

INDIAN COAST GUARD LOCATES MISSING FISHING BOAT MERCEDES AT HIGH SEAS

1. The Indian Coast Guard in yet another successful Search and Rescue operation at Sea has located missing Tamil Nadu fishing boat Mercedes in a massive search operation launched since 24 Apr 21 at a distance of about 1100 kms (590 miles) from Goa. The fishing boat had sailed for Deep Sea fishing on 06 Apr 21 with 11 crew onboard West of Kerala for 30 days voyage from Thengapattnam Fishing harbour in Tamil Nadu. The Tamil Nadu Fisheries authorities on 24 Apr 21 intimated regarding sighting of debris by other fishing boats operating in the area presuming the fishing boat Mercedes to be sunk.

2. The Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Center (MRCC) of Indian Coast Guard at Mumbai activated International Safety Net to alert merchant vessels transiting near reported position to lookout for the missing boat. Simultaneously, ICGS Samudra Prahari on Concurrent Deployment was diverted for search. MRCC (Mumbai) coordinated with merchant vessel Maersk Horsburgh to join the search operation alongwith fishing boats operating in the area. As the reported position was located in Pakistan Search and Rescue Region, MRCC Karachi was also requested for assistance as per IMO norms in vogue. Considering the distance from mainland, Indian Navy was requested for launch of Long Range Maritime Patrol aircraft. It was learnt that the fishing boat was not carrying AIS or any other transponder which could have assisted in early locating of the boat by the search units.

3. After four days of continuous search amidst challenges of distance from mainland and weather, the missing boat was located around 200 miles (around 370 kilometers) from Lakshadweep Islands. ICG Dornier located and corroborated presence of the fishing boat today morning. MRCC (Mumbai) established communication with the fishing boat on satellite phone held by the boat and ascertained the crew to be safe. In the interim, an information

was also received from TN fisheries authorities that the crew of IFB Mercedes had called up home through Satellite phone to indicate that they are safe. ICG ship on deployment off Lakshadweep was diverted to render logistic and medical assistance to the crew. The fishing boat is returning to its base port under escort of ICG ship and would reach around 03 May 21.

4. The Indian Coast Guard as the National Maritime Search and Rescue Coordinator has saved around 10,000 lives over 3400 missions averaging almost one life saved per two days. The Indian Coast Guard has been advocating fitment of AIS, Distress Alert Transponders and Long Range two way Communication mechanism for enhancing safety of fishers proceeding for Deep Sea Fishing.

