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Casualty Circular No. 03/2015

Sub: Collision between a bulk carrier and a tanker at Port approaches.

Preamble: The fundamental purpose of Marine Accident Investigation is to determine the circumstances and the causes of the accidents that have been reported, with the aim to improve the safety of life at sea and the avoidance of accidents in future. Towards this objective, shipping casualties, occurring Indian ships are investigated, in pursuance with the mandated requirement of Part XII of the MS Act. Similar reports are received from foreign flag administrations for accidents occurring on ships where Indians have been involved. These reports are collated and disseminated to all concerned for information and learning.

1. What happened?

A foreign flag bulk carrier ("A"), loaded with part cargo of Iron ore, collided with an anchored oil tanker ("B") while maneuvering to pick up pilot at a port on the east coast of India

2. How it happened?

2.1 Vessel "A" had arrived at the port on 07.08.2013 and was instructed to wait for her berthing turn at the anchorage. Later, at 2100hrs on the same day, the vessel was instructed by the port control to pick up anchor and

proceed towards pilot station, approx. 3 miles off the breakwater. At 2142 hrs, the anchor was aweigh and the vessel 'A' proceeded towards the pilot station, at speed of about 4-6 knots. At this time, the visibility was low due to drizzle and light rain.

2.2 Master noticed an echo on the radar screen, almost right ahead but could not see anything visually. After some time, at about 2159 hrs, the Chief Officer who was stationed on the forecastle, reported unlit vessel ahead and asked Master to alter course to port. Master immediately ordered wheel 'hard over' to port side. In spite of the avoiding action taken, the vessel came in contact with the unlit tanker.

2.3 Incident was reported by the Master, on VHF, to the port control, however, inspite of repeated calls to the unlit vessel, no response was received. Preliminary survey on board the vessel 'A', revealed ingress of sea water in the fore peak tank, however, all other compartments were found to be intact. Vessel thereafter was instructed by the port control to anchor 4/5 miles off the breakwater.

3. Why it happened ?

3.1 Most proximate cause:

The collision took place, primarily, due to poor look out by the vessel 'A'.

3.2 Contributory factors:

i) Unlit tanker was at anchored as a lay-off ship (Dead ship) and was manned by only one person, holding "Class IV MEO certificate", as a care taker. Vessel was not complying with any Navigational lights or shapes to indicate her location and was also not keeping any VHF watch.

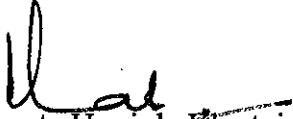
ii) The port control, which was well aware of the status of unlit DEAD SHIP, failed to transmit any nav-warnings, to the ships at anchorage or to the incoming vessels.

iii) The pilot, who was to board the incoming vessel, too, failed to advise the Master to keep clear of the danger.

4. Lessons learnt:

4.1 All vessels must keep proper look out, by all available means, so that they are fully aware of the environment around and also available water depths.

4.2 Prior to approaching any port, it would be prudent for the vessel to contact the port control and seek information on inward & outward bound vessels, any disabled vessels at the anchorage, any unlit navigational marks, movement of dredgers or ferries in and out of the port and local rules etc.


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To,
Ship-owners/Ship operators/Ship Managers / Ship Masters