



Humanitarian assistance by Indian coast guard on high seas

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The onset of South West monsoon on the West coast has resulted in heavy sea conditions and high swells. Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has been maintaining its units on alert for meeting any SAR requirements during such sea conditions. **A Coast Guard Dornier whilst on Maritime Reconnaissance Sortie on 10 Jul 2017, sighted one a drift boat on high seas.** The crew of the boat were observed on weather deck waving for assistance. A fishing ban is imposed on West coast of India and the appearance (structure/colour) of the boat was not commensurate with the features of boats from Gujarat. Further, the boat had its name inscribed in Urdu on its Foxle (front) side. The Dornier tried to establish communication with the distressed boat without any success. Subsequently, the matter was reported to coast guard operations centre at Porbandar. **On receipt of information, Indian Coast Guard Ship Samudra Prahari on patrol was diverted to proceed for rendering assistance.** One ICG aircraft was maintained at standby in search and rescue configuration whilst holding the contact through electronic surveillance.



Indian Coast Guard Ship Samudra Prahari effected rendezvous with the distressed vessel on 10 Jul 2017 in PM hours, ICG personnel boarded the vessel to ascertain the credentials of the boat and its crew. The distressed boat was identified as "**AL Bome Marize**" which reportedly departed Yemen on 05 Jun 2017. The boat subsequently encountered a technical snag on 06 Jun 2017 and remained adrift since then. The ICG ship confiscated the documents of the boats which include crew list issued by Yemenese Fisheries Department and one Somilan Seaman's log book. **The six crew onboard (03 Yemenees, 01 Somalian and 02 Tanzanian)** were in a dehydrated condition and were unable to clearly communicate. Communication set of the boat was non operational and the battery of the 02 hand held GPS held with the boat had drained out rendering them completely helpless in the open sea. The Merchant Vessels encountered en-route denied assistance to the boat suspecting them to be pirates. Due South West monsoon condition with aiding sea conditions, the boat drifted towards Indian Coast. Indian Coast Guard Ship Samudra Prahari on arriving in the area provided the distressed crew of the boat with water, food and necessary medical assistance. The crew were stabilised and thereafter the boat towed to Porbandar for joint interrogation by security agencies to rule out nefarious intent.

Presently the boat is berthed at the Coast Guard jetty at Porbandar for mandatory joint interrogation in the presence of various associated resource agencies being undertaken on 11 Jul 2017. The lives saved were of utmost importance in the entire evolution.

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