



Safe Waters

NEWSLETTER

On Maritime Safety and Security

BIANNUAL

Vol - 02

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From the Desk of the Chairman
National Maritime Search & Rescue Board
& Director General Indian Coast Guard



Dear Reader,

Safe Waters continue to be the cognitive indicator to the maritime fraternity in terms of the literature content and the collective quest of the NMSAR Board. The News Letter truly exhibits ICG's Vision as NMSARCA reiterating the precepts of M-SAR while pulling the oars together. It is also significant to note that, the criticalities and challenges associated with the M-SAR will continue to evolve and we shall aim to reaffirm our preparedness and commitment to strengthen the M-SAR architecture in India.

As we all are aware of the fact that, the M-SAR construct warrants timely reinvigoration taking cognisance of the changing safety spectrum in the maritime arena vis-à-vis the intensity of various maritime contingencies such as collision, cyclone, fire, flooding, sinking & grounding etc. Despite the odds and complexities in the maritime environment, the measured response and coordinated approach of the national SAR focal points i.e. the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centers (MRCCs) with the national stakeholders/ resource agencies has been quite encouraging for the ensuing period. Coordinated efforts in saving 44 lives in distress at sea in last six month is testimony to the efficient functioning of the SAR Mechanism and excellent coordination among stakeholders.

Besides coverage of SAR & Medical Evacuation incidents, capacity building endeavours from the NMSAR Board, the News Letter also contains topics of awareness from the IMO/ ICAO including other maritime authorities, journal/ articles from the NMSAR board members in order to develop and leverage our aptitude.

I am glad to convey that the prompt support from all member agencies through the NMSAR Secretariat shall continue to have sustained and focused approach towards strengthening the M-SAR construct while addressing the growing maritime and aeronautical activities in the Indian Search and Rescue Region (ISRR) and even beyond.

Jai Hind ... VAYAM RAKSHAMAH...

(Rakesh Pal)
Director General, Indian Coast Guard
Chairman
National Maritime Search & Rescue Board

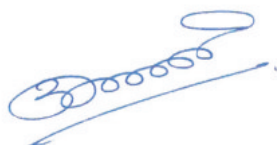
New Delhi

From the Editor's Desk

Architecture of safety in maritime environment brings stability, growth and prosperity of the nation. The well-established maritime search and rescue services not only have significant effects on the psyche of mariners operating in challenging seas, but also - taking broader view - for the regional emergency management system and overall development of the nation. Hence, it is imperative to have an all time preparedness & response measures to the dynamic & evolving challenges at sea.

During the first half year 2023, our concentrated efforts resulted in saving 44 precious lives at sea including 11 medical evacuations. Prompt response and coordination amongst the stakeholders was appreciated in all the SAR missions. Secretariat extends sincere gratitude to all the NMSAR Board Members, Resource Agencies & Stakeholders for consistent and collective support towards endeavors and activities of the Secretariat.

After the previous edition of newsletter *Safe Waters* published for period Jan-Dec 22 as 'resumed edition', this edition onwards the Newsletter will be published half yearly. It has been my sincere attempt to highlight significant maritime SAR incidents, events and efforts undertaken by the stake holders including SAR related information/ circulars/ IMO news in the newsletter. I strongly urge all members to regularly share the SAR activities undertaken by respective agencies including articles to the NMSAR Board Secretariat for inclusion in the *Safe Waters*. I also seek positive feedback and suggestions to improve/ enhance the content of *Safe Waters*.....Happy Reading...



(Arun Singh)
Dy Inspector General
Member Secretary
For Chairman, NMSARB

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Please send your queries, articles and feedbacks to :

'Safe Waters'

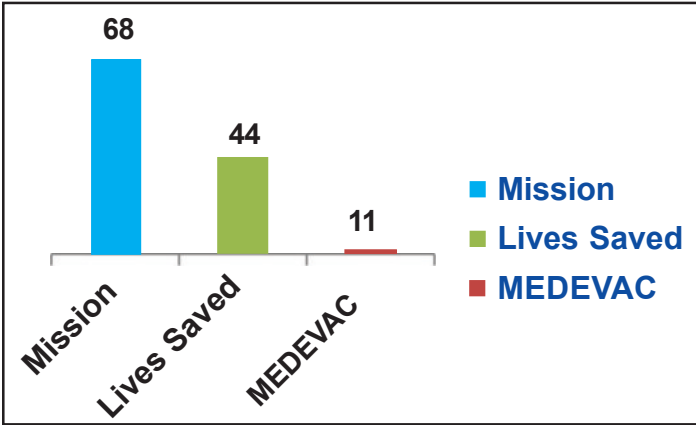
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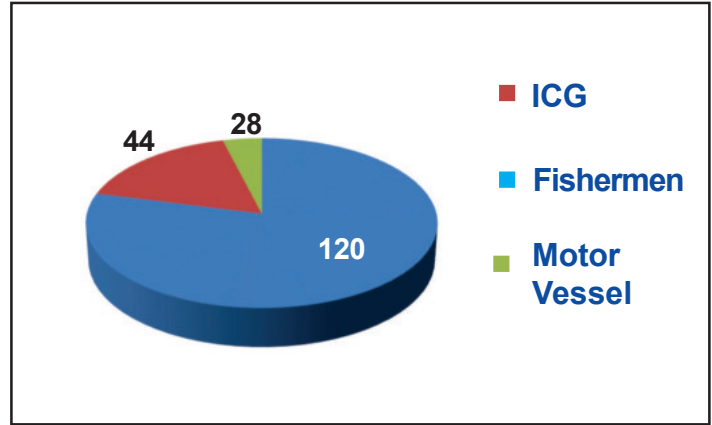
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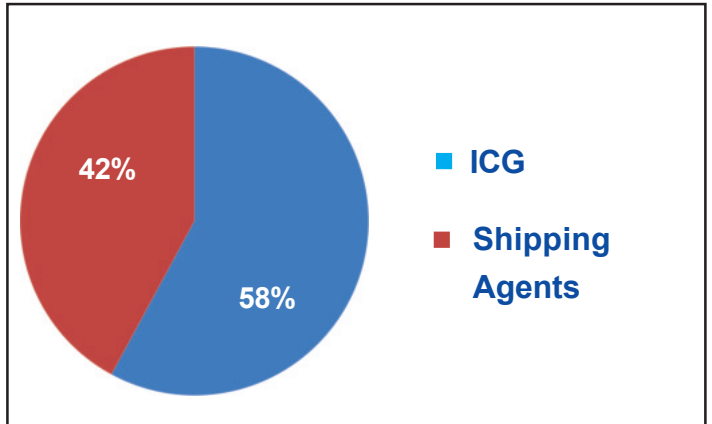
ICG - Maritime Search & Rescue Statistics



