



REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

Maritime Administrator

JABAL HAFIT MARINE SAFETY INVESTIGATION REPORT

Collision with Fishing Vessel

Arabian Sea | 4 March 2025

Official Number: 7228

IMO Number: 9735804



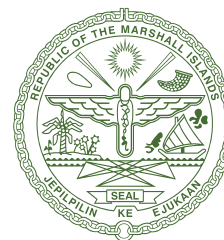
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AUTHORITY

An investigation, under the authority of the Republic of the Marshall Islands laws and regulations, including all international instruments to which the Republic of the Marshall Islands is a Party, was conducted to determine the cause of the casualty.



Maritime Administrator

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

3/O	Third Officer
AIS	Automatic Identification System
ARPA	Automatic Radar Plotting Aid
ASD	Able Seafarer Deck
BRG	Bearing
BRM	Bridge Resource Management
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CPA	Closest Point of Approach
°T	Degrees True
E	East
ECDIS	Electronic Chart Display and Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
IMO	International Maritime Organization
ISM	International Safety Management
J3/O	Junior Third Officer
kn	Knots
MSA	Marine Safety Advisory
MSC	Maritime Safety Committee
m	Meter
NM	Nautical Miles
N	North
OICNW	Officer in Charge of a Navigational Watch
OOW	Officer of the Watch
RNG	Range
SAR	Search and Rescue
STCW	International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers
SMS	Safety Management System
TCPA	Time to Closest Point of Approach
TSS	Traffic Separation Scheme
VHF	Very High Frequency

DOCUMENTS CITED

COLREGs	International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972, as amended
ISM Code	International Safety Management Code for the Safe Operation of Ships and for Pollution Prevention
MLC, 2006	Maritime Labour Convention, 2006
MSA 16-23	Marine Safety Advisory No. 16-23, Navigation Watchkeeping – Observations and Lessons Learned
STCW Code	Seafarers' Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping Code



PART 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 4 March 2025, the Republic of the Marshall Islands-registered bulk carrier JABAL HAFIT, managed by Asyad Ship Management SPC (the “Company”), was underway in the Arabian Sea on a voyage from Mumbai, Republic of India (hereinafter “India”) to Sohar, the Sultanate of Oman (hereinafter “Oman”).

The ship was proceeding on a westerly course in the Arabian Sea, approximately 114 NM northwest of Mumbai when it encountered a fishing vessel, which was later identified as the Indian-registered fishing vessel NIRALI. At about 2246,¹ JABAL HAFIT and NIRALI collided. The collision caused NIRALI, with a crew of eight, to sink resulting in the loss of five crewmembers, two dead and three missing. The three surviving crewmembers from NIRALI were rescued after approximately 18 hours.

The marine safety investigation conducted by the Republic of the Marshall Islands Maritime Administrator (the “Administrator”) concluded that neither vessel was fully compliant with COLREGs. JABAL HAFIT’s OOW did not determine the risk of collision when encountering NIRALI, and NIRALI was navigating without maintaining a proper lookout.²

It was further determined that assumptions made by JABAL HAFIT’s OOW during the developing close-quarters situation were detrimental, as appropriate collision avoidance actions were not taken.

The below lessons learned were identified.

- Navigational watchstanders need to fully appraise the situation, the risk of collision, and other dangers to navigation in compliance with COLREGs.
- Navigational watchstanders need to use extra caution when navigating in the vicinity of fishing vessels and small power-driven vessels.

¹ Unless stated otherwise, all times are ship’s local time (UTC +5.5).

² See COLREGs Rule 5.

- A proper lookout shall be maintained at all times, in compliance with COLREGs, for the purpose of maintaining a continuous state of vigilance by sight and hearing, as well as by all other available means, with regard to any significant change in the operating environment.³
- Normalization of deviance through JABAL HAFIT's OOW's previous encounters with fishing vessels.

PART 2: FACTUAL INFORMATION

The following Factual Information is based on the information obtained during the Administrator's marine safety investigation.

Ship particulars at the time of the incident: *see* chart to right for JABAL HAFIT and *see* page 11 for NIRALI.

Background Information

Collision

On 4 March 2025, the bulk carrier JABAL HAFIT (*see Figure 1*) departed the port of Mumbai, India in ballast condition bound for Sohar, Oman. JABAL HAFIT was expected to encounter fishing vessels while sailing along the Indian coast as indicated by the Master in the Night Order book.⁴ The weather conditions were reported as clear, visibility in excess of 5 NM, wind from the northeast at Beaufort Force 5, and rough seas.

