



भारतीय नौसेना

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INDIAN NAVY AND COAST GUARD NEUTRALIZE MENACING PIRATE MOTHER VESSEL 'PRANTALAY'



Pirate Mother Ship 'PRANTALAY' with two Skiffs in tow

In a well coordinated and jointly conducted operation on 28 Jan 2011, the Indian Navy and the Coast Guard intercepted **Prantalay**, a **pirate mother vessel** which was being used by Somali pirates since April 2010, for piracy at various locations in the Arabian Sea. This vessel has been a risk to the International shipping for many months and has carried out several attacks.

At about 1030h on 28 Jan 11, a Coast Guard Dornier while responding to a Mayday call from MV CMA CGM Verdi, a Bahama Flagged container ship, located two skiffs attempting a piracy attack. Seeing the aircraft, the skiffs immediately aborted their piracy attempt and dashed towards the mother vessel Prantalay which hurriedly hoisted the two skiffs onboard and set a Westerly course to escape from the area. This action cleared all doubts of Prantalay being used by pirates as a mother vessel. Whilst CG and IN Dorniers continuously tracked Prantalay, Indian Naval Ship Cankarso (a recently commissioned Water Jet Fast Attack Craft) which was already deployed in the area for anti piracy patrol was directed to intercept and investigate Prantalay.

At about 1700h on 28 Jan 11 INS Cankarso closed Prantalay and made all efforts to establish communication on the International Mercantile Marine Band, but the vessel did not respond and continued to proceed westwards in the hope of escaping.

In keeping with internationally accepted norms, Cankarso fired a warning shot well ahead of the bows of Prantalay to compel her to stop. Instead of stopping, however, Prantalay suddenly opened fire on INS Cankarso. INS Cankarso returned limited fire in self defence out of necessity and as a proportionate measure. Thereafter, it was observed that a fire had broken out on Prantalay (mother vessels are known to carry additional fuel drums to fuel the skiffs). Personnel were also seen jumping overboard.

INS Cankarso recovered 20 fishermen of Thai and Myanmar nationality. These were the original crew of the fishing vessel and were being held hostage for several months. Prantalay is a Thai fishing vessel which had been hijacked by Somali pirates in April 2010 and has thereafter been used as 'mother vessel' for piracy operations. In addition to the fishermen, 15 pirates were also recovered, under humanitarian considerations. INS Cankarso was subsequently joined by INS Kalpeni and CGS Sankalp. Naval and Coast Guard ships and aircraft remained in the area searching for any other fishermen/pirates.

In addition to the anti-piracy patrols being sustained in the Gulf of Aden since Oct 2008, in view of the dangers from vessels such as Prantalay, the Indian Navy and the Coast Guard have been maintaining vigil west of the Lakshadweep Islands since Nov 2010. This has proved effective in keeping the international shipping lanes in this region safe from piracy attacks and piracy incidents in this area have seen a 75% decline since December 2010. South Eastern Arabian sea is a focal point of International traffic and the security of these sea lanes in the Arabian Sea is critical to the flow of global trade.

The manner in which the firm and resolute actions by the Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard were undertaken, demonstrates the nation's determination to strengthen safety of merchant shipping in the international sea lanes in the Arabian Sea with due regard to international humanitarian law, even when dealing with a group of hardened pirates.

It maybe recalled that recently Mr Hardeep Singh Puri, India's Ambassador to the UN, had presented a five point action plan to combat the menace of piracy, to the Security Council of the United Nations.



**Aerial view - Pirate Mother Ship 'PRANTALAY'
with Skiffs in tow**



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