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 Sindhuvrat 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.

Even the traces of oil found off the Karachi 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 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 Paramotor was also undertaken. Coast Guard has also sought the services of National Institute of Ocean Technology research vessel to locate the crew. IGCA’s director M A Afman and 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 Pichavaram coast of Cheinambar. Speaking to Express over phone, he said C S Venunder Babu, ACG of CSG himself led the search operations.

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

The ships participating in the operations are ICG Sarang, Vignah, Ameya, Abheek, Raj Tarang, C-410, IC-119, IC-123, INS Kukri, Chetak, Coradivi, Carnicobar.