

ICG, Navy & IAF Execute High-Risk Operation to Stabilise Fire-Hit Singaporean Vessel Off Kochi

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In a major development in the firefighting and salvage operation of Singaporean Vessel MV Wan Hai 503, the Indian Coast Guard (ICG), along with the Indian Navy and Indian Air Force, successfully transferred the tow of the distressed container vessel to the ocean-going tug Offshore Warrior on June 13, 2025. The ICG had been holding the vessel away from the Kerala coast for several days, but sudden deterioration in weather conditions and strong westerly winds caused it to dangerously drift toward the shoreline.

Despite adverse weather that restricted aerial operations and delayed salvage crew boarding, a Navy Sea King helicopter launched from Kochi on June 13 successfully winched salvage team members onto the vessel under extremely challenging conditions. The team then managed to connect a 600-metre tow rope to Offshore Warrior approximately 20 nautical miles off the coast of Kochi. The vessel is now being towed westward at a speed of 1.8 knots and is nearly 35 nautical miles offshore.

Three ICG Offshore Patrol Vessels are continuing to escort the container ship and sustain firefighting operations. At present, only thick smoke and a few isolated hotspots remain onboard, a testament to the ICG's effective firefighting efforts that have helped avert a major environmental disaster.

The ICG is closely coordinating with the Directorate General of Shipping to ensure the vessel remains at least 50 nautical miles from the Indian coastline until its fate is determined by the owners, in accordance with international norms. The situation is expected to further stabilise with the anticipated arrival of additional firefighting tugs.





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