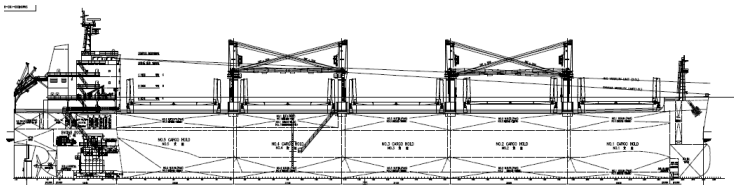


Figure 1: JABAL HAFIT General Arrangement.

JABAL HAFIT exited the Mumbai TSS at around 2200 (*see Figure 2*). At 2231, JABAL HAFIT was proceeding on a course of 291°T, at a speed of 13 kn in the Arabian Sea. The 3/O was the OOW and the

³ See STCW Code Part A, Chapter VIII, Section A-VIII/2, Part 4-1 Principles to be observed in keeping a navigational watch.

⁴ See the Master's Standing Orders paragraph contained on page 14 of the report.

JABAL HAFIT SHIP PARTICULARS

Vessel Name
JABAL HAFIT

Registered Owner
Jiayang International Ship
Lease Co., Limited

ISM Ship Management
Asyad Ship Management SPC

Flag State
Republic of the Marshall Islands

IMO No. 9735804	Official No. 7228	Call Sign V7ZT5
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Year of Build 2017	Gross Tonnage 36,291
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Net Tonnage 21,607	Deadweight Tonnage 63,800
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Length x Breadth x Depth
194.9 x 32.3 x 18.5 m

Ship Type
Bulk Carrier

**Document of Compliance
Recognized Organization**
American Bureau of Shipping

**Safety Management Certificate
Recognized Organization**
Lloyd's Register

Classification Society
Lloyd's Register

Persons on Board
22

J3/O was the Lookout. The ASD2, who was assigned for navigation lookout duties with the 3/O for the 2000–2400 navigational watch, was not on duty per the Master’s orders. JABAL HAFIT was being steered by autopilot.

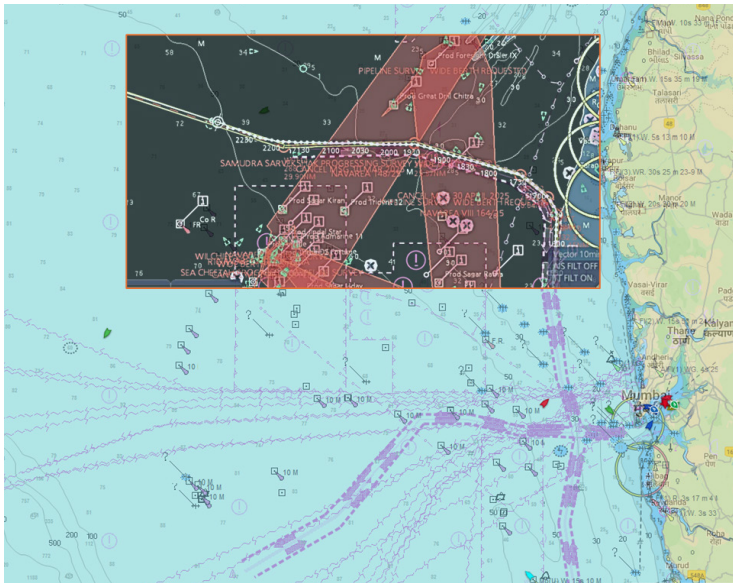


Figure 2: At 2200 JABAL HAFIT exited the TSS as indicated from positions plotted every 30 minutes and captured on ECDIS screenshot (inset).

The ship’s navigational and communication equipment, main engine, auxiliary engines, and steering gear were all reported to be operational and working satisfactorily except for the ship’s speed log which was defective. Both the X-Band and S-Band⁵ radars were operational. The 3/O and J3/O (see Figure 3) were monitoring both radars during the watch.

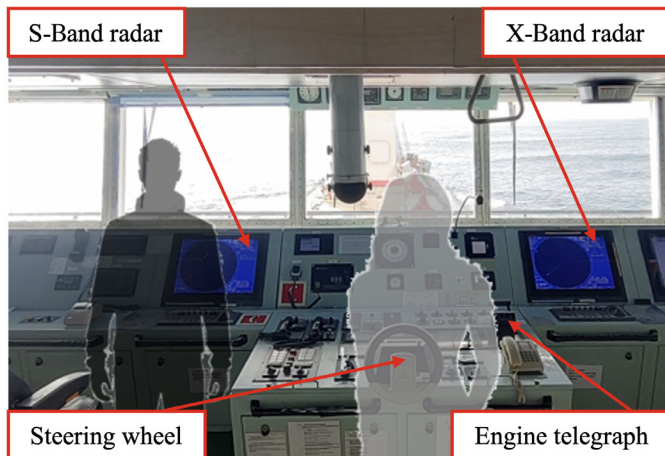


Figure 3: Positions of the J3/O (black) and 3/O (grey) on the Bridge.

