

PRESS RELEASE

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MESSAGE OF DG PMSA REAR ADMIRAL IMTIAZ ALI ON EXERCISE BARRACUDA XII

The dependence of mankind on sea, its resources and environment has increased manifold in today's globalized world. The corresponding upscale in maritime activities is threatening marine environment. Mercantile traffic accounting for more than 90% of global trade carries along a perpetual danger of marine pollution through oil/chemical spills during collision/ groundings and port operations. Timely and effective containment of such pollution requires regular rehearsals of response options besides coordination among all stakeholders. Likewise, being Regional Coordinator of Search and Rescue (SAR) setup of IMO, maritime services of Pakistan are required to coordinate and respond to distress situations at sea where human life and property is at risk.

In this context, Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) is holding its twelfth series of exercise BARRACUDA scheduled from 2-4 Jan 24. PMSA has consistently taken the leading role both national and international level to safeguard maritime security in the region and the exercise has become a signature event of PMSA since 2007. The pressing need for mitigating and managing Oil spill at sea became evident following the catastrophic incident of MV TASMAN SPIRIT In Karachi back in 2003. PMSA then vehemently proposed development of national oil spill contingency plan to deal with all maritime disasters. Subsequently the national Marine Disaster Contingency Plan (NMDCP) was approved by Govt in 2007 which mandated PN & PMSA to lead national effort to fight the pollution, oil spillage and other maritime disasters at sea. Resultantly exercise BARRACUDA was conceived by PMSA with the aim of generating consensus and fostering a coordinated response among different stakeholders, ensuring preparedness in the event of potential maritime disaster. The practical manifestation of response mechanism was seen in case of oil spill by MT AL-JAWAZA off Mubarik village and MV Hang Tong off Sea View wherein all stakeholders came together to handle disaster of oil spill at sea.

This year, as we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the MARPOL convention with the theme 'at 50- Our Commitment Goes On' reflecting IMO's enduring dedication for protection of marine environment through a robust regulatory framework. Embracing these evolving paradigms, foster a collective responsibility among all stakeholders. PMSA being a lead agency in maritime sector, remains resolute in its dedication to ensure maritime safety and upholding environmental mandates. The conduct of Ex-BARRACUDA under the ambit of PN underscores our commitment to prevent marine pollution. Apart from meeting national objectives on environmental control and anti-pollution drives the exercise also provides a common platform to deliberate upon and fine tune response mechanism for marine pollution incidents including SAR operations.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the friendly nations that have responded to our invitation and envision this exercise as a learning opportunity. The collaborative nature

of the Ex BARRACUDA hold the potential to foster a valuable exchange of knowledge and experiences among participants. As we join hands together for this exercise the collective and collaborative efforts of all stakeholders will help to achieve the objective of shared response against disaster management to marine pollution and SAR.

I look forward to welcome all national stakeholders and maximum international participants/ observers at the inaugural session of exercise BARRACUDA-XII as I remain hopeful of a rewarding and mutually beneficial exercise.

DIRECTOR GENERAL PUBLIC RELATIONS (NAVY)