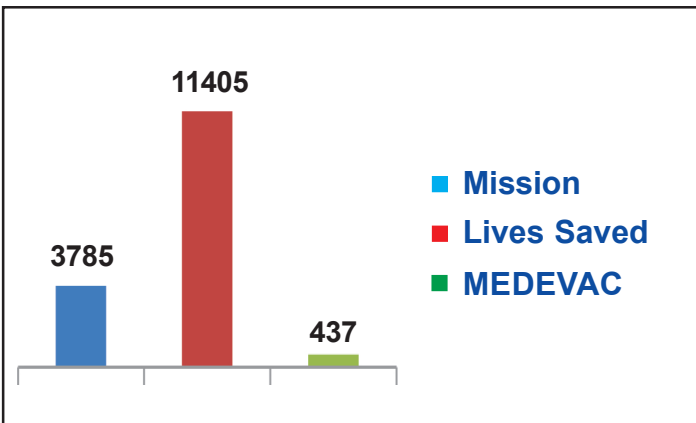
SAR by ICG : Jan - Jun 23



Lives Saved : Jan-Jun 23



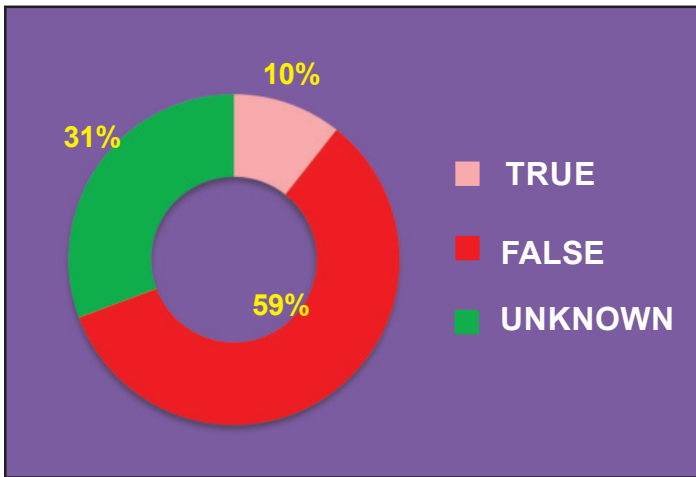
Medical Evacuation : Jan - Jun 23



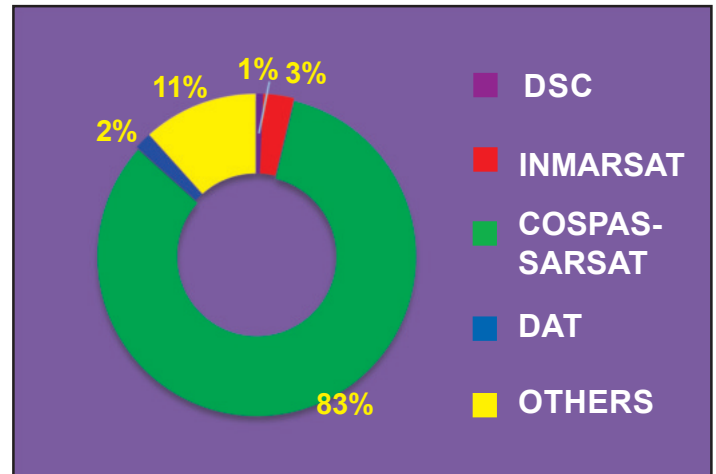
ICG SAR Data : Since Inception



Distress Alerts Received at MRCCs Mumbai, Chennai & Port Blair : Jan-Jun 23



Status of Distress Alerts



Source of Distress Alerts

- ✓ MRCC Mumbai, MRCC Chennai and MRCC Port Blair are designated point of contact for distress alerts at sea in Indian Search & Rescue Region West, East & Andaman & Nicobar respectively.
- ✓ Out of 1401 distress alerts received, 149 were true (10%), 822 False (59%) and 430 Unknown (31%) (feedback not received).
- ✓ Majority of alerts received (83%) were through COPSPAS-SARSAT followed by telephone/ email/ fax (11%).
- ✓ False distress alerts (59%) overburden SAR system & must be avoided through careful handling of Distress alerting devices specially 406 Mhz beacons (EPIRB, ELT & PLB).
- ✓ Unknown distress alerts (31%) can be minimised through better response by agencies/ entities responsible for raising distress alerts to MRCCs/ MRSCs queries.

Maritime SAR Events

SAR Communication Exercises (Jan - Jun 23)

SAR Communication Exercises (SARCOMEX) were conducted with leading SAR service providers of the world with a view to reinforce operational linkages and to provide opportunity to MRCC operators in coordinating with other MRCC/ RCC. Besides 03 MRCCs, 36 ICG Maritime Rescue Sub Centres (MRSCs) along the Coast & at Islands participated in the SARCOMEX through VC. During Jan-Jul 23, total of 10 SARCOMEX including one Regional SARCOMEX (Amongst India, Bangladesh, Myanmar & Thailand) were conducted.



Ser	Agencies Participated in SARCOMEX	Date
(a)	MRCC Mumbai – JMRCC Jeddah	24 Jan 23
(b)	MRCC Chennai - MRCC Korea	14 Feb 23
(c)	MRCC Port Blair- MRCC Colombo	20 Feb 23
(d)	MRCC Mumbai – MRCC Male	21 Feb 23
(e)	MRCC Chennai- MRCC Dhaka - MRCC Yangon & RCC Bangkok (Regional SARCOMEX)	13 Mar 23
(f)	MRCC Port Blair- MRCC Mombasa	23 Mar 23
(g)	MRCC Mumbai- MRCC Dar Es Salaam	11 Apr 23
(h)	MRCC Chennai- JRCC Australia	26 Apr 23
(j)	MRCC Chennai- JRCC Juneau	23 May 23
(k)	MRCC Port Blair – MRCC Yangon	24 May 23



MRCC Ops & SAR Course for Friendly Foreign Countries

As part of MEA GoI initiative under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme, one week 'MRCC Ops & SAR Course' for Friendly Foreign Countries (FFCs)' was conducted from 16-21 Jan 23 at MRCC Mumbai, wherein a total of 22 participants from 06 Countries - Bangladesh, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Myanmar & Maldives participated. This course is modeled on International best practices and training was imparted on legal background of Maritime Search & Rescue (M-SAR), M-SAR planning & coordination, computation of datum and search plans, case studies, GMDSS, Harmonization of Aeronautical and Maritime SAR, Satellite Aided SAR Operations, case studies amongst others. The course besides contributing to professional capacity building of participants from FFCs has enhanced general goodwill and cooperation.



Maritime SAR Workshops

Under the aegis of NMSAR Board, ICG conducts SAR workshops for one-two days duration in Coastal States and Union Territories. These workshops are aimed at enhancing awareness and safety consciousness amongst the fishermen and strengthening the Maritime SAR (M-SAR) construct by involving the respective Fishing Associations/ Authorities and other resource agencies/ stakeholders towards inclusive effort. During Jan-Jun 2023, total six Maritime SAR (M-SAR) Workshops were conducted.

