



ICAO

International Civil Aviation Organization

Eighth Meeting of the ICAO Asia/Pacific Search and Rescue Working Group (APSAR/WG/8)

Bangkok, Thailand, 22 – 25 May 2023

Agenda Item 4: Asia/Pacific and inter-regional SAR planning, coordination and cooperation

SEARCH AND RESCUE EXERCISE – SAREX 2023 (RESCUE COORDINATION CENTRE, MUMBAI - INDIA)

(Presented by India)

SUMMARY

The whole world has gone through the trauma of COVID-19 during the last 3 years and the human interactions were bare minimum, therefore, Full Scale SAR Exercise (SAREX) could not be conducted. Now, as the world returns to the normalcy, SAREX for the year 2022-23 was conducted by RCC Mumbai at Mumbai in physical mode with the active participation of all the concerned agencies. SAREX helps in to assess the SAR Plan and personnel and also reveal deficiencies in the SAR Plans. The deficiencies once identified, can be addressed and SAR Plans can thus be improved to prepare all concerned agencies to handle real emergencies in the most efficient manner.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Search and Rescue (SAR) is an important function of Air Traffic Services. Although, rapid advancement in technology has enhanced the safety of aviation industry over the years to a great extent, accidents cannot be ruled out. Annex 12 mandates the requirement of an efficient Search and Rescue plan, infrastructure and effective execution to provide a better search and rescue services to the aviation as well as maritime users.

1.2. Exercises, conducted on a realistic basis, help to demonstrate and assess true effectiveness of training, operational efficiency and competence of the SAR service and thus help to improve coordination skills and effectiveness of SAR procedures.

1.3. A table top exercise is conducted in each FIR in India on quarterly basis. The annual Full Scale SAREX is conducted in one of the four Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC) or a Rescue Sub Centre.

1.4. SAREX for the year 2022-2023 was conducted by RCC Mumbai.

1.5. SAREX for the year 2023-2024 is planned for RSC Guwahati in March-2024.

1.6. This paper presents information about SAREX 2023.

2. DISCUSSION

SAREX 2023: RCC Mumbai

2.1 SAREX 2023 was conducted by RCC Mumbai on 16th and 17th March, 2023.

2.2 RCC Mumbai conducted SAREX-2023 in accordance with guidelines as published in National Aeronautical Search and Rescue (NASAR) Manual.

2.3 Various agencies such as Indian Mission Control Centre (INMCC), Indian Army, Indian Coast Guard, Indian Air Force, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Indian Meteorological Department, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Mumbai International Airport Ltd, Maharashtra State Govt. Administration and Police etc. participated in the Full Scale SAR Exercise.

2.4 Day one programme was an interactive seminar in which different stakeholders delivered presentations on preparedness as well as challenges based on experience of their respective organizations. Day two was dedicated to a Full Scale Search and Rescue Exercise.

2.5 To make the exercise as realistic as possible and check the preparedness and efficiency of RCC as well as SAR units, a scenario was simulated when a flight SAREX 023 departed from Ahmedabad (VAAH) for Mumbai (VABB) and lost. Another flight (ABC123) flying in the vicinity of final approach RWY14 reported sighting a huge fire ball breaking into two pieces and falling into the sea near the coastline. A villager also informed the local police about the crash as it happens in real life scenario. The SAR personnel activated the RCC and coordinated the SAREX.

2.6 The SAR Personnel were divided into two teams. One Team went to the suspected crash site which was at Erangal Beach, Bhati Village, Madh Island, Mumbai (5.5 NM from beginning of RWY 14). The other team was stationed at RCC Mumbai.

2.7 A giant flex model of a crashed aircraft was laid at Erangal Beach, Bhati Village, Madh Island, Mumbai. Fire and smoke were created to make it look like an air crash. Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) was also activated.

2.8 Observation Team noted the various activities and coordination among SAR agencies.

2.9 SAR activities concluded and terminated at time 0616 UTC.

2.10 Later on, the analysis and discussion took place to evaluate the preparedness of the RCC and other agencies involved in the exercise.

3. ACTION BY THE MEETING

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the information contained in this paper; and
- b) discuss any relevant matters as appropriate.

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