The J3/O was the Lookout during the 3/O’s navigation watchkeeping duties. During the J3/O’s Lookout duty, the radar’s ARPA was used to acquire and monitor vessels and the J3/O apprised the 3/O of the vessel’s ARPA data. Both radars were set at north-up, relative motion with own ship positioned off-center to the bottom right of the radar screen (see Figure 4).

5 The S-Band radar’s ARPA was primarily used for acquiring ships during the 3/O’s navigation watch.

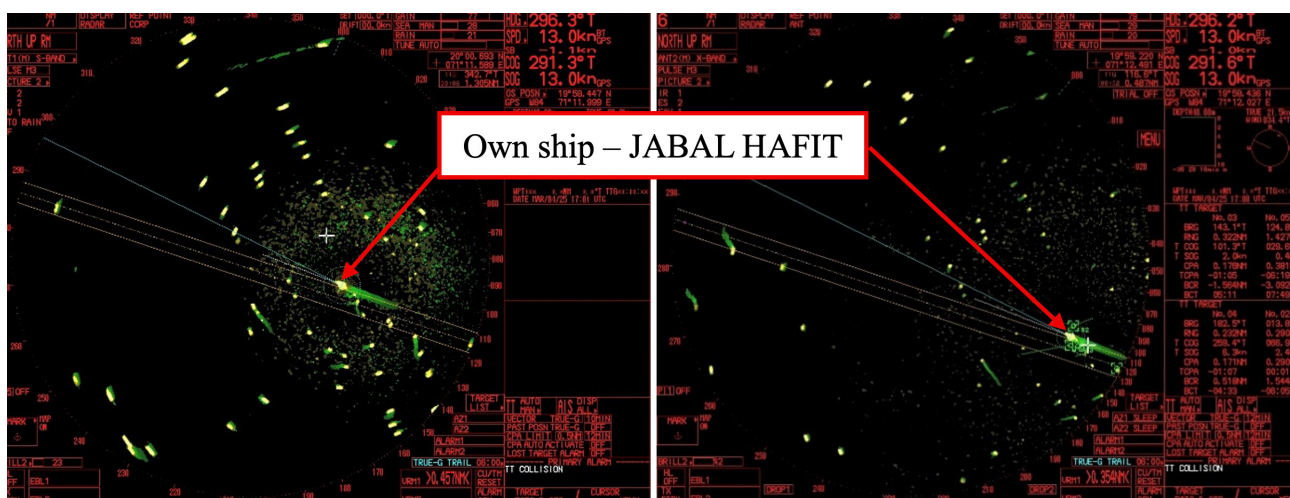


Figure 4: Screenshot of S-Band radar on the right and X-Band radar on the left, both radars were set to 6 NM range scale with the own ship positioned off-center to the bottom right of the radar screen.

At 2234, the J3/O reported to the 3/O that he had visually observed a fishing vessel⁶ on the ship's port side and by the S-Band radar. The 3/O, who acknowledged the report, confirmed that she also observed the fishing vessel visually and on both radars. JABAL HAFIT was proceeding on a course of 290.1°T at a speed of 13 kn. Both the 3/O and J3/O visually observed a red and green light from NIRALI but could not determine if they were navigation sidelights or other lights used for illumination on board.

Earlier that day at around 1300, NIRALI had begun sailing back to Vanakbara Jetty,⁷ followed by another fishing vessel RUXMANI. Both fishing vessels were sailing back to port after 14 days of fishing. NIRALI was reportedly equipped with navigation lights, VHF radio, and a GPS for navigation. Other navigation equipment such as radar and AIS were not installed on board.⁸ By about 2130, NIRALI's crewmembers were resting below leaving only the Side Skipper⁹ navigating in the wheelhouse.¹⁰ At the time of the collision, NIRALI was not engaged in fishing, and RUXMANI was approximately two hours behind NIRALI.

NIRALI VESSEL PARTICULARS

Vessel Name
NIRALI

Registered Owner
Shri Chunilal Devabhai Baraiya

Flag State
Republic of India

Year of Build 2017	Registration No. ND-DD-02-MM-757
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Gross Tonnage
47.7

Length x Breadth x Depth
15.7 x 4.5 x 2.9 m

Ship Type
Fishing Vessel

Persons on Board
8

⁶ This fishing vessel was identified post incident to be the fishing vessel NIRALI.

