

## **Search for missing Dornier aircraft continues for 4th day**

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**Chennai:** The Indian Navy and Coast Guard, assisted by several national agencies, continued searching for the fourth day in the Bay of Bengal for an Indian Coast Guard Dornier aircraft reported missing since Monday evening with no clue yet to its whereabouts, an official said.

An official here said the search team was yet to get any clue into the disappearance of the plane that went missing on June 8.

“The status is same as it was yesterday (Thursday) evening. The search operations are continuing,” said an Indian Coast Guard official.

An official statement released on Friday said INS Sandhayak, a hydrographic survey vessel of the Navy, arrived in the area on Thursday night and has commenced searching for the missing plane.

The vessel is using its underwater detection equipment to detect any transmission from the Sonar Locater Beacon of the aircraft.

Aerial search by Paramotors through Coastal Security Group of Tamil Nadu was also undertaken 30 km south of Cuddalore along the coast over marshy mangroves, which are not approachable by sea.

Indian Navy submarine INS Sindhudhvaj was expected to join the search by Saturday afternoon.

Assistance of the National Remote Sensing Agency (NRSA) has also been sought for analysis of the satellite imagery of the area to assist in locating the aircraft.

An earlier glimmer of hope in the form of an oil slick on the sea surface in the Karaikal area also got snuffed out on Thursday as test results ruled it was not aviation fuel.

The coastal security agency said highly specialised Coast Guard/naval ships and several patrol boats of coastal security group were involved in the search operation.

Air sorties too have been carried out to locate the missing aircraft.

The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Hyderabad has been requested to undertake SAR model programming for the missing aircraft and to identify the Most Probable Area (MPA).

National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai has been approached for oceanographic analyses of the area around the datum and feasibility of deploying their Research Vessel “Sagar Nidhi” for augmenting the subsurface search.

A team from M/s Omcar Foundation, Thanjavur has been embarked onboard “ICGS Sarang” for undertaking underwater photography and acoustic survey.

Unrelenting efforts by Coast Guard and Naval ships/aircrafts to locate the missing Dornier and crew is also on.

The missing Dornier had on board Deputy Commandant Vidyasagar piloting the aircraft, his co-pilot and Deputy Commandant Subash Suresh and navigator/observer M.K. Soni—all in their 30s.

The missing aircraft was deployed for surveillance along the Tamil Nadu coast and over Palk Bay.

It took off from Chennai airport around 6 p.m. on Monday (June 8) for a surveillance sortie but did not return.

An official statement issued on Tuesday (June 9) said the last contact with the aircraft was made at 9 p.m. on Monday.

The last known location of the aircraft, as per Trichy radar, was off Karaikal in Puducherry, where it was tracked till 9.23 p.m., 95 nautical miles south of Chennai.

•The aircraft was the latest induction in the Coast Guard inventory in 2014 and was being flown by a highly experienced crew,• an official statement said.

The latest incident comes within months of a Dornier-228 of the Indian Navy with three crew members going down in the Arabian Sea off Goa coast, killing two.

The March crash was the first involving a Dornier which was inducted by the Navy in mid 90s.