Sr.	Date	Venue of Workshop
(a)	23 Jan 23	Goa
(b)	14 Feb 23	Porbandar
(c)	28 Mar 23	Kakinada
(d)	10 May 23	Puduchery
(e)	19 May 23	Kochi
(f)	22 Jun 23	Goa



Regional Search & Rescue Exercise

Regional Search and Rescue exercises are conducted to check preparedness of stakeholders towards response in case of large scale maritime disaster in Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal. Often Mass Rescue Operation drill is also exercised with emphasis on role of state/ Local administration in handling of injured, deceased and establishing of triage services. The following exercises were conducted during the period Jan-Jun 2023 with active participation of stake holders:-

Sr.	Date	Place
(a)	24 Jan 23	Goa
(b)	15 Feb 23	Porbandar
(c)	29 Mar 23	Kakinada



Maritime SAR Bulletin

(01 Jan - 30 Jun 23)

SEARCH & RESCUE COORDINATION

Fire - IFB 'Jay Bhole'



At 0945 hrs on 16 Jan, Maritime Rescue Sub Centre (MRSC), Porbandar received information from Fishermen Association, Porbandar regarding fire onboard IFB Jay Bhole in position 24 N miles West of Porbandar with 07 fishermen onboard. Out of 07 fishermen, 02 were rescued by a dingy boat operating nearby and 05 were reported missing. ICG Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) CG 851 was launched at 1045 hrs from Porbandar in SAR configuration for augmenting SAR efforts for the 05 missing fishermen. During the aerial search, the ALH located survivors floating in water with the help



of thermocol 16 N miles North-West of Porbandar. All the 05 crew were winched up and brought to Coast Guard Air Enclave Porbandar and handed over to boat owner.

Rescue of 511 Pilgrims during Ganga Sagar Mela

At 0920 hrs on 16 Jan, MRSC Haldia received information from District Magistrate, South 24 Paraganas regarding two ferry vessels namely MV Lochamati and MV Agramati along with approx



500 pilgrims in distress. Both the ferry vessels reported aground near 01 N mile South off Ghoramara Island since mid-night 15/16 Jan 23. On receipt of information, two ICG Hovercrafts (H-186 & H-182) from Haldia and Frazerganj respectively, were immediately launched for evacuation of the stranded pilgrims. Both the hovercrafts reached Ghoramara



Island at 0945 hrs on 16 Jan and commenced evacuation of pilgrims to Kakdwip harbour. In a prompt and seamless operation by ICG hovercrafts, a total of 511 pilgrims were safely rescued and handed over to local administration for further formalities.

Flooding - IFB 'Himalaya'

At 0345 hrs on 07 Mar, Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) Arush while on area patrol received a distress



call on VHF CH-16 regarding flooding/ capsizing of IFB Himalaya with 06 crew onboard in position 56 N miles South-West of Mithaport. On receipt of information, ICG Ship proceeded with maximum speed towards the distressed boat and reached in proximity of the distressed IFB at 0430 hrs. The IFB was taken alongside and observed that lower



decks of the IFB were flooded upto 2-2.5 meter (approx. 20 Tons of sea water ingressed in the compartments). ICG ship's Damage Control Party de-flooded the water using portable Educators/ Diesel Driven pumps. On completion of de-flooding, approx. 2.5 inches hole was observed in forward fish storage/ cold room which was also repaired by Ship's Damage Control Party. Further, it was ascertained that nil ingress of sea water inside the IFB and the IFB was made seaworthy. IFB alongwith 06 crew safely reached Okha harbour at 0800 hrs on 08 Mar 23.

Rescue of 02 Myanmar Nationals

At about 1310 hrs on 21 Apr, CG Dornier (CGDO) during aerial surveillance sighted two persons clinging onto broken wooden platform in position 135 N miles East of Port Blair. Upon sighting, CGDO vectored INS Cora Divh patrolling in the area for rendering assistance. INS Cora Divh arrived in the proximity at 1525 hrs and both person were rescued. ICG Ship C-151 took over both the survivors off Port Blair and entered harbour. The rescued persons were handed over to local authorities, for further formalities.



Stranded - IFB 'Lourdumatha'

At around 2120 hrs on 26 Apr, an information was received at MRCC Mumbai from DG shipping regarding IFB Lourdumatha, stranded in position



713 N miles South of Muttam Pt (in Maldives Search and Rescue Region) view engine failure with 10 crew onboard. On receipt of the information, MRCC Mumbai directed MV Furious (nearest vessel) to provide necessary assistance to the stranded IFB. At around 2335 hrs, MV Furious reached in the vicinity of IFB and embarked all 10 crew from the fishing boat. Upon embarkation, the MV resumed voyage to Singapore as next port of call with intention to disembark crew off Port Blair. Accordingly, ICGS Vigraha was deployed to rendezvous MV Furious off Port Blair on 02 May for embarkation of the rescued Indian fishermen. ICGS Vigraha embarked the rescued fishermen ex-MV Furious and brought them to Vizag and handed over to the local fisheries authorities for further formalities.

Collision - MV 'ITT Jaguar' with Boat 'Ganga Sagar' (Cargo Ferry Boat)

At 0545 hrs on 02 May, MRCC Port Blair received an email from master of MV ITT Jaguar regarding collision of the vessel with unknown boat in position 11.5 N miles East of Port Blair. The incident occurred while the MV was approaching Port Blair anchorage. On receipt of the information, ICGS C-146 on patrol was diverted for augmenting Search and Rescue efforts. Concurrently, ICG



Helicopter was tasked for undertaking sea-air coordinated search. ICG Helicopter sighted 02 survivors floating in water with the help of empty drum. Both the survivors were promptly airlifted and disembarked at Coast Guard Air Enclave (CGAE) Port Blair at 0800 hrs. Both survivors were handed over to the local police, Port Blair for further formalities.

Stranded - IFB 'Rosanna'

At 2041 hrs on 27 May, MRCC Mumbai received an email from MV Navdhenu Sun regarding IFB Rosanna stranded in position 78 N miles South-West



of Diu Head due to engine failure with 09 crew onboard. On receipt of information, ICGS Shoor was diverted to investigate and provide necessary assistance. On arriving in proximity of the distressed IFB, ICG Ship's boarding party embarked the IFB and



ascertained that engine had seized view water contamination in fuel tanks. Further, the efforts of restarting engine proved futile. Subsequently, the ICG ship took the distressed IFB under tow and proceeded towards Veraval. The ship reached off Veraval at 2300 hrs on 28 May and handed over IFB Rosanna along with 09 crew to IFB Bhawani Kripa.

