queen

On 30 Oct 12, Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC), Chennai received a COSPAS-SARSAT distress alert from MV Saigaon Queen, which was at 185 n miles East-South East of Trincomalee (Srilanka). Since this position was in Srilankan Search and Rescue Region (SRR), the distress message was relayed to MRCC, Colombo with a request for assuming Search and Rescue (SAR) co-ordination.

In the interim, MRCC, Chennai made repeated efforts to contact the distressed vessel, however, received nil response. Simultaneously, MV Pacific Skipper transiting through the area was contacted telephonically and requested to contact the distressed vessel on VHF Channel-16.

Rescuing Crew from MV Saigon Queen by MV Pacific Skipper

MRCC, Chennai continued co-ordination with MV Pacific Skipper for SAR and directed MV Pacific Skipper to proceed towards the datum and render assistance.

At 1845 h on 30 Oct 12, MV Pacific Skipper rescued 18 crew of the distressed vessel from 02 life boats. The Master of the distressed vessel reportedly drowned during the rescue operation due to rough sea conditions prevailing in the area. The rescued crew reported that remaining 03 crew

members could not embark the life boats and probably sank alongwith the vessel. MV Pacific Skipper alongwith 18 rescued crew departed area for her next port of call; Mongla, Bangladesh at 0030 h on 31 Oct 12. Further, MRCC, Colombo had been requested to promulgate NAVAREA warning for vessels transiting through the area to keep sharp look out for the missing crew.

Rescued Crew of MV Saigaon Queen

The proactive co-ordination by MRCC(Chennai) by way of searching satellite based Automatic Identification System (AIS), generating US based AMVER (Automated Mutual Assistance Vessel Rescue System) Plot and establishing communication with vessel passing through the area, resulted in saving 18 crew out of 22 crew of the ill fated vessel on 30 Oct 12, outside Indian Search and Rescue Region (ISRR).

MRCC(Colombo) and P&I Club, Chennai had conveyed gratitude for all efforts put in by MRCC (CH) in saving valuable lives of 18 crew members of MV Saigon Queen.

Assistance to MT Pratibha Cauvery

On 31 Oct 12, MT Pratibha Cauvery was anchored off Chennai harbour and was reported to be dragging her anchor in the prevailing rough sea conditions due to the onset of cyclone “Nilam”. Subsequently, the vessel ran aground close to Adyar river mouth, Chennai at approx 1430 h on 31 Oct 12. The vessel was carrying 356 MT of furnace oil and 02 MT of diesel oil.

Grounded Vessel MT Pratibha Cauvery

The situation deteriorated further since, 20 out of the 37 stranded crew of MT Pratibha Cauvery had abandoned the vessel and boarded a lifeboat to reach ashore. Though the weather in area was still cyclonic with very rough seas and excessive winds gusting upto 60 knots, the rescue team comprising of divers and medical assistants equipped with rescue craft ‘Gemini’, life saving equipment and ambulance was rushed to Elliot beach at 1630 h on 31 Oct 12. However, due to the very high waves and surf prevailing on the beachfront, rescue operation from shore was not successful despite best efforts, as the rescue boats were pushed back to the shore. Meanwhile, ICGS Varuna was also sailed from Chennai, despite extreme rough weather and sea conditions for assistance.

The lifeboat from the merchant vessel subsequently washed ashore at about 1750 h. A total of 17 crew members were rescued from the lifeboat and the survivors were rushed to the nearest hospital, Fortis Malar at Adyar. Out of the rescued crew, 04 were reported to be critical and 01 crew member, Mr Anand Mohan Das, was declared dead due to drowning. Consequently, 15 crew members were confirmed to be onboard MT Pratibha Cauvery while remaining 05 were reported to be missing. ICG remained in constant communication with the stranded crew and they were advised to refrain from abandoning the vessel, since the vessel was

reported to be stable. ICGS Varuna continued extensive search in area for the missing crew. ICGS Rajshree was kept standby to sail from Chennai at short notice to augment SAR efforts. Further, two ICG helicopters were also kept standby with the medical support team to be launched with the first light on 01 Nov 12.

CG Helo Rescuing MT Pratibha Cauvery Crew

These helicopters were tasked from Chennai at 0600 h on 01 Nov 12 for search and rescue. ICGS Rajshree was also sailed from Chennai at 0600 h to assist ICGS Varuna in search of the missing crew members. Meanwhile, the specialized rescue team comprising divers from IN and ICG deployed from the Elliot beach at 0600 h on 01 Nov 12, boarded the grounded ship through a rescue boat for providing necessary assistance.

