

General Cargo Ship King Midas Major Marine Occurrence

Executive Summary

On December 6, 2019, the general cargo ship King Midas (Midas), registered in the Republic of Sierra Leone, with a gross tonnage of 499 and IMO number 8879055, departed Hai Phong Port, Vietnam, bound for waters in the Yellow Sea, China. The ship carried a total of 10 persons on board, including the master and nine crewmembers. At 0944, Midas grounded on a sandbar approximately 2.8 nautical miles offshore from Sanfeng Village, Dacheng Township, Changhua County, Taiwan. Following the grounding, the ship sustained no apparent structural damage, no pollution occurred, and none of the 10 crewmembers were injured.

The oil tanker Chang Feng, registered in the Republic of Togo, with a gross tonnage of 4,173 and IMO number 7350260, carried one master and six crewmembers, totaling seven persons on board. The ship had been operating in the Taiwan Strait for an extended period with unclear trading activities. On December 12, 2019, the master of Chang Feng received instructions from the shipowner's representative of Sing Da Sheng Co., Ltd. to proceed to waters off Sanfeng Village, Changhua County, to assist in refloating Midas. At that time, Chang Feng had a forward draft of 4.27 meters and an aft draft of 5.49 meters and was not carrying oil cargo. At 1136 on December 13, during towing operations, Chang Feng's hull bottom made contact with the seabed. At 1400, the ship developed a 7-degree port list and grounded approximately 0.3 nautical miles northeast of Midas. Chang Feng sustained partial hull damage. No pollution or injuries occurred.

In accordance with the Transportation Occurrence Investigation Act, Taiwan,

and the definition of major transportation occurrences specified therein, the Taiwan Transportation Safety Board was the independent agency responsible for investigating the marine occurrences. Organizations invited to participate in the investigation included the Maritime and Port Bureau of the Ministry of Transportation and Communications and the Coast Guard Administration, Ocean Affairs Council.

After comprehensive investigation and analysis of the factual data, a total of 11 findings and 3 safety recommendations were obtained.

The investigation identified 11 findings:

1. Midas lacked a voyage position management system, nautical charts had not been updated, and the officer on watch failed to verify the ship's position or maintain a safe distance from shallow sandbar areas, resulting in the grounding of the ship.
2. Chang Feng, being an oil tanker, was not suitable for conducting salvage operations. Although the master understood the risks associated with the salvage mission involving Midas, the master failed to exercise proper professional judgment to refuse the operation, resulting in the grounding of Chang Feng.
3. The shipowner of Midas failed to provide sufficient navigational resources necessary for safe voyage operations, preventing the crew from obtaining adequate and accurate navigational information for risk assessment.
4. Prior to the grounding of Chang Feng, the shipowner or agent of Midas violated the Commercial Port Act by failing to submit a salvage plan to the Maritime and Port Bureau.
5. Midas had no comprehensive voyage plan, and its weather facsimile

receiver was inoperative, preventing the ship from receiving weather information.

6. On the day prior to the grounding, Midas encountered severe weather conditions causing heavy rolling and difficulty maintaining effective control. At the time of the occurrence, winds in the accident area reached Beaufort Force 8 with reduced visibility.
7. The shipowner of Chang Feng failed to fulfill its safety management responsibilities, resulting in multiple expired certificates and insufficient numbers of qualified crewmembers.
8. Chang Feng proceeded with the salvage operation without adequate manpower, without professional towing expertise, and without approval from the Maritime and Port Bureau.
9. Following ship grounding occurrences in Taiwan waters, interagency coordination and information sharing concerning substandard foreign ships among relevant authorities were insufficient.
10. Taiwan's existing coastal radar systems were capable of monitoring and identifying abnormal ship movement patterns within Taiwan waters.
11. During the grounding of Chang Feng, weather conditions in the accident area were clear with northwesterly light winds and good visibility.

Safety Recommendations

To Coast Guard Administration, Ocean Affairs Council

1. Coordinate with the Maritime and Port Bureau and strengthen interagency communication mechanisms concerning abnormal movement patterns of high-risk ships or ships exhibiting abnormal movement patterns in designated waters, and provide navigational safety

alerts when necessary.

To Maritime and Port Bureau of the Ministry of Transportation and Communications

1. Coordinate with the Coast Guard Administration and strengthen interagency communication mechanisms concerning abnormal movement patterns of high-risk ships or ships exhibiting abnormal movement patterns in designated waters, and provide navigational safety alerts when necessary.
2. Review regulations governing marine casualty assistance and salvage operations and strengthen emergency response measures for foreign ships in distress.

Note: The final report of this occurrence investigation is published in Chinese. To facilitate understanding for non-Chinese readers, the Executive Summary has been translated into English. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, discrepancies may occur. In the event of any inconsistency, the Chinese version shall prevail.