Distress onboard IFB 'Thalapathy'

At 0820 hrs on 28 May MRSC Mandapam received information from AD Fisheries, Mandapam regarding IFB Thalapathy in distress due to broken



shaft in position 15 N miles North-east of Pamban and drifting towards Indo-Sri Lanka International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL). On receipt of information, ICGS C-432 was diverted for rendering assistance. The ship carried out extensive search



in area and located the distressed IFB along with 06 survivors in position 15 N miles North-east of Pamban. Ship's boarding party assessed the situation and found that IFB's shaft had broken and fell overboard. With no option of repairs, the ICG ship embarked all 06 crew onboard and took the distressed IFB under tow. The ICG ship entered Mandapam CG jetty at 1130 hrs and handed over the distressed IFB along with all 06 crew to Fisheries Department, Mandapam.

Rescue of Crew - Jack up Rig 'Key Singapore'

On 12 Jun, Indian Coast Guard Headquarters received a request from Directorate General of Hydrocarbons for evacuation of 50 personnel from Jack up Rig Key Singapore operating 25 N miles off Okha in view of the Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storm (ESCS) 'Biparjoy'. On receipt of the information, ICGS Shoor on area patrol was immediately diverted towards the rig. As the helicopter chartered by the Rig was unable to operate in the prevailing weather conditions, ICGALH was tasked for evacuating all crew in coordination with the ICG Ship Shoor. Despite adverse weather, CG ALH proceeded

towards the rig with maximum possible speed while maintaining communication with ICG Ship Shoor and the rig. By the twilight time of 12 Jun, 26 crew were safely evacuated from the rig and were shifted to ICGS Okha. Thereafter, the operation was briefly suspended owing to visibility and inclement weather conditions in area and deck not cleared for night operations. Further, evacuation of the remaining 24 crew commenced with first light on 13 Jun and by 0900 hrs on 13 Jun, the crew were safely evacuated. All the evacuated crew were handed over to local administration Okha for further formalities.



Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC)

(01 Jan - 30 Jun 23)

MEDEVAC Ex - Passenger Vessel 'MS World Odyssey'

At 1750 hrs on 18 Jan, MRCC Mumbai received an e-mail from Passenger Vessel MS World Odyssey regarding medical emergency onboard whilst in position 250 N miles South-West of Mumbai. One of the passengers onboard the vessel was reported suffering from Left Retinal Detachment. As the master confirmed that Helo landing facility was not available onboard, MRCC Mumbai advised the master to proceed towards off Mumbai with best available speed for evacuation of the patient. ICG Ship C-439 ex-Mumbai was deployed along with medical team. At 1010 hrs on 19 Jan, the ICG ship effected rendezvous with the passenger vessel and embarked the patient onboard. Thereafter, the patient was disembarked at MbPT jetty, Mumbai handed over to the local agent for further medical management.



MEDEVAC Ex - MT 'GB Venture'

At 0630 hrs on 23 Jan, MRSC Haldia received information from Sagar VTMS regarding medical emergency onboard Singapore Flagged vessel



MT GB Venture wherein one of the crew sustained blunt trauma on abdomen by sudden impact of pressurized hydraulic oil of windlass. The patient had also complaints of severe pain in the upper abdomen area and having breathing difficulty. The MT was anchored 40 N miles South-west of Sagar Island (West Bengal) and Master of the vessel requested ICG for medical evacuation. On receipt of information and prompt assessment of the situation ICG Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) was tasked from Bhubaneswar for immediate evacuation of the patient. In a swift and coordinated operation the patient was winched up from MT GB Venture and disembarked at Bhubaneswar at 1142 hrs. Thereafter, the patient was handed over to local agent of the vessel for further medical management.



MEDEVAC Ex - Afra Bay, Campbell Bay

At 1935 hrs on 28 Jan, CG Dist Headquarters-10, Campbell Bay (A & N) received a request from the local administration for medical evacuation of a patient having low pulse and SPO2 level. On receipt of the information ICGS C-424 was sailed out at 2030 hrs with 02 medical staff ex-PHC Campbell Bay. ICG ship arrived off Afra Bay and the patient was safely embarked onboard. ICG Ship brought the patient to Campbell Bay at 0330 hrs on 29 Jan and handed over to PHC Campbell Bay for further medical management.



MEDEVAC Ex - Lifting Vessel 'Taklift-7'

At 2315 hrs on 07 Feb, MRCC Mumbai received information regarding medical emergency onboard Singapore Flagged Lifting vessel Taklift-7 wherein one of the crew reported to have Acute abdomen



pain (suspected Appendicitis) in position 8.3 N mile South-West of Prongs (off Mumbai).

On receipt of information, ICGS C-439 was sailed for evacuating the patient. At 0105 h, on 08 Feb the ICG ship arrived in proximity of the vessel and evacuated the patient. At about 0140 hrs, the ICG ship handed over the patient to the local agent at Mumbai anchorage for further medical management.

MEDEVAC Ex - MV 'Irenes Ray'

At 1600 hrs on 13 Feb, MRSC Porbandar received information from Liberia flagged MV Irenes



Ray regarding medical emergency onboard, wherein one of the crew reported unconscious in position 108 N miles South-West off Porbandar. The vessel was on passage from Sri Lanka to Pakistan. On receipt of information, ICGS Ankit was sailed from



Porbandar for evacuating the patient. At 1919 h, the ICG ship arrived in proximity of the vessel and established communication with the vessel. Thereafter, the ICG ship's boarding team along with Medical Team boarded the vessel and ascertained that the patient had sustained head injuries, however, the vital parameters were observed to be stable. Subsequently, the patient was safely evacuated and the ICG ship handed over the patient to local agent for further medical management.

MEDEVAC Ex - IFB 'Dhumrvarn Moraya'

At 1203 h on 30 Mar, MRCC Mumbai received information from IFB Dhumrvarn Moraya regarding



medical emergency onboard wherein one of the crew reported to have seizure & breathing problem in position 85 N miles West of Mumbai. On receipt of information, MRCC Mumbai contacted IFB owner



and directed to proceed towards Mumbai for disembarking the patient. Subsequently, ICGS C-439 was diverted towards the IFB for rendering necessary assistance at 1430 hrs. On arrival the ICG ship embarked the patient onboard in position 20 nautical miles west of Prongs, Mumbai and handed over the patient to IFB Kaushlya arranged by the owner for further formalities.

MEDEVAC Ex- MV Hafnia Express

At 1249 hrs on 05 Apr, MRCC Mumbai received information from Singapore flagged MV Hafnia Express regarding medical emergency onboard wherein one of the crew reported to have fracture/ dislocation of left knee and ankle in position 366 N miles West of Mumbai. On receipt of information, MRCC Mumbai contacted the vessel and directed to proceed towards off Mumbai for disembarking the patient. Subsequently, ICGS C-439 was deployed from Mumbai for rendering necessary assistance. On vessel arrival in position 50 nautical miles West of Mumbai, the ICG ship embarked the patient and entered Mumbai harbour. Thereafter, the patient was handed over to local agent at 1900 h on 06 Apr.