⁷ Vanakbara Jetty was about 45 NM north from the location of the collision.

⁸ This equipment is as required by the Merchant Shipping (Indian Fishing Boats Inspection) Rules, 1988, published by the Directorate General of Shipping which is an attached office under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Government of India.

⁹ The alternate Skipper on board NIRALI.

¹⁰ There were eight crewmembers on board. Reportedly, NIRALI was equipped with 10 lifejackets. When resting or navigating, the crewmembers were not wearing lifejackets.

The 3/O and J3/O had noticed NIRALI visually and on the radar at 2234 but only acquired NIRALI on the ARPA six minutes later. Both the 3/O and J3/O did not use the compass to observe the visual bearing of NIRALI. At 2240, the 3/O, after visually observing NIRALI and assuming that it was a fishing vessel engaged in fishing, told the J3/O that NIRALI would remain clear of JABAL HAFIT.¹¹ The J3/O acquired NIRALI on ARPA of the S-Band radar and informed the 3/O that NIRALI would have a CPA of 0 NM and that the TCPA was six minutes. The 3/O then assured the J3/O that NIRALI would not cross the ship's bow.

At 2242, J3/O reported to the 3/O that NIRALI's speed was 7 kn, that the CPA was still zero, and that the TCPA was 4 minutes. The 3/O acknowledged the J3/O's report but maintained the assumption that NIRALI would not cross the bow of JABAL HAFIT, which was on a course of 281.3°T at a speed of 13 kn. The 3/O stated that she was aware that JABAL HAFIT was engaged in a crossing situation and must give way to the fishing vessel.¹²

At 2243, the 3/O queried the J3/O regarding the exact CPA of NIRALI. The J3/O responded that it was 0.07 NM and suggested to the 3/O that JABAL HAFIT's course be altered more to port to avoid NIRALI. At the time JABAL HAFIT's course was 281.2°T. The ship's speed remained unchanged. The 3/O said NIRALI was too close and there was not enough sea room for an alteration to port. The J3/O, while remaining inside the Bridge, then began using the ship's handheld daylight signaling lamp¹³ to attract the attention of the watchkeeper on board NIRALI.

At 2245, the J3/O, who was continuing to attempt to attract the attention of the watchkeeper on board NIRALI with the handheld daylight signaling lamp, informed the 3/O that the fishing vessel was still approaching JABAL HAFIT's bow. The 3/O then instructed the J3/O to go out onto the port side bridge wing to attract the attention¹⁴ of NIRALI's watchkeepers using the handheld daylight signaling lamp.

The J3/O immediately went out onto the port side bridge wing and continued flashing the handheld daylight signaling lamp. Approximately 20 seconds later, the J3/O returned inside the Bridge shouting to the 3/O to "go to starboard, go to starboard, take it on hand steering."

At about 2246, JABAL HAFIT and NIRALI collided in approximate position 20° 00.3' N, 071° 08.6' E just as the 3/O started altering the ship's course to starboard using hand steering.¹⁵ At the moment when the ship's course was being altered, the 3/O and J3/O saw the lights on board NIRALI switch off but were unable to determine if a collision had occurred. At the time, JABAL HAFIT was on a course of 280.1°T at a speed of 13.1 kn. All eight of NIRALI's crewmembers were thrown overboard. Four crewmembers were able to keep themselves afloat holding onto a floating hatch cover from NIRALI. A fifth crewmember was shouting for help but could not be located in the dark night and rough sea. The three remaining crewmembers had not been seen after the vessel capsized. NIRALI's Side Skipper reported that JABAL HAFIT struck the fishing vessel's starboard quarter, resulting in the fishing vessel being completely damaged and promptly capsizing after the collision.

11 The 3/O shared with the Administrator's investigator that she had assumed the fishing vessel would not cross the bow of JABAL HAFIT but instead would pass astern or would stop and wait for JABAL HAFIT to pass them. This was based on the 3/O's previous encounters with fishing vessels.

12 See COLREGs Rule 18 Responsibilities between vessels (a)(iii) – A power-driven vessel underway shall keep out of the way of a vessel engaged in fishing.

13 See IMO Resolution MSC.95(72) – Performance Standards for Daylight Signaling Lamps; "...for conveying information between ships, or between ship and shore, by means of light signals, both by day and by night."

14 The 3/O shared with the Administrator's investigator that she did not think of using the ship's horn to warn the fishing vessel.

