

# Indian Coast Guard Helping in Firefighting for MT New Diamond off Sri Lankan Coast

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Editor

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**New Delhi: Indian Coast Guard launched operation towards fire fighting and consequential pollution response for MT New Diamond off Sri Lanka since September 3 being the Competent National Authority under South Asian Co-operative for Environment Protection (SACEP) for responding and coordinating pollution response in South Asian Sea region.**

A bilateral MoU also exists between ICG and SLCG covering co-operation in the Marine pollution Response domain.

MT New Diamond is being held by Tug TTT1 in position about 30 miles from the nearest coast of Sri Lanka for preventing drifting of the vessel ashore and facilitating fire-fighting operation both by ships and aircraft including logistics ease.

The fire which re-ignited late in the evening on September 7 increased drastically by midnight, with very high flames emanating from funnel and aft section, reaching almost 50-60 m from weather deck. The sustained firefighting efforts by ICG Ships Sujay, Shaurya, Sarang and specialised ICG Pollution Response Vessel Samudra Paheredar along with Sri Lankan Ships and tugs ensured the intensity and magnitude of fire was reduced considerably by daybreak on September 8.

The master of MT New Diamond, onboard ICGS Shaurya has intimated ICG PM that the fire appears to have been doused. The situation is being monitored closely and boundary cooling with sea water and application of foam has been enhanced to avoid re-ignition.

The persistence of fire for the eighth day has weakened the accommodation superstructure. No significant list is observed. Vessel is trimmed by aft by about three feet.

In order to supplement the surface firefighting efforts with aerial dropping of Dry Chemical Powder (DCP), Sri Lankan Navy had requested ICG for additional DCP. ICGS Abheek with 1500 kg of DCP was diverted from on scene to enter Trincomalee harbour for handing over the DCP to Srilankan Navy. CG Dornier 770 with 700 kg DCP was also dispatched from Chennai to Trincomalee. Sri Lankan Ships, Indian Naval ships are also operating in area.

CG Dornier 775 continue to operate from Mattala, Sri Lanka. CG Helicopter being carried on ICGS Sarang is launched regularly for aerial assessment of the situation. No oil spill has been reported.

The 16 member salvage team including Marine Chemist and Naval Architect are onboard Tugs ALP Winger and TTT1. The salvage team is in agreement with the methodology adopted by ICG to fight fire and are providing suggestions to make the firefighting more effective.

Continuous liaison and co-ordination is being maintained with Sri Lankan Navy/Coast Guard and other authorities for augmentation and effective response.