MEDEVAC Ex - IFB 'Parvati Nandan Ganesh'

At 1004 hrs on 13 Apr 23, MRCC Mumbai received an e-mail from owner of IFB Parvati Nandan Ganesh regarding medical emergency onboard as



one of the crew was reported to have high Blood Pressure and paralysis attack in position 53 N Miles North West of Mumbai. On receipt of information, ICGS Arush was diverted for rendering necessary assistance. Concurrently, the IFB owner was contacted and directed to proceed towards off Mumbai with maximum speed for patient disembarkation. At 1140 hrs, the ICG ship arrived in proximity of the IFB and embarked the patient in position 50 N Miles North West of Mumbai. Post embarkation, the patient was provided with oxygen and intravenous medication by ICG Medical team. Further, the patient was handed over to IFB Shree Kashi Vishwanath Krupa off Mumbai for further medical management at hospital.

entered harbour at 0445 hrs. Subsequently, the patient was handed over to local agent for further medical management.

MEDEVAC Ex -Makachua Village, Campbell Bay

At 2100 hrs on 12 May, Coast Guard District HQ-10, Campbell Bay (A&N) received request from local Administration for evacuation of a woman patient from Makachua village, Campbell Bay who was suffering from severe chest congestion and breathlessness. Accordingly, ICGS Rajdhvaj on area surveillance was diverted for evacuating the patient. The ship arrived off Makachua AM 13 May and the patient was evacuated and embarked onboard. Medical care was provided to the patient onboard the ICG ship during the passage to Campbell Bay. The patient thereafter was handed over to PHC, Campbell Bay for further medical management.

MEDEVAC Ex- MV 'Helen'

At 2145 hrs on 25 Apr, MRSC Porbandar received information from master of Panama flagged MV Helen regarding medical emergency onboard in position 95 N miles West of Porbandar. During the incident onboard, a 29 Yrs old Indian crew had severed right hand index finger requiring immediate medical supervision. Considering the gravity of the situation, ICGS C-161 was sailed from Porbandar at 2220 hrs for evacuating the patient. On arrival in proximity of the MV, ICG ship evacuated the injured crew and provided preliminary medical aid. Thereafter, ICG ship headed towards Porbandar and



MEDEVAC Ex - MT 'Xante'

At 1948 hrs on 17 May, MRCC Mumbai received information from Panama flagged MT Xante regarding medical emergency onboard in position 128 N miles North-West of Kochi. In the instant case, the two crew sustained skin burn due to accidentally falling over hot



lub oil bucket in engine room and were requiring immediate medical assistance. The MT headed towards Kochi and sought assistance from local agent at Kochi, however local agent could not arrange CoPT tug due to unavailability and therefore, sought ICG assistance. Accordingly, ICGS C-162 was deployed from Kochi at 0600 hrs on 18 May for evacuating the patient. On arrival in proximity of the MT, medical team embarked MT and examined both the patients. Thereafter, both the patients were embarked onboard ICGS C-162 and brought to Kochi harbour. Subsequently, the patients were handed over to local agent for further medical management.



MEDEVAC Ex - MT 'Gas Pisces'

On 27 Jun, agent of vessel MT Gas Pisces, requested MRSC Porbandar for Medical Evacuation of a crew of Romanian nationality from MT GAS Pisces. The patient was diagnosed with cardiac arrest and required treatment by a medical specialist.



On receipt of the information, ICG Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) took off from CGAE Porbandar for evacuating the patient. ICG ALH effected rendezvous with MT Gas Pisces in position 36 N miles South-East of Porbandar and the patient was evacuated from the vessel. The patient was thereafter examined by ICG medical Officer and administered initial medication for suspected cardiac arrest and elevated BP during passage. The ICG ALH landed Porbandar at 1725 hrs and the patient was handed over to the local agent for further medical management.



IMO FORTHCOMING MEETINGS – 2023

Date	Meeting
03-07 Jul	Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) – 80 th Session
17-21 Jul	Council – 129 th Session
31 Jul-04 Aug	Sub-Committee on implementation of IMO Instruments (III) – 9 th Session
20-29 Sep	Sub-Committee on Carriage of Cargoes and Containers (CCC) – 9 th Session
28-29 Sep	15 th Meeting of the LP Compliance Group
02-06 Oct	39 th Meeting of the Editorial and Technical (E&T) Group (IMDG Code) 45 th Consultative Meeting of contracting parties (London Convention 1972) 18 th Meeting of contracting parties (London Protocol 1996)
09-13 Oct	19 th Meeting of the Joint IMO/ITU Experts Group on Maritime Radio communication Matters IMSO
To be confirmed	29 th Meeting of the Working Group on the Evaluation of Safety and Pollution Hazards of Chemicals (ESPH)
11-13 Oct	7 th Session of the Joint Working Group on the Member State Audit Scheme (JWGMSA 7)
16-19 Oct	Technical Cooperation Committee (TC) – 73 rd Session
23-27 Oct	9 th Meeting of the Expert Group on Data Harmonization
06-10 Nov	30 th Meeting of the ICAO/ IMO Joint Working Group on Harmonization of Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue
06-10 Nov	IOPC Funds
23 - 24 Nov	Council – 130 th Session
27 Nov-06 Dec	Assembly – 33 rd Session
07 Dec	Council – 131 st Session

OTHER EVENTS

Date	Meeting
01-02 Feb	Orientation seminar for IMO delegates
18 May	IMO International Day for Women in Maritime
25 Jun	Day of the Seafarer
28 Sep	World Maritime Day

MARITIME SAR CALENDAR ACTIVITIES

(JUL - DEC 23)

Date	Event	Venue
12-13 Jul 23	M-SAR workshop	Diglipur
20 Jul 23	M-SAR workshop	Mumbai
09-10 Aug 23	M-SAR workshop	Haldia
09-11 Aug 23	25th Beacon Exercise	-
22 Aug 23	M-SAR workshop	New Mangalore
24 Aug 23	M-SAR workshop	Daman
07-08 Sep 23	M-SAR workshop	Port Blair
12-13 Sep 23	M-SAR workshop	Paradip
12 Oct 23	21st NMSAR Board meeting	Kolkata
18 Oct 23	M-SAR workshop	Porbandar
19 Oct 23	M-SAR workshop	Vizhinjam
23 Oct 23	M-SAR workshop	Okha
30-31 Oct 23	Regional SAREX	Paradip
02 Nov 23	M-SAR workshop	Kavratti
16 Nov 23	M-SAR workshop	Beypore
28-29 Nov 23	Regional SAREX	Port Blair
13-15 Dec 23	19th M-SAR Refresher course	MRCC Chennai



IMO RESOLUTIONS

1. Recommended cooperation to ensure the safety of life at sea, the rescue of persons in distress at sea and the safe disembarkation of survivors

[https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjfdjUo4mBAx-bWwGHSG1C4gQFnoECBoQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwwwcdn.imo.org%2Flocalresources%2Fen%2FKnowledgeCentre%2FIndexofIMOResolutions%2FMSCResolutions%2FMSC.528\(106\).pdf&usq=AOvVaw0PJNYPkQ9vZUfibqnGswMT&opi=89978449](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjfdjUo4mBAx-bWwGHSG1C4gQFnoECBoQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwwwcdn.imo.org%2Flocalresources%2Fen%2FKnowledgeCentre%2FIndexofIMOResolutions%2FMSCResolutions%2FMSC.528(106).pdf&usq=AOvVaw0PJNYPkQ9vZUfibqnGswMT&opi=89978449)