15 The 3/O shared with the Administrator's investigator that she hesitated to stop the ship's engine as she was not sure if she was permitted to do so.

At 2247, the J3/O used the bridge telephone to call the Master requesting his attendance on the Bridge. By 2248, the Master was on the Bridge. The 3/O and J3/O informed him that a fishing vessel was crossing JABAL HAFIT's bow from the port side and that they could no longer see the fishing vessel. At 2249, the Master informed the 3/O to switch on the searchlight and aft station lights and look for any fishing vessels in the immediate vicinity. No fishing vessels were seen. The Master then told the 3/O and J3/O that the light they had seen was probably from fishing nets and not from a fishing vessel. At 2253, the Master ordered the 3/O to return JABAL HAFIT back to its planned course. After the ship resumed its planned route, the Master explained to the 3/O and J3/O that if the ships had collided, they would have heard an impact sound of the collision.

The Master also explained to the 3/O and J3/O that at a speed of 7 kn it was too fast for a vessel to be engaged in fishing. The Master added that the fishing vessel that the 3/O and J3/O might have seen could have been a guardian boat, which would chase away or warn ships of fishing nets in the area. At about 2328, after monitoring the VHF radio and noting that there were no calls or communication related to a collision, the Master left the bridge.

On 5 March 2025, at approximately 0800, RUXMANI arrived in Vanakbara Jetty and could not locate NIRALI. Subsequently, RUXMANI returned to sea to look for NIRALI. At around 1400, the wreckage and debris of NIRALI were found along with three crewmembers, who were holding themselves onto a floating hatch cover from NIRALI. The three crewmembers were successfully recovered from the water by the crew of RUXMANI. It was reported by a rescued crewmember that earlier in the day, a fourth crewmember was also holding onto the floating hatch cover but was washed away by a wave and was not seen again.

The three survivors safely disembarked at 2315 in Vanakbara Jetty and were transported to the hospital, where they remained for four days. Following the incident, subsequent SAR operations recovered two deceased crewmembers, while three remain missing as of the publishing of this report.

JABAL HAFIT Crew

JABAL HAFIT had 22 crewmembers, six more than required by the Minimum Safe Manning Certificate issued by the Administrator.

The Administrator did not find any indication that any crewmembers involved with this incident failed to receive the amount of rest mandated by the STCW Code, Section A-VIII/1, paragraphs 2 and 3, and the MLC, 2006, Regulation 2.3.

The crew involved had the following experience:

RANK	TIME ON BOARD JABAL HAFIT	TIME IN RANK	TIME WITH COMPANY	TOTAL TIME AT SEA
Master	1.1 months	18 years	4 years	42 years
3/O	4.9 months	4.9 months	2.1 years	2.1 years
J3/O	1.9 months	1.9 months	1.2 years	1.2 years

The 3/O joined JABAL HAFIT on 14 October 2024. Her duties, among others, were to maintain a safe navigational and communications watch in compliance with the Master's Standing Orders, applicable national and international rules and regulations, industry standards and guidelines, and Company procedures applicable to bridge and navigational operations.¹⁶

The 3/O held a national certificate as an OICNW¹⁷ as well as a Republic of the Marshall Islands endorsement. The 3/O was certified on 12 September 2019 and the certificate expired on 11 September 2024. The 3/O then had the certificate revalidated, extending the validity to 7 September 2029.

After attaining her national certificate on 12 September 2019, the 3/O did not sail because of the COVID-19 pandemic. She resumed sailing with the Company on 6 October 2023 as a J3/O. JABAL HAFIT was the first vessel on which she served as an OICNW and stood duty as an OOW.

The J3/O had similar qualifications as the 3/O and held a national certificate. He joined JABAL HAFIT on 7 January 2025 and it was the first ship he sailed after attaining his qualification as an OICNW on 8 September 2024.

The duties of the J3/O were not specified in the Company's SMS and according to the Company, it was at the Master's discretion to assign tasks for the J3/O. The J3/O was assigned to perform navigation Lookout duties during the 3/O's 2000–2400 bridge watchkeeping period.

NIRALI Crew

NIRALI was an Indian-registered fishing vessel with eight crewmembers, one more than required by the registration certificate. The Skipper¹⁸ and Side Skipper were the principal watchkeepers on board NIRALI. At the time of the collision, the Side Skipper was at the helm. The Side Skipper did not see JABAL HAFIT until moments before the collision. Both the Skipper and Side Skipper survived the collision.

According to local regulations,¹⁹ there were no requirements for the qualification and certification of crew working in their respective positions on board fishing vessels. The fishing vessel's owner decides the appointment of the Skipper, crew, and cook as per work efficiency and experience at sea.