All 15 stranded crew who were stranded onboard the grounded vessel were rescued by the ICG helicopters at 0645 h on 01 Nov 12 and brought ashore.

MEDICAL EVACUATION

MV Al- Dafna

On 23 Jun 12, Coast Guard Regional Headquarters (West), Mumbai received information from local agent of LNG carrier MV AL-Dafna at Mumbai, regarding evacuation of one crew member (Mr. NK Sharma, 2nd Officer, an Indian National) suffering from severe abdominal pain. The efforts of local agent for evacuation through tug could not fructify view rough sea conditions and distance involved. Subsequently, at about 0405 h on 24 Jun 12, agent sought Coast Guard assistance for evacuation of the patient.

Medical assistance to MV Al-Dafna

Upon receipt of the request, ICG helicopter from Mumbai was launched at 0650 h on 24 Jun 12. ICGS Samudra Prahari in area was also alerted to meet the mission requirement. The helicopter evacuated the patient at 0710 h and handed over to the local agent at 0745 h on 24 Jun 12 for further management.

MV Helian Star

At 1600 h on 27 Jun 12, Coast Guard Regional Headquarters (West), Mumbai received an information from the Master of vessel “MV Helian Star” requesting for urgent evacuation of one crew member (Zhangh Ji, a Chinese National) who was unconscious after falling from deck crane.

The Master of the vessel was advised by Coast Guard to proceed towards Mumbai coast for early evacuation. ICG helicopter from Mumbai was launched at 1720 h on 27 Jun 12 for medical evacuation. The patient was evacuated by ICG helicopter at 1800 h and brought to INS Shikra (Naval Base at Colaba, Mumbai) at 1840 h on 27 Jun 12. Post arrival, the patient was examined by

Medical assistance to MV Helian Star

Medical Officer of the Naval Air Station, Mumbai and was subsequently handed over to the local agent at 1840 h on 27 Jun 12 for further medical care.

MT Pacific Voyager

At about 1830 h on 18 Jul 12, MRCC, Mumbai received a request from Master of MT Pacific Voyager for medical evacuation of patient (Mr Ganesh Yelaka, Seaman/Security) suffering from severe Malaria. The Motor Tanker was on passage from Ras Tanura (Saudi Arabia) to Singapore and was in position 180 n miles North West of Goa.The vessel was advised to close in Goa Coast for early evacuation. Coast Guard helicopter was launched from Goa at 0745 h and the patient was evacuated at 0825 h on 19 Jul 12 from position 12 n miles West of Goa. Subsequently, patient was admitted at Salgoankar Hospital, Goa by the local agent for further medical care.

Medical assistance to MV Pacific Voyager

MT Guru Govind Singh

At about 1515 h on 10 Aug 12, Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC), Mumbai received an information from the master of MT Guru Govind Singh, requesting for evacuation of one crew member, who was injured due to foreign particle embedded in his right eye (Mr. Anurag Kumar Vishal, an Indian National), from position 18 n miles North West of Mumbai.

Medical assistance to MT Guru Govind Singh

Upon receipt of the request, Coast Guard helicopter was launched from Mumbai at 1600 h for evacuation of the patient. The patient was evacuated at 1625 h and handed over to the representative of Shipping Corporation of India Ltd. at 1655 h on 10 Aug 12 for further medical care.

Medical Evacuation From Narcondam

At 1600 h on 20 Aug 12, Coast Guard Regional Headquarters (A&N), Port Blair received information from the Commandant, Indian Reserve Battalion (IRBn) requesting for urgent evacuation of one Police constable suffering from 'Otitis Media' from Look Out Post (LOP), Narcondam. Upon receipt of information, Coast Guard Ship Kanaklata Barua, on patrol, was diverted at 1400 h on 21 Aug 12 to evacuate the patient ICGS Kanaklata Barua evacuated the patient from LOP Narcondam at 0630 h and entered Diglipur at 1215 h on 22 Aug 12. Subsequently, the patient was handed over to Diglipur Marine Police for further medical care.

MV Trade Star

At about 1530 h on 30 Sep 12, Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC), Mumbai received information from Vessel Traffic Service (VTS), Mumbai intimating about requirement of urgent medical evacuation of a patient (a Philippines national) from MV Trade Star which was anchored in position 20 n miles North West of Mumbai. The left arm of the patient was severely injured.