2. Member states' obligations in connection with SAR services under the SOLAS and SAR conventions in the context of armed conflicts

[https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwijtLGiplmBAxVRbmwGHVgNAwYQFnoECBUQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwwwcdn.imo.org%2Flocalresources%2Fen%2FKnowledgeCentre%2FIndexofIMOResolutions%2FMSCResolutions%2FMSC.519\(106\).pdf&usq=AOvVaw3H4Nt-mYWkIlp62PM12YMS&opi=89978449](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwijtLGiplmBAxVRbmwGHVgNAwYQFnoECBUQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwwwcdn.imo.org%2Flocalresources%2Fen%2FKnowledgeCentre%2FIndexofIMOResolutions%2FMSCResolutions%2FMSC.519(106).pdf&usq=AOvVaw3H4Nt-mYWkIlp62PM12YMS&opi=89978449)



DG SHIPPING ORDERS/ MS NOTICE/ CIRCULAR

1. Testing and maintenance of EPIRB and testing of other GMDSS radio equipment by approved service stations or shore-based maintenance facilities

<https://www.dgshipping.gov.in/writereaddata/ShippingNotices/202303160550013076066NT-RADIO-CIRCULARNO10OF2023Testing&maintenanceofEPIRBandotherGMDSSradioequipmentbyDGSAapprovedServiceStation.pdf>

2. Usage of Thuraya, Iridium and other such Satellite Communication in Indian Waters

<https://www.dgshipping.gov.in/writereaddata/ShippingNotices/202307120521394179167DGSORDERN009OF2023.pdf>

3. Registration and de-registration of Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBs)

<https://www.dgshipping.gov.in/writereaddata/ShippingNotices/202302160533004488840MSNotice04of2023onRegistration&de-registrationofEPIRBs.pdf>

4. Operational of Iridium Safety Cast Service for NAVAREA-VIII under World-Wide Navigational Warnings Service (WWNWS)

<https://www.dgshipping.gov.in/writereaddata/ShippingNotices/202301230443206781619MSNoticeNo02of2023.pdf>

5. Guidelines for the avoidance of false distress alerts

<https://www.dgshipping.gov.in/writereaddata/ShippingNotices/202212200315551098379MSN13of2022-Guidelinesfortheavoidanceoffalsedistressalerts.pdf>

Navigating The Future: The Rise Of Autonomous/ Unmanned Ships In Coast Guard Operations

Introduction

In recent years, autonomous technology has been rapidly advancing and making its way into various industries, revolutionizing the way we work and live. One sector that has seen significant transformation is maritime operations, particularly in the field of Coast Guards services. Autonomous/unmanned ships, equipped with cutting-edge technology and artificial intelligence, are set to redefine the future of maritime safety and security.

The Advent of Autonomous Ships

Autonomous and unmanned ships are vessels that can navigate the seas without a human crew onboard. These state-of-the-art ships are equipped with advanced sensors, radar systems, satellite communication, and artificial intelligence algorithms, enabling them to operate autonomously, make informed decisions and adapt to changing environments. The integration of autonomous/unmanned ships into Coast Guard operations will open new possibilities for enhancing maritime surveillance, search and rescue missions, environmental monitoring and law enforcement activities.

Latest Developments by United States Coast Guard

Coast Guards around the world have begun embracing the potential of autonomous and unmanned ships to bolster their operations. For instance, the United States Coast Guard has been actively exploring the use of Autonomous and Unmanned Surface Vehicles for a range of missions, including maritime surveillance, drug interdiction, and environmental monitoring. Some projects being pursued by USCG are as follows :-

- USCG in Dec 2020, completed a 30 day test of Unmanned Surface Vehicles (USVs) provided by Saildrone and Spatial Integrated Systems off the coast of Oahu. This was also followed by USCGC



30 day test of unmanned surface vehicles



L3 Harris Arabian Fox MAST-13 unmanned surface vessel transiting Strait of Hormuz

Charles Moulthrop and USCGC John Scheuerman transiting Strait of Hormuz with an L3 Harris Arabian Fox MAST-13 unmanned surface vessel.

- The USCG has also been working on the acquisition of Medium Unmanned Surface Vessels (MUSVs), which are larger autonomous ships intended to perform a range of missions, including surveillance, intelligence gathering, and maritime security.
- The Over-the-Horizon Unmanned Surface Vehicle (OTH-USV) is another autonomous ship concept being explored by the USCG. This type of vessel would be capable of operating beyond the visual range of a ship or aircraft, extending the USCG's surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities.

IMO Initiatives for operating Autonomous Ships

The Maritime Security Committee (MSC) under International Maritime Organization (IMO), included the issue of Marine Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) into agenda meeting held in 1998. Key points of subsequent of MSC meetings regarding MASS are as mentioned below:-

MSC Meeting no/Date	Gist of discussions
MSC 98 (Jun 2017)	Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) agreed to include the issue of Marine Autonomous Surface Ships and conduct of a Research Scoping Exercise (RSE) on its agenda
MSC 99 (May 2018)	Commenced developing a framework for the RSE and defined the aim, objective, preliminary definition of MASS, degrees of autonomy, list of mandatory instruments to be considered and applicability in terms of type and size of ships.
MSC 100 (Dec 2018)	Framework for RSE approved by the Committee.
MSC 101 (Jun 2019)	Further developed and approved Interim guidelines for MASS trials.
MSC 103 (May 2021)	RSE was finalized and approved.
MSC 104(Oct 2021)	Development of a goal-based instrument for Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS)" included in agenda, with a target completion year of 2025.
MSC 105(Apr 2022)	Approved road map containing work plan for the development of IMO instruments in the form of a non-mandatory Code, for adoption in second half of 2024 and development of mandatory MASS Code to enter into force on 1 January 2028.

<p>MSC/LEG/FAL Working Group on MASS (Sep 2022)</p>	<p>Developed table to identify preferred options for addressing common issues, like role of MASS master and crew; responsibilities of MASS master and crew; competencies required for MASS master and crew; identification and meaning of terms "remote operator" and "remote control station/centre"</p>
<p>MSC 106 (Nov 2022)</p>	<p>Structure and draft content of the draft MASS Code was endorsed. New draft section on fire safety, based on the guidance and example for the development of functional requirements for the IMO MASS Code developed.</p>
<p>MSC 107 (Jun 2023)</p>	<p>Agreed in principle that MASS code would apply to SOLAS cargo ships and high-speed craft, and be complimentary to SOLAS and other relevant IMO instruments. It was also decided that COLREG would be relevant and applicable regardless of how a ship is operated. It was decided that there shall be a human master responsible for MASS regardless of its modes of operation. The term "Remote Operations Centre" (ROC) will be used to designate place where remote master and remote operator(s) are located.</p>

Advantages of Autonomous Ships in Coast Guard Operations

➤ Enhanced Safety and Efficiency

Autonomous ships offer the potential to improve safety at sea by reducing the risk of human error, fatigue, and exposure to dangerous situations. These vessels can operate continuously, without the need for crew rotation, ensuring round-the-clock surveillance and rapid response capabilities. By leveraging advanced technologies, autonomous ships can navigate challenging weather conditions, avoid collisions, and optimize fuel consumption, leading to greater operational efficiency.

