

■ Underwater Search to Set Off Tonight to Trace Missing Dornier

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CHENNAI/PUDUCHERRY: The underwater search to locate Indian Coast Guard's (CG) missing Dornier and its three crew would start on Friday night assisted by Naval submarine INS Sindhuhwaj and survey ship INS Sandhayak, equipped with sonar. There has been little luck during the last 96 hours, despite 12 Coast Guard and Naval ships scouring the area along with Dorniers of the Coast Guard, Navy's long range maritime reconnaissance aircraft P8I and patrol boats of Coastal Security Group.

A total of 60 hours of air search has already been done by the Dorniers and the long range maritime reconnaissance aircraft.



THE BIG HUNT | NEARLY 100 HOURS HAVE PASSED SINCE THE COAST GUARD, ALONG WITH OTHER FORCES, BEGAN SEARCH FOR ITS MISSING CREW AND CRAFT. A LOOK AT THE ACTION IN THE SEA, AIR AND COAST

<p>AT SEA 12 ships belonging to the ICG and Navy involved in the search</p> <p>IN ACTION ICG Sarang, Vighraha, Ameya, Abheek, Raj Tarang, C-415, IC-119, IC-120, and INS Khukri, Chetlat, Coradivh, Carnicobar apart from small patrol boats</p> <p>EYE IN THE SKY Coast Guard Dornier and long range maritime reconnaissance aircraft P8I undertake aerial survey</p> <p>SONAR SEARCH Naval Submarine INS Sindhuhwaj and survey ship INS Sandhayak equipped with sonar begin underwater search ops</p>	<p>LAND SCOUTING The Coastal Security Group of the State Police searches along the marshy and mangrove filled coastal areas</p> <p>FUEL MIS-LEAD Water samples were collected to analyse whether the oil patches in it was aviation fuel. However, it has returned negative</p> <p>SPACE TECH ISRO's Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC) try to locate aircraft using radio transmission, if any, from the aircraft. But unsuccessful</p> <p>SCUBA DIVERS In addition to the personnel from ICG, Navy and CSG, fishermen and scuba divers have also been roped in to aide the search</p>
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Even the traces of oil found off the Karaikal Coast failed the test of aviation fuel. Inspector General SP Sharma, Commander, Indian Coast Guard (East) said the test conducted by the Indian Oil Corporation on the oil samples to ascertain whether it was aviation fuel turned out to be negative. Meanwhile, the search area was being expanded after analyzing the reports from the search units.

Coast Guard has sought the expertise of Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Sharma said.

INCOIS has a search and rescue model based on a set of mathematical calculations of the current and wind in the ocean. Using that, INCOIS could provide information on the current of the water and wind around a particular place where the aircraft went missing.

Knowing the direction and strength of the current and wind could help identify where the aircraft could be at the moment.

Meanwhile, the aerial search by Coastal Security Group (CSG) of Tamil Nadu Police using Paramotors was also undertaken. Coast Guard has also sought the services of National Institute of Ocean Technology research vessel to locate the crew. NIOT director M A Atmanand said they were considering Indian Coast Guard's request. To bolster the search operations, S P Aravind, a scuba diving instructor from Puducherry on Thursday joined the CSG's mission. The 39-year-old is among the seven-member team of divers, who conducted the underwater searches near Pichavarm coast of Chidambaram. Speaking to Express over phone, he said C Sylendra Babu, ADGP of CSG himself led the search operations.

Divers have covered over 25 meters depth, he said and added the search would move to Karaikal coast.

The ships participating in the operations are ICG Sarang, Vighraha, Ameya, Abheek, Raj Tarang, C-415, IC-119, IC-120, INS Khukri, Chetlat, Coradivh, Carnicobar.