JABAL HAFIT Master's Standing Orders

The Master's Standing Orders were read and acknowledged by both the 3/O and J3/O on 3 February 2025. It required them to comply with instructions as written in the Master's Standing Orders.

Together with the Master's Standing Orders, there was also a daily bridge order (Night Order) in which the Master reiterated the need for compliance with the standing orders and additional instructions to be followed during their night watch. On 4 March 2025, the Night Order instructions to the OOW, among others, were to:

¹⁶ See Management Manual – Section 6.6 Responsibility and Authority (Shipboard Personnel).

¹⁷ See STCW Regulation II/1 – Mandatory minimum requirements for certification of officers in charge of a navigational watch on ships of 500 gross tonnage or more.

¹⁸ The Skipper was in overall charge of NIRALI with the Side Skipper as his second in charge.

¹⁹ See Daman & Diu Marine Fishing Regulation Act, 1980, and Goa, Daman & Diu Marine Fishing Regulation Act, 1982, and the Daman & Diu Marine Fishing (Amendment) Regulation 2010.

- (a) follow Standing Orders;
- (b) maintain proper lookout;
- (c) keep the vessel on charted track; and
- (d) give wide berth to all traffic, including fishing vessels. Minimum CPA 3 NM and TCPA 30 minutes.

The Night Order for 4 March 2025 was read and acknowledged by the 3/O and J3/O. Information on the use of the main engine was not available for the OOW in the Master's Standing Orders, Night Order, nor was it contained within the ship's passage plan.

Bridge Team Roles and Practices

The Bridge Team's roles under the various watch conditions were included in the Company's SMS.²⁰ On 4 March 2025, the watch condition fulfilled during the 3/O's navigational watch included an OOW and a Lookout in accordance with "BRIDGE WATCH IB" (see Figure 5). The watch condition set reflected the requirement contained within the ship's passage plan. The Bridge Team's roles under the various watch conditions were stated in the Company's SMS. However, in lieu of the duty ASD, the Master had assigned J3/O as the Lookout which deviated from the Company's SMS.

When underway Master shall set bridge watch manning according to prevailing conditions as follows:
BRIDGE WATCH IA
This watch has one Deck Watch Officer on the Bridge. However, the duty AB is on call and readily available.
BRIDGE WATCH IB
This watch has one Deck Watch Officer and the duty AB stationed on the Bridge.
BRIDGE WATCH II
This watch requires two Deck Watch Officers on the Bridge. Though one officer is usually the Master, under special circumstances the Master may delegate authority to the Chief Officer. There shall be a Helmsman AND a lookout.
BRIDGE WATCH III
This watch requires three Deck Watch Officers on the Bridge. The Senior Officer is always the Master. The Master will take the CON. There shall be a Helmsman AND a lookout.

Figure 5: The Bridge Team's roles under the various watch conditions (AB denotes ASD).

Post Incident Action

The 3/O and J3/O visually identified NIRALI approaching JABAL HAFIT in vicinity of the bow, and both watchkeepers suspected that a collision had occurred and called the Master to the Bridge. Upon the Master's arrival on the Bridge, the Master was briefed by the 3/O and J3/O and, based on the information available at the time, assessed that a collision was unlikely, given the absence of VHF transmissions and the fact that no collision was heard from within the enclosed Bridge of JABAL HAFIT. The Master's justification included an observation that often a guardian boat was used to warn ships of fishing vessel activity and fishing nets in the immediate vicinity.

The Master ordered the 3/O to maintain course and speed and did not take any further action to assess the situation and determine if a collision had occurred.

²⁰ See Navigational Procedures & Bridge Organization Manual – Section 2.3.1 The Bridge Team roles under the various watch conditions.

Similar Incidents

On 1 November 2023, the Administrator issued MSA 16-23, which provides important observations and lessons learned to improve navigational watchkeeping standards. Between 1 January 2020 and 4 March 2025, when JABAL HAFIT and NIRALI collided, collisions involving Republic of the Marshall Islands-registered ships and fishing vessels had resulted in the loss of 16 lives and five fishing vessels.

PART 3: ANALYSIS

The following Analysis is based on the above Factual Information.

Collision Prevention and Loss of Life

NIRALI was initially sighted at 2234 by the 3/O and the J3/O; however, no assessment of the risk of collision was made until 6 minutes later. An observation of compass bearing from the initial sighting from 2234 to 2240 would have indicated to the 3/O that the compass bearings of NIRALI did not appreciably change and that a risk of collision existed (see Figure 6). When NIRALI was acquired on ARPA at 2240, the distance to NIRALI was approximately 1 NM and the CPA was 0.017 NM. Although this was less than the limit specified in the Master’s Standing Orders and indicated a risk of collision, no immediate action was taken.