➤ Extended Range and Persistent Surveillance

With their ability to operate autonomously for extended periods, autonomous ships significantly enhance the Coast Guard's surveillance capabilities. They can cover vast maritime areas, collect real-time data, and detect potential threats or illegal activities, such as smuggling, piracy, or unauthorized fishing. Autonomous ships can also support long-range search and rescue missions, providing assistance in remote or hazardous locations.

➤ Environmental Monitoring and Protection

Autonomous ships equipped with environmental sensors and monitoring systems can play a crucial

role in protecting marine ecosystems. They can detect and respond to oil spills, monitor water quality, track marine life populations, and contribute to early warning systems for natural disasters.

Challenges and Considerations.

➤ Regulatory Framework and Standards

The widespread adoption of autonomous ships in Coast Guard operations necessitates the development of robust regulatory frameworks and safety standards framed by International Maritime Organizations and governments.

➤ Cyber security Risks

As with any autonomous system, the cyber security of autonomous ships is of paramount importance. Safeguarding these vessels from potential cyber threats, such as hacking or unauthorized access to critical systems, requires robust security measures, regular updates, and rigorous testing to ensure the integrity and reliability of the ship's operations.

Conclusion

Autonomous and Unmanned ships are poised to revolutionize Coast Guard operations, offering enhanced safety, improved surveillance, and increased efficiency. While there are challenges to overcome, the potential benefits are immense. As the world navigates the future, Autonomous and Unmanned ships will undoubtedly play a pivotal role in safeguarding our seas, protecting lives and preserving our marine environments.

- *Dy Commandant Puneet Sharma*
Coast Guard Selection Board

Exodus of Refugees and Chances of A Probable MRO

In recent times spurt in refugees taking ocean passage are being witnessed. The increase in number of such oceanic voyages by people in war struck areas surely increase the chances of accidents and distress at sea. Such boats have also been found to be poorly constructed, in poor materiel state and overloaded with refugees. The law of probability surmises that all these factors may result in a mishap at sea.

In a recent incident, on 13 Jun 23, a refugee boat sank near Greece wherein it is estimated that approx. 400 lives have been lost. In the incident the boat was carrying approximately 500 - 700 refugees, and had left the Tobruk area in eastern Libya and was bound to Italy. However, the boat capsized about 75 kilometers (45 miles) southwest of Greece's southern Peloponnese peninsula. The boat was overloaded with refugees and capsized due to sudden movement of passengers onboard. In the accident, only 104 persons could be rescued even after various vessels were pressed into action by Greek authorities.

The accident is a lesson to Indian Search and Rescue stakeholders as similar transoceanic movements of refugees are gaining momentum in Indian Ocean region also (Rohingya movement close to the Andaman Sea). Such boats generally leave from war struck areas or from congested refugee camps for countries offering asylum. Such boats overlook safety precautions, try to pass undetected and do not respond to security forces even if they are contacted. The persons onboard such vessels also move abruptly if any security forces vessel is in vicinity, thereby increasing the probability of vessel getting capsized. Such vessels also face regular breakdowns due to poor materiel state and keep drifting at sea without contacting SAR authorities to avoid detection and deportation to their countries of origin. The boats carry refugees in jam packed state and any accident will surely turn in to a Mass Rescue operation.

Curtailling movement of refugees is not possible as it involves multiple countries and geopolitics involved in the process. However, SAR authorities must be prepared to undertake Mass Rescue Operation resulting from such movement of refugees.

- *Commandant (JG) Anil Kumar
MRCC (PBR)*



Drone Technology For Search And Rescue

In Search and Rescue scenario, time is often the most critical factor as lives are at risk and golden period of rescue is limited, with every passing minute the probability of survival diminishes. Time factor combined with position uncertainty further complicates the situation as the exact location of the person concerned is unknown and much time is generally spent on search rather than rescue. In most of the maritime SAR situations, Search and Rescue Units are required to search a vast area within a very short period of time. Many countries have already started to deploy Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) in an attempt to search a large area in a shorter time span.

In natural calamities and maritime search and rescue scenarios, UAVs have a number of advantages over humans. Firstly, UAVs can be sent to any location without the requirement of operator knowing the exact conditions in the target area, which reduces the possibility of rescuer injury or death. With the latest tracking and communication technologies, UAVs can scan a large area in a shorter time span. Thermal and Infrared camera combined with state of the art machine learning can also be used for identifying and tracking humans and can assist boarding operations, wherein UAVs may be used to scan the ship before launching the VBSS team.

UAVs have extensive ability to overview large and remote areas, they can transmit images and sensor data from remote locations faster than conventional means and without the risk of injury to the person monitoring the situation. UAVs can help the SAR forces understand the situation and identify injured person or persons requiring support. UAVs can transmit not only visual information, but also other sensor data. Further, UAVs can provide a communication connection to inaccessible people or even deliver urgently needed tools. UAVs can also be utilized during fire fighting operations.

In many cases it is advantageous to obtain overview of a situation remotely to be able to react to emergencies quickly. UAVs can easily locate a man overboard flying at a height and can transmit the Geo-position of overboard person to the rescue units, speeding up the rescue process significantly. When a quick rescue is not possible, tools medicine or nutrition can be delivered by an UAV, before SAR units arrive.

During SAR missions wherein rescuers are not conversant with the structure of distressed ship and the dangers posed onboard such ships, the UAVs can gather information before search party is deployed onboard vessels facing flooding or fire onboard. UAVs can also act as aerial surveillance devices to locate a survivor in water and offer a huge advantage over surface search. UAVs with optical and thermal imaging camera can greatly augment the search capabilities of SRUs in SAR mission at sea.

- *Vikas Kumar Rao, U/Adh (RO),
MRCC (PBR)*

Forcible Evacuation during SAR

Introduction

The 1979 SAR Convention provides an internationally standardized foundation and framework for coastal states to work together in implementing a global maritime SAR system. It was aimed at developing an international SAR plan, so that, no matter where an accident occurs, the rescue of persons in distress at sea will be coordinated by a SAR organization and when necessary by co-operation between neighboring SAR organisations. The Indian Govt. ratified SAR Convention in 2001 and entrusted ICG with responsibility of providing SAR coverage in Indian Search and Rescue region (ISRR) of about 4.6 million square kilometers.

