

PRESS BRIEF



7TH NATIONAL MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE WORK SHOP AND EXERCISE – 2016 SAREX - 16

1. Indian Coast Guard, being the Apex body for National Maritime Search and Rescue Coordination conducted the 7th Search and Rescue Workshop and Exercise– 2016 (SAREX-16) on 02-03 May 16 off Mumbai to check the preparedness and response measures for Search and Rescue at sea in a coordinated manner. The two days event organised by the Coast Guard Region (West) comprised of Search and Rescue Workshop and Table Top Exercise conducted on 02 May 16 and was followed by Search and Rescue Exercise at sea on 03 May 16. A total of twenty five international observers from nine maritime nations witnessed the exercise at sea. Besides this, members from National Maritime Search and Rescue (NMSAR) Board from various Central and State Departments, resource agencies and other maritime stake holders also participated in the exercise. This Workshop and Exercise assumes significance in the wake of past SAR operations like rescue of the 20 crew from MV Jindal Kamakshi, 14 crew of MV Coastal Pride, recovery of body of the pilot of ill-fated Pawan Hans helicopter, as well as numerous SAR cases handled by the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC), Mumbai. The Seventh National SAR Exercise focussed on responses for passenger aircraft ditching at sea off Mumbai. During the Mass Rescue Operation exercise for distressed aircraft, the rescue capabilities by ICG Ships and aircraft showcased the commitment to safety of life in distress at sea.

2. As part of international obligation, the Maritime Search and Rescue services need to respond to every situation with utmost alacrity displaying professional acumen and exercising full coordination with other support agencies. Given the vast search and Rescue Region given to India for SAR coordination, the involvement of multiplicity of stakeholders is an inescapable requirement. The Indian Coast Guard through the National Search and Rescue Board takes necessary actions for continuous improvement of SAR system. This calls for best SAR training and practices, efficient on-ground coordination and enhanced integration with the global

SAR system. With this aim and to check the efficacy of Search and Rescue mechanism, Director General Rajendra Singh, PTM, TM, Director General Indian Coast Guard reviewed the Search and Rescue Exercise at sea off Mumbai on 03 May 2016.

3. The SAREX-16 which focussed on Mass Rescue Operation (MRO) post an aircraft accident also activated real time satellite based distress communication mechanisms such as Emergency locator Transmitter (ELT) from the aircraft so as to check the efficacy of distress alert relay mechanisms. After receipt of distress message, Search and Rescue Operations simulating "Mass Rescue" through a coordinated and synergised SAR Operations was demonstrated. Ten ICG Ships, Dornier aircraft, three Chetak helicopters, one indigenous Advance Light Helicopter from Coast Guard, one Indian Naval Ship, one Indian Air Force helicopter, one ship of Shipping Corporation of India besides other resource agencies like Airline Operator Committee, Mumbai International Airport Limited, Air India, Airport Authority of India (MB), Indian Mission Control Centre (INMCC) Bangalore, Maharashtra State administration, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, Maharashtra Police, JNPT and MbPT participated in the exercise. Prior to the exercise, Indian Coast Guard conducted Search and Rescue training for the Officers from Sri Lanka and Maldives Coast Guard under Trilateral Cooperation at Mumbai from 25-30 Apr 16.

4. During the exercise, shore stations for receiving the casualties for provision of the medical aid as well as transfer to the nearest hospitals were established at four locations, namely Mahalakshmi Racecourse, Girgaon Chowpatty, Sasson Dock and MbPT. The BMC also utilise this occasion for validation of their Standard Operating Procedures of disaster management for large scale medical management.

5. The Search and Rescue missions undertaken and the lives saved during emergencies at sea stand testimony to the concerted efforts of Indian Coast Guard (ICG). The dedicated efforts of ICG have resulted in saving of 7038 precious lives at sea till date through 2336 missions. The proactive approach adopted on Search and Rescue, particularly for ensuring safety of fishermen has yielded positive results and contributed toward growing confidence amongst the fishing community in the maritime SAR network in India.

6. With the conduct of this exercise, the Indian Coast Guard has once again proven its multifarious capabilities and the growth it has witnessed since inception in 1978 living up to its motto. "Vayam Rakshamah" which means "We Protect".