

# DOWNTOWN

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YOUR LOCAL WEEKLY TABLOID ♦ SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2009



## Vigil on water

*citizens must be familiar with sleek Hyundai Accent, fitted with beacons, trolling. Not many are aware of a more exciting mode of conveyance the police deploys — a state-of-the-art speedboat built at a cost of Rs. 1 crore.*

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# On the move, round the clock

*The floating police station combats theft / piracy menace on board the vessels at the port's waterfront.*

Port Marine police station (B6) in Chennai stands unique from the rest in just one aspect — its patrol vehicle. While white coloured Hyundai Accents serve other police stations, the B6 inside the Chennai harbour has a whopping Rs. 1 crore-worth speedboat to patrol the waters from Palaverkadu to Muttukadu.

The objective of establishing this is to combat theft/piracy menace on board the vessels at the port's anchorage/waterfront. The port bears all the expenditure not only towards this boat but towards police force it engages.

Provided by the Chennai Port Trust, the 310 hp, 2500 rpm twin screw diesel engine speedboat is used by the Port Marine police to keep vigil of local pirates and miscreants entering anchorage ships in and around the port.

"Any sort of criminal activity within 5 nautical miles from the port comes under our jurisdiction. Our team remains vigilant in the waters round the clock and has a history of stalling some serious intrusions. We even help fishermen in distress in our waters," said Mohammed Muthahir Hussain, Assistant Commissioner, Port Marine.

The fully-air-conditioned speed boat with wooden interiors is capable of cruising with 12 persons at a

time at a top speed of 16-18 nautical miles an hour.

Equipped with advanced communication facilities including VHF radio, GPS equipment and a radar, the boat has on board an engineer-in-charge, a boat driver and two rescue divers apart from the police team who scan the waters for pirates and even restrict movement of fishermen near anchored vessels.

According to the policemen on duty, patrolling is especially high in the waters near the Kasimedu fishing harbour as there is a possibility of people sneaking into anchored ships to commit theft.

S. N. Seshasai, Joint Commissioner of Police, North Chennai said that the Chennai Port Trust is paying a sum of eight lakh per month as rent for the speedboat. "Our police team with the speedboat are combing the seas here alongside another boat deployed by the Coastal Security Group recently," he added. According to him because of the vigilance patrolling of this force, theft and smuggling activities in this area have been curbed effectively.

A total strength of 27 policemen including an Assistant Commissioner, an inspector and four sub inspectors, patrol the waters in three shifts on the special speed boat often referred to as the 'Floating police station'. This police force has all powers



**ON HIGH SEAS:** The police force patrolling the coastal area. PHOTO : R. RAVINDRAN

under Cr.P.C. and I.P.C to investigate, apprehend and prosecute persons engaged in any crime within the waterfront/port's sea limits. The force will also collect intelligence about the antisocial elements / criminals and smugglers. The force works under the operational control of the

chairman of Madras Port Trust.

The police patrolling here have a history that dates back to 1895 when the first patrol boat E.L. Stracey went into sea only on March 28, 1990, and was later replaced by the present hi-tech boat on May 4, 2007.

Later in 1910, due to escalating incidents of theft from ships and

traders, the British Government formed the Marine police. However the first patrol boat E.L. Stracey went into sea only on March 28, 1990, and was later replaced by the present hi-tech boat on May 4, 2007.

PETLEE PETER

New Aavin kiosk at St. Thomas Mount railway station