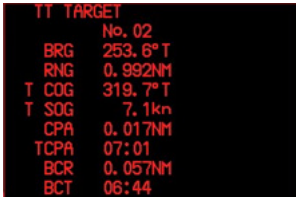
		
2240	2243	2246 — collision

Figure 6: NIRALI’s ARPA data from 2240 shown at 3 minute intervals.

The 3/O was hesitant to make use of the main engine after identifying the risk of collision between JABAL HAFIT and NIRALI existed²¹ and was not sure if the OOW was permitted to adjust the speed for collision avoidance. The 3/O was required to call the Master based on the CPA of NIRALI in accordance with the Master’s Standing Orders. The 3/O did not call the Master informing him of the presence of NIRALI and the developing situation and risk of collision.

The OOW on board JABAL HAFIT assumed NIRALI²² was engaged in fishing activities, despite no clear observations such as the requirement to display lights prescribed within COLREGs Rule 26(c). Based on the assumption of the OOW, JABAL HAFIT was required by COLREGs Rule 18 to keep out of the way of NIRALI. The 3/O did not take any action to keep out of the way of NIRALI and consequently did not act according to her assumptions.

In actuality, NIRALI was a power-driven vessel, approaching JABAL HAFIT from its port side. COLREGs requires that when two power-driven vessels are crossing so as to involve risk of collision, the vessel which has the other on its

21 Contrary to STCW Code Part A, Chapter VIII, Section A-VIII/2, Part 3 – Watchkeeping Principles in General.
22 NIRALI was not equipped with AIS.

own starboard side (NIRALI) shall keep out of the way and shall, if the circumstances of the case admit, avoid crossing ahead of the other vessel (JABAL HAFIT).

NIRALI was defined in accordance with COLREGs as the give-way vessel and JABAL HAFIT was the stand-on vessel, requiring JABAL HAFIT²³ to maintain course and speed, and to maneuver as soon as it was apparent to the 3/O that NIRALI was not taking action to avoid a collision.

The Side Skipper of NIRALI did not take action as the give-way vessel to avoid crossing ahead of JABAL HAFIT or to keep well clear by taking early and substantial action. The 3/O on board JABAL HAFIT did not take action as the stand-on vessel as soon as it became apparent that NIRALI, which was required to keep out of the way, was not taking appropriate action in compliance with COLREGs. The 3/O on board JABAL HAFIT assumed, based on previous encounters with fishing vessels, that NIRALI would stop or pass astern of JABAL HAFIT.

The delay in taking action to avoid collision on board JABAL HAFIT and the absence of action taken by NIRALI resulted in a close-quarters situation where the options to avoid a collision rapidly decreased.

In an effort to attract the attention of NIRALI, the 3/O instructed the J3/O to signal the NIRALI using the daylight signal lamp from within the Bridge. With no observed alteration of NIRALI's course or speed moments prior to the collision, the 3/O instructed the J3/O to attract the attention of NIRALI using the daylight signal lamp from outside the Bridge on the Bridge Wing. By the time the J3/O commenced using the daylight signal lamp from the Bridge Wing, the collision had occurred. It could not be determined if the daylight signal lamp was observed by the Side Skipper on board NIRALI. Using the daylight signal lamp from within the Bridge likely reduced its effectiveness.

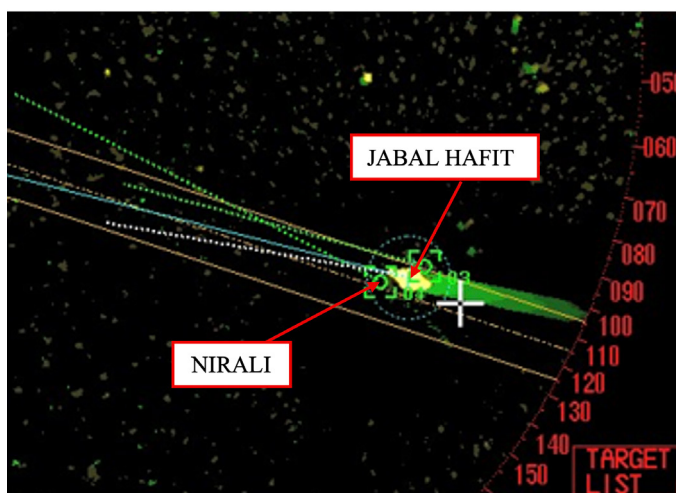


Figure 7: At 2246 NIRALI was forward of JABAL HAFIT, close to the port bow.

