Global Maritime Distress and Safety System GMDSS Fatality File

Improper Communication Leads to Accidents At Sea

A vessel was transiting Suez Canal with a pilot onboard where she was supposed to be navigating along the center line of the channel, however as she drifted away from the center line the pilots and bridge team used corrective helms and engines to counter it.

By the time the vessel had swung considerably, and it neared another bank on the opposite side. The stern of the vessel brushed and contacted with a rocky bottom.

A heavy thud was heard and vibrations were felt in the wheelhouse and engine room as well.

The speed of the vessel dropped and picked up again. All ship staff noticed the vibrations. The engine room called up the bridge to confirm if everything was in order.

Both the officers on watch confirmed with the pilot if everything was to which the pilot responded affirmatively.

The vessel had picked up speed again and resumed the canal transit.

The senior officer on watch neither called the master nor discussed it later on with him.

However, below the waterline, the forward part of the hull suffered damages and thus her strength was reduced considerably in the area of impact.

Slight deformation was there but below the waterline. The vessel crossed the canal and while she was loading in the load port, a large thud was heard again, and the officer on watch noticed water rushing in ballast tanks No. 1,2,3 on the Port Side.

Due to continual stresses on a damaged, deformed, and fatigued hull, the weak zone crumbled and gave away.