

# **Container Ship Asiatic Sun Major Marine Occurrence**

## **Executive Summary**

At 0733 on 26 December 2021, the container ship Asiatic Sun, owned by Asiatic Lloyd Shipping Pte. Ltd., with ship management by Asiatic Lloyd Shipmanagement LLP and commercial operation by TS Lines Ltd., was en route from Port of Keelung to Port of Taichung. The ship, registered in Singapore, has a gross tonnage of 9,610 and a capacity of 1,049 TEU (IMO No. 9402768). At the time of the occurrence, she was carrying 905 TEU and was scheduled for Berth 11. After the pilot boarded, the ship proceeded inbound under pilotage. Upon passing the North Turning Basin, the ship's bow contacted Berth 8A at the Port of Taichung, resulting in indentation damage to the bow of Asiatic Sun and damage to Berth 8A. No injuries or environmental pollution were reported in this occurrence.

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 in charge of investigating the marine accident. The organizations and agencies invited to participate in the investigation included the Maritime and Port Bureau of the Ministry of Transportation and Communications, Port of Taichung, Taiwan International Ports Corporation, Ltd., Taichung Harbor Pilot Office, Inchcape Shipping Services Agency (Taiwan) Ltd, and Ever Comfort Shipping Co., Ltd.

After comprehensive investigation and analysis of the factual data, a total of 8 findings and 4 safety recommendations were obtained.

**The findings related to probable causes are as follows:**

1. In planning the berthing operation, the pilot did not adequately plan or coordinate the deployment of tugs under adverse weather conditions, including their optimal standby positions. As a result, the towlines of the two tugs requested on an emergency basis were not made fast in a timely manner. Consequently, when the ship yawed, the tugs were unable to render assistance, rendering the intended tug assistance ineffective.
2. The pilot's hard-to-port helm order was the primary cause of the ship's rapid swing to port and the inability to counteract it in time. This is consistent with shiphandling simulation findings indicating that, under the northeast monsoon, inbound ships at the Port of Taichung are prone to a bow deviation to port.
3. Inadequate speed control within the port, together with an increase in speed to enhance the rate of turn to starboard, contributed to the two tugs not having their towlines made fast prior to the contact with the berth.
4. During the period from when the two tugs were waiting inside the breakwater to the point of contact with the berth, the pilot's poor speed control prevented the tugs from safely matching the ship's speed, resulting in the towlines not being made fast in a timely manner.
5. Within the limited distance to Berth 8A, the pilot failed to maintain situational awareness and did not demonstrate adequate shiphandling. Timely emergency actions—such as letting go both anchors or maneuvering to avoid the danger area—were not taken to prevent the contact with the berth.

**The findings related to risk are as follows:**

1. The Taichung Port Entry and Departure Guide does not establish wind

force limitation criteria, resulting in VTS operators being unable to effectively enforce traffic control for ship movements. This increases the likelihood of recurrence of similar occurrences.

2. The pilot involved in this occurrence had relatively limited pilotage experience. This indicates an immediate need to further strengthen pilots' professional competence and to require regular recurrent training and knowledge updating.

**The other finding is as follows:**

1. The content of in-service training for pilots in Taiwan does not include components aimed at the continuous enhancement of professional competence or the acquisition of updated knowledge, and is not aligned with relevant training standards for pilots established by the International Maritime Organization.

**Safety Recommendations**

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

1. In accordance with international pilot in-service training practices and the relevant recommendation of the International Maritime Organization Resolution A.960(23), Annex 1, concerning the essential knowledge and skills required for pilots, such requirements should be incorporated into the scope of amendments to domestic pilotage legislation. This is intended to ensure the continuous proficiency and updating of pilots' professional knowledge and competence.
2. The planning and implementation of periodic refresher training for pilots (not exceeding a five-year interval), as well as the content of in-service training courses, should ensure the maintenance of pilots' professional

competence, continuous proficiency, and up-to-date knowledge in line with international standards. This is to sustain the highest level of professional skill and enhance the safety of navigation channels and ship movements in international commercial ports of Taiwan.

**To Taichung Harbor Pilot Office**

1. Notify pilots assigned to the Port of Taichung that, when developing berthing and navigation plans under adverse weather conditions, the plans shall include the optimal standby positions and deployment arrangements for harbor tugs. Tug utilization shall be incorporated as an essential element of cooperative and safe pilotage operations.

**To Taiwan International Ports Corporation, Ltd.**

1. Revise the Port of Taichung entry and departure control regulations to establish operational standards and traffic control measures for ship movements in relation to wind force intensity and sea state conditions both within and outside the port area. Ensure strict enforcement of ship traffic control requirements under adverse weather conditions for port entry and departure, in order to safeguard the safety of navigation channels and ship arrival, departure, and berthing operations within the port.

**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.