Issues Faced During SAR Operations

The ICG under its charter is bound to provide SAR/ MEDEVAC to all distressed personnel at sea. However, sometimes ICG ships/aircrafts deployed for rendering rescue services to distressed personnel may resort to forcible evacuations at sea. Fishermen's/ Masters of distressed vessel at sea refuse to leave their craft in spite of understanding the inability of the distressed craft to sustain at sea in inclement weather conditions. Hence, this makes it difficult to render requisite SAR assistance. The main plausible reason for such scenarios is due to the emotional inclination of the Tandel towards the IFB or it may be due to the fear of the Tandel from the boat owner. Such scenarios are predominantly noticed at sea during sorties in the Gulf of Khambhat region, which are nowhere mentioned in the NMSAR manual. These scenarios lead to several important questions being raised such as: -

- What if a SAR Mission Co-ordinator (SMC) is notified that a vessel is in distress and dispatches a SAR unit to render assistance, but the vessel's captain refuses to disembark, even though in the judgment of the SAR unit on scene he will perish if he does not abandon the vessel?
- What if the crew or passengers wish to evacuate a vessel in distress, but the vessel's captain refuses to allow them to depart? What should the SAR unit or SAR facility on scene do? Should the use of force be contemplated to allow passengers and crew members to disembark the vessel in distress?
- What are the legal implications of compelling a person against his "WILL" to abandon his vessel in what is perceived to be a life-threatening situation?

SAR Efforts during MRO

In order to ensure smooth flow of communication, operation and logistic support for administering SAR to personnel in distress it is very much critical for SMC to understand the on-ground scenario. In such situation it is important for the Master of the distressed craft to aid in assistance provided by the SMC rather than to become negligent towards the help provided. The issue worsens if the SAR operations is elevated to Mass Rescue Operations (MRO) where the number of personnel in distress is very high. The factors mentioned

above are critical to understand. These are difficult questions applied to challenging, life-threatening situations and SAR authorities should address them before this type of incident occurs. Forcibly compelling a person to abandon his vessel, presents a difficult situation to the on scene SAR responder, who is attempting to provide the lifesaving assistance and may result in controversy, property loss, and litigation. In order to understand such difficulty being faced by ICG or other maritime stakeholders it is imperative for the voyager's venturing out at sea to understand the responsibility of the SMC and render as much help/ assistance required at sea, so as to entrust the charter of duties entrusted upon ICG and other agencies involved in SAR.

Conclusion

The efforts put in by SMC/ On Scene Commander (OSC) is required to be realized by the local populace as much as possible so as to ensure the effects of such kind of scenario doesn't elevate any further. The CIPs and other platforms for mass addressing of such issues are of vital importance which are to be made to realise by all maritime voyagers venturing out at sea.

- Asst Comdt SK Sharan
ICGS Pipavav



Emergency Personal Radio Devices

The Maritime Safety Committee, at its 106th session (02 - 11 Nov 2022), approved the Guidance on the training and operation of emergency personal radio devices in multiple causality situation. It is intended to minimize harm to search and rescue communications and operations by emergency personal radio devices (EPRDs) in multiple causality situations.

The circular states that crew should be aware of following characteristics of Emergency Personal Radio Devices (EPRDs). EPRD may include Man overboard (MOB) devices, Personal Locator Beacons (PLB), Maritime Survivor Locating Devices (MSLD) and other radio devices.

- EPRDs generally transmit two different radio signals: -
 - An alerting signal either to trigger an alarm on a bridge or, alternatively, at a Rescue coordination centre.
 - A locating signal to help rescuers get within visual range.
- EPRDs should be worn or attached to a person in accordance within the manufacturer's guidance.
- EPRDs may be armed to automatically activate (transmit) on immersion or manually activated.
- EPRDs commonly have indicators to show they are transmitting.
- Most EPRDs require a clear line of sight to the sky because they fix their position from satellite signals.
- If the aerial is underwater, an EPRD cannot transmit or receive radio signals.
- When many EPRDs are activated in the same area, they can prevent SRA services from using the locating signals effectively and harm on-scene radio communications by causing repeated audible alarms on older radio receivers.

Crew on board should be briefed on the following aspects of the use of EPRDs during specific safety and emergency training:

- Ship systems will make the necessary distress signals to initiate rescue actions.
- An EPRD should never be activated except by a person in the water or on instructions from the ship's crew.
- An active EPRD should be switched off as soon as the wearer is out of the water or out of immediate danger.
- This information may be reinforced by signage at muster stations.

Persons with designated responsibility for the safety of persons in emergency situations should ensure EPRDs are not activated for person getting into survival craft prior to deployment.

Person responsible for a survival craft, once deployed, should ensure that all EPRDs remains switched off for anyone aboard a survival craft, including persons recovered from the water. Where a survival craft has lost contact with other survival craft and is not equipped with an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPRIB) or AIS Search and Rescue Transmitter (AIS – SART), then an EPRD may be used to help locate the survival craft.

- ICGS Sarthak

If Helmet is Mandatory on Road, Why not a Life Jacket at Sea?

India is considered as the 3rd largest fish producing Country in the world supporting livelihood of approx 28 million people especially in the marginalised and vulnerable communities. More than the contribution towards GDP, it matters to India as one of the largest bread earners for the coastal population. Country-wide a mixed and varied scenario of marine fisheries sector can be observed. The fishing boats vary from wooden vallams, dingies, other country crafts, fibre boats to metal boats and multi-day trawlers. Deep sea fishing can also be found in bits and pieces. Despite its varied nature and regulatory mechanisms, the sector has been mostly an organised sector under the State legislations. Most of the boats and crafts are registered and accounted for. The sector has been supported through various government schemes, trainings and subsidies to improvise fishing techniques, acquire seaworthy boats and deep sea trawlers.



Amidst all these developments, what has been lagging is the safety concern for the boats and the fishermen. Unlike regulatory laws in land, the safety of fishermen has taken a backseat in absence of strong regulations and strict enforcement. The Law enforcement agencies at sea have been given nil powers of enforcement even for ensuring safety aspects. The Seaworthiness of boats is left to the mercy of boat owners and fishermen. Carriage of life jackets has remained just an advisory. Finally, the Search and Rescue assistance in case of distress to these fishermen has been enshrined as the primary duty of Coast Guard. Armed with no powers to ensure safety but endowed with duties to save lives, Coast Guard resorted to softer means of Community Interaction Programmes in fishing villages and coastal hamlets educating and sensitizing fishermen to be safe at sea. But who cares? Over the years has the scenario changed? Every year there are hundreds of incidents of capsizing of boats, Man Overboard and death due to drowning. Unseaworthy boats suffer fire, flooding, adrift for days till rescued by Coast Guard or some other angel at sea. While our laws are so strict on land, why do we remain ignorant to the dangers at sea. If Helmets are Mandatory in land, why not Life Jackets at sea?

- Comdt AS Ali, TM
CGRHQ (East)

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