Medical assistance to MV Trade Star

Upon receipt of information, Coast Guard Interceptor Boat ICGS C-147 was deployed at 1615 h on 30 Sep 12 to evacuate the patient. ICGS Amrit Kaur which was on patrol, was diverted for preliminary assessment and medical assistance. ICGS C-147 evacuated the patient at 1815 h on 30 Sep 12 and brought the patient to harbour. Subsequently, the patient was handed over to local agent and admitted in Saifee Hospital in critical condition.

MARITIME SAFETY & SECURITY

Fire Onboard MV Amsterdam Bridge

At 1725 h on 09 Sep 12, VTMS, Mumbai informed Coast Guard Regional Headquarters (West) regarding fire onboard MV Amsterdam Bridge, which was anchored at Mumbai inner anchorage. The fire was reported in a container carrying dangerous cargo.

Fighting Fire onboard MV Amsterdam Bridge by ICGS Samudra Prahari

On receipt of the information, Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) Samudra Prahari was sailed with dispatch at 1800 h on 09 Sep 12 and ICGS Subhadra Kumari Chauhan was also diverted from area patrol for providing assistance to the vessel. Emergency Towing Vessel (ETV), SCI Pawan was also mobilised at 1800 h on 09 Sep 12 for assistance. ICGS Samudra Prahari arrived on scene at 1845 h on 09 Sep 12 and assumed the duties of On Scene Commander (OSC) to coordinate the fire fighting efforts.

At 1930 h, ICGS Samudra Prahari intimated that the fire had turned into a major fire and thick black smoke was seen emanating from the vessel. ICGS Samudra Prahari operated the External Fire Fighting (EFF) system to contain the fire onboard MV Amsterdam Bridge and directed the ship to keep clear off the navigational channel. Emergency Towing Vessel, SCI Pawan also assisted in the fire fighting operations. ICGS Subhadra Kumari Chauhan was kept standby in vicinity to undertake Search and Rescue operations, in case needed. ICGS Samudra Prahari learnt from MV Amsterdam Bridge, that the vessel was carrying 18 Tons of Turpentine oil, 20 Tons of inflammable liquid and 7.6 Tons of inflammable gas.

Considering the gravity of the situation Coast Guard Regional Headquarters (West) launched 'Operation Agnishaman'. Assets for co-ordinating the fire fighting, Rescue and Pollution Response operations were mobilised INS Matanga and INS Tarasa were sailed from Mumbai at 0400 h on 10 Sep 12 with 30 Fire Fighters to augment the fire fighting efforts. A Boarding party consisting of Indian Coast Guard and Indian Navy personnel boarded MV Amsterdam Bridge for onboard situation assessment and fire fighting.

The actual seat of fire was localised in hold no. 3 of the merchant vessel. Fire was contained with the combined efforts of ICG units, SCI Pawan and Port tugs at 0600 h on 10 Sep 12, but was not fully extinguished. Joint inspection team from ICGS Sankalp, ICGS Samudra Prahari and INS Matanga had inspected the affected area and reported buckling of deck due to fire explosion. Further, yellow smoke and sudden increase in temperature was observed in slot 17 at 0910 h on 10 Sep 12. Boundary cooling and monitoring continued till smoke from affected area remarkably reduced. MV Amsterdam re-anchored in position 238 Prongs Lt 5.5 n miles at 1640 h on 10 Sep 12. Four tugs were kept standby in the vicinity of the merchant vessel to provide assistance. Dense smoke again emanated from containers around 1045 h on 11 Sep 12.

The fire onboard MV Amsterdam Bridge was completely extinguished at 1706 h on 11 Sep 12. However, ICGS Samudra Prahari continuously monitored the situation till the termination of the operation 'Agni Shaman' at 0700 h on 12 Sep 12.

Fighting Fire onboard MV Amsterdam Bridge by ICG Ship and SCI Pawan

The swift reaction by ICG ships and co-ordinated response by Coast Guard Regional Headquarters (West), resulted in containing a potentially disastrous situation, especially, which could have impacted human lives, the environment and marine traffic in the area.

SAR ARTICLES

Maritime Safety and Security Practices

The security in transport has become a crucial issue internationally, especially after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and even more recently. Maritime, along with aviation, is considered a sensitive and of high-risk transport sector, in terms of security.

Taking into account the global dimension of maritime transport along with the fact that, the participation of Asia in the world trade during the past decade has been substantial.

The Maritime Safety and Security can only be achieved through the application of high standards and regulations setting the prerequisites for safe and secure navigation. In this direction, a significant number of Directives, Regulations and Initiatives on maritime safety and security have been introduced by international and European organizations, such as the International Maritime Organization, (I.M.O.), the International Labour Organization (I.L.O.) and the European Union (EU).

