

Whilst navigating in the Western Fairway, the Hong Kong registered chemical carrier Larasati collided with the Chinese registered container ship Bai An 6 on 5 May 2003

A. The Incident

1. At about 0833 on 5 May 2003, the Hong Kong registered chemical carrier Larasati collided with the China registered container ship Bai An 6 in the Western Fairway at the approximate position 22° 17.90 ' N 114° 05.82 ' E. Both ships were under pilotage. Larasati was an outbound vessel departing from CRC terminal while Bai An 6 was a transiting ship proceeding via Hong Kong to Shekou, China (Fig 1).
2. At the time of the accident, the weather conditions were rainy with thunderstorm in the vicinity. The wind was southwesterly at force 5 and the visibility was about 3 miles, occasionally deteriorating to about 0.35 mile due to localized rainsqualls.
3. Larasati sustained considerable damage to the side shell plates and deck structures on the port side while Bai An 6 sustained minor damage to the bulbous bow and the stem. There was no oil pollution reported in the incident.

B. Findings

1. The investigation has revealed that the probable causes for the collision were the master and pilot of Larasati had failed to keep the ship as near to the outer limit of the fairway which lies on the starboard side as was safe and practicable as required by Rule 9(a) of COLREGs. They had also failed to proceed at a safe speed in accordance with Rule 6 of COLREGs, and use proper sound signals in accordance with Rule 35(a) of COLREGs in time of restricted visibility. Upon detecting Bai An 6 on the radar and receiving warning from VTC, no avoiding actions were initiated by Larasati in ample time to avoid close-quarters situation and subsequent collision as required by Rule 19 of COLREGs.
2. On the other hand, the master and pilot of Bai An 6 failed to proceed at a safe speed required by Rule 6 of COLREGs so that the ship could be stopped within a distance appropriate to the prevailing circumstances and conditions. They also failed to sound signals required by Rule 34(d) of COLREGs when Larasati was seen manoeuvring on the wrong side of the fairway, and use proper sound signals in accordance with Rule 35(a) of COLREGs in time of restricted visibility. Furthermore, they failed to comply Rule 7(a) of COLREGs in determining that risk of collision did not exist.

## C. Lessons

1. The masters and officers of the watch navigating in the waters of Hong Kong have to pay particular attention in restricted visibility, and to strictly follow the requirements of COLREGs as appropriate to the prevailing circumstances. They should also ensure proper communication with pilots for safe navigation.
2. Pilots have to pay particular attention when piloting vessels in restricted visibility, and strictly follow the requirements of COLREGs as appropriate to the prevailing circumstances.

Fig. 1 The collision tracks of Larasati and Bai An 6

