

INCIDENT OF PIRACY IN CENTRAL ARABIAN SEA

The recent incident of hijacking of the Malta flagged MV Ruen by Somalian pirates in the Central Arabian Sea, approximately 450 nm East of Socotra on 14 Dec 23 indicates potential re-emergence of piracy attempts on MVs in the region, driven by commercial motives. Certain salient observations from the incident are :-

- **Use of Dhow as Mother Ship.** Somali pirates hijacked a dhow operating off Somalia and utilised the same for attacking/ hijacking MV. Utilisation of hijacked dhow provided reach and sustenance to pirates from mainland Somalia upto high seas. It was observed that the dhow maintained in proximity of MV after boarding till the pirates established control over the vessel, as a possible means for a quick exit in case of intervention by naval forces.
- **Selection of Area of Hijacking.** Attack/ hijacking of the MV was undertaken at high seas (Central Arabian Sea), well clear of shipping/ fishing. Further, the area chosen by pirates for attacking/ hijacking the vessel was also well clear of embarkation/ disembarkation point of private Marine Armed Security Personnel (PMASP) ex-floating armouries. The scene of incident also had limited presence of warship in vicinity.
- **Usage of Citadel/ Safe House.** The crew had safely evacuated to citadel/ safe house onboard the MV and had established communication with a naval maritime patrol aircraft.

In light of this recent piracy incident, the following is re-emphasised:-

- Implementation of action by crew in case of pirate attack, as elucidated in the Best Management Practices (BMP 5, 2018).
- Audit of the functionality of citadel(s) onboard MVs.
- Need to remain in citadel in case of a pirate attack till clearly communicated by the naval unit to exit.
- In case of a probable attack on MV, information be relayed to all concerned agencies and IFC-IOR at the earliest.