In the framework of this analysis, the levels of compliance of European and Asian countries, regarding the international legislation, is examined while special emphasis is given on the problems and difficulties encountered during the implementation processes.

The main activities and tasks of IMO since its establishment have been to develop and maintain a comprehensive regulatory framework for international shipping. Its mandate was originally limited to safety-related issues, but very soon it has been expanded to include other issues closely interrelated with shipping such as environmental, legal matters, technical co-operation and many topics affecting the overall efficiency of shipping, for example how to deal with stowaways or how a cargo manifest should be transmitted to the authorities ashore; piracy and armed robbery against ships etc.

The overall safety level of shipping over the years has been steadily improving at a global level. During the centuries the sea has always been considered a potentially hazardous and dangerous working environment. Today, following the significant changes that took place in international trade and transport, ship operators are facing challenged. The structure of the global marketplace requires that goods and materials be delivered not only to the geographical location where they are required but also within a very precise timeframe.

Nowadays, considerable progress has been achieved with the regulatory framework implied from all the regulatory associations and the IMO. However, there is still room for further improvements since not all countries comply with the regulations and international standards on maritime safety and security.

- Capt. Umashankar Behera,
Pilot, Paradip Port Trust

Maritime Search and Rescue – Points To Ponder

It's now over 100 years since the *Titanic* disaster, when the maritime world first woke up to the fact that something needed to be done about the safety of people on board ships. Since 1912, we unquestionably have safer ships, better systems and much improved life saving appliances, but even after 100 years of Titanic disaster, we still can't make ships "unsinkable", nor can we prevent serious large-scale life-threatening situations from occurring on board. Worse still, even though we can now give men, women and children a place in a lifeboat, we still cannot guarantee to get them from there to a 'place of safety' within an acceptable time. Regular rescue craft are purposely designed for getting people out of the water, or recovering them from survival craft.

In normal rescues, typically involving a small number of persons, a few minutes here or there in the recovery cycle time, rarely matters to the overall outcome. However, in the case of a large-scale incident, if the cumulative time taken to recover all casualties (that is the typical cycle time multiplied by the number of people to be recovered) is longer than the average survival time, then, clearly, some will die before they can be rescued. In cases of rapid evacuation, where many may not be wearing properly fitted life jackets and few will have survival suits, a few hours in cold conditions could well be far too long. Many incidents from the history are evident, where the ship's own lifeboats were supplemented by local boats (not necessarily SAR recovery craft) available within a very short distance. It still took many hours to get all the casualties to the shore, which was only a short distance away. Small shore-based rescue craft may not be able to transit to the scene in heavy weather conditions, nor be able to operate effectively on arrival. Rescue craft from many merchant ships, including other passenger ships, would suffer similar launch and recovery restrictions. This would

inevitably result in fewer rescue craft being capable of operating on scene, and those that could, would invariably take longer to complete recovery in the prevailing conditions. The average survival times will also shorten in such conditions.

Most rescue activities depend directly on the physical effort of crews. Clearly, crews will quickly fatigue during sustained rescue operations and their casualty processing rates will drop significantly, unless regular rest and sustenance is provided. This implies that we need to have relief crews available on scene, as well as the necessary logistics and support systems for them. Furthermore, unless the boats can be re-fuelled and have essential supplies replenished on scene, they will have to interrupt their recovery efforts to make regular re-fuelling trips back to land. Ideally, to maximise the time spent on life-critical recovery operations, the distance from the casualty recovery zone to a temporary drop-off location should be as short as possible. Typically large vessels of opportunity act as such places of temporary refuge, capable of providing safe platforms for triage, treatment and ultimately transportation back to a place of safety ashore. The key difficulty is that we currently do not have a safe and effective means by which large numbers of casualties can be safely transferred from the smaller recovery craft to these larger ships. To compound the problem, merchant ships do not usually have sufficient crew numbers, nor do they have sufficiently trained crew to operate such systems, or to deal with large number of casualties once on board.

In recent years, many agencies have fought hard at the IMO to highlight these challenges and press for regulations to ensure that vessels of opportunity would be better prepared to provide the necessary assistance. Sadly, though everyone seemed to accept the indisputable need for improvement, few are willing to support the requisite new regulations to make sure that it happens. The status quo is maintained and the problem remains. So have we really moved forward much since *Titanic?* The once popular ideal of the "unsinkable ship" has faded permanently into history, and the more recent mantra that "the ship is its own best lifeboat" is also wearing slightly thin. Can we afford to continue to trust our luck, to put our heads into the sand, as the risks of a large-scale incident are clearly increasing year on year? Some would argue that mass rescue operations are infrequent. You may deny the argument but not the fact. Statistics of recent past are evident of toll of lives lost at sea and this does not count the many more lives lost annually in the smaller 'village transport' systems in many under-developed countries accidents which fail to register on the public radar. Yet these are still 'mass rescue operations', for they overwhelm any rescue resource available locally. The need for improvement in maritime safety is obvious.

- ICGS C-148

ICG: Search and Rescue Operations including Maritime Safety and Security

Indian Government, being a contracting party to IMO SAR conventions has instituted a formidable Search and Rescue organization in India with Coast Guard being the nodal agency for coordination at sea. In partnership with other federal agencies, state Governments, marine industries and individual mariners, Coast Guard had improved safety at sea through complementary programs of Search and Rescue seminars, joint exercises, community interactions with coastal populace. Indian Coast Guard has been instrumental in saving lives of thousands of mariners including fishermen in distress at sea since bestowed with this noble responsibility.

Indian Coast Guard has surface and air assets available at all possible coastal ports to provide timely assistance to sea farers in distress. The shore coordination for Search and

Rescue element is being carried out by Maritime RescueCo-Ordination Centre (MRCC), which 24 x 7 manned and operated by Coast Guard personnel. Contingency plans for maritime and aeronautical Search and Rescue is well laid down with amplifying responsibilities of each participating agency. A dedicated reporting procedure for ship's INDSAR, towards SAR in Indian waters has also been monitored by MRCC, which provides a maritime surface picture for SAR coordinating agency. Close co-ordination with neighbouring maritime state's ship reporting procedures and exchange of data bank along with availability of satellite pictures from space centres has added much needed teeth to successful Coast Guard's Search and Rescue missions in vast Indian Search and Rescue Region (ISRR).

The availability of maritime data at MRCCs in form of E-PANS, INDSAR SURPIC, satellite based plots on daily as well as real time basis not only boosts up the timely rescue efforts by Indian Coast Guard but also provides vast maritime data for safety and security agencies. At any hour of the day, the maritime picture of Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal is available to track/locate the shipping and coastal traffic which is vital for effective domain awareness for security agencies. Additionally, the availability of maritime data from other agencies viz. Indian Navy, Ports, Fishing Departments and their integration towards better Search and Rescue (SAR) efforts is actually a plethora of vital information to security agencies. Random investigations, availability of maritime assets for reconnaissance/ patrol for SAR efforts also induces deterrence in the minds of crime perpetrators.

The implementation of Port State Control Programme by Director General of Shipping is not only a vital tool for ruling out operation of sub-standard hull vessels in our waters but also ensures verification of crew credentials. This program is critical since the majority of the passenger, pleasure crafts and cargo ships operating in Indian waters are foreign flagged. Additionally vessels, mobile offshore drilling units and marine facilities are inspected by registered agencies for rescue, safety and security. Regular exercise of contingency plans, mass evacuation drills involving all related agencies ensure compliance/ streaming of laid down standard operating procedures.

But the maritime domain is large and complex, and much more needs to be done to ensure better SAR cover in Indian Search and Rescue Region (ISRR). The ongoing efforts towards enhancing coastal surveillance system through chain of radars, AIS network including RFID/Transponders on the fishing boats, if integrated with SAR support system will boost India's maritime SAR supremacy besides a major leap in security efforts. An enhanced maritime domain picture/plots with security and safety agencies in any coastal state is critical for economic/environmental growth and India with vast maritime legacy is considered no exception. Additionally, India may consider adoption of various safety and security measures implemented in advanced maritime nations viz. UK, USA etc. in a phased manner to grow as a formidable maritime power in Asian sub-continent.

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Safe Waters

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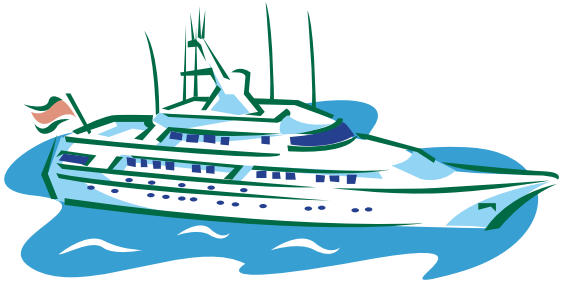
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