Due to the proximity of both vessels, it could not be observed on the radar if NIRALI had maneuvered following the use of the daylight signaling lamp. No sound signals were given as an additional attempt to attract attention.²⁴

²³ See COLREGs Rule 17.

²⁴ The use of light or sound signals should be used to attract the attention of another vessel in accordance with COLREGs Rule 36.

The 3/O and J3/O did not see any lights from NIRALI after the collision. It could not be determined post collision why the navigation lights of NIRALI were immediately extinguished. It is likely that immediately after the collision, the impact of the collision either damaged the navigation lights or caused the lights to switch off due to water ingress, resulting in a loss of electrical power.

The OOW called the Master less than a minute after the incident but did not initiate any immediate emergency response after the collision occurred. JABAL HAFIT did not stop or slow down to look for survivors or wreckage.

The Master arrived on the bridge at 2248 and at 2249, the 3/O switched on the searchlight and aft station lights, approximately three minutes after the collision. JABAL HAFIT, with a speed of 13.1 kn, would have moved ahead between 809 and 1,213 m and continued to increase the range from NIRALI's last known visual sighting.²⁵ Without JABAL HAFIT returning to the site of the collision, they would not have been able to sight any survivors or wreckage.

The 3/O and J3/O informed the Master that they suspected a collision had occurred as they could no longer see the fishing vessel, but the Master was not receptive to the explanations of the 3/O and J3/O and stated that the lights were likely from a fishing net, not a fishing vessel. This explanation was accepted by the 3/O and J3/O without further discussion.

Watchkeeping Practices

The 3/O and J3/O, when following up on targets movement during navigation watchkeeping were limited to using visual sighting and radar, and only thereafter on ARPA information. The range scale on both radars on board was kept to 6 NM, which limited the ability to keep a clear overview of any changes in heading of ships nearby. Targets on a collision course on the portside were not acquired on ARPA for further follow-up. This set-up resulted in NIRALI not being acquired at an early stage.

The 3/O stated, that based on previous observations during past encounters with fishing vessels, they would either stop or pass astern of JABAL HAFIT. The Administrator's investigation could not establish how many occasions the 3/O experienced these encounters. It could also not be determined whether this perceived expectation was gained through experience or learned through instruction by more experienced OOWs.

By not taking any action to avoid a collision and in assuming that NIRALI was a fishing vessel and that it would stop or pass behind JABAL HAFIT, the 3/O accepted the increased risk of a collision while in a close-quarters situation. This normalization might explain why no frequent and accurate compass bearings of NIRALI were taken and why no immediate ARPA acquisition of NIRALI was deemed necessary which was against watchkeeping principles.²⁶

The ineffective use of radar and the normalization to accept close-quarters situations with fishing vessels resulted in the collision between JABAL HAFIT and NIRALI.

²⁵ Calculated between 2 and 3 minutes between the time of the collision and the reported time of switching on the search light.

²⁶ See STCW Code Part A, Chapter VIII, Section A-VIII/2, Part 4-1 – Principles to be observed in keeping a navigational watch.

The Master's explanation regarding a guardian boat in an area where fishing vessels operate was counterintuitive to the proper application of COLREGs; and could have potentially impacted the 3/O and J3/O in their future actions when encountering fishing vessels or vessels operating in or near a fleet of fishing vessels.

On board NIRALI, the Side Skipper reportedly had the helm while the remaining crewmembers were resting at the time of the collision. The Side Skipper was the navigator and there was no dedicated Lookout assigned. The Administrator's investigation determined that JABAL HAFIT was only observed very shortly before the collision occurred and too late to initiate any action to avoid collision.

PART 4: CONCLUSIONS

The following Conclusions are based on the above Factual Information and Analysis and shall in no way create a presumption of blame or apportion liability.

1. Causal factors that contributed to this very serious marine casualty included that:
 - (a) neither vessel took substantial action to avoid collision, due to:
 - (i) ineffective navigational watchkeeping standards on board JABAL HAFIT while navigating in an area known to contain fishing vessels;
 - (ii) JABAL HAFIT's 3/O's lack of full appraisal of the situation and of the risk of collision;
 - (iii) JABAL HAFIT's 3/O's deviation from the Master's Standing Order and Night Order;
 - (iv) JABAL HAFIT's 3/O's assumption that NIRALI would stop or pass astern; and
 - (v) NIRALI's Side Skipper's lack of full appraisal of the situation and of the risk of collision when navigating.
 - (b) NIRALI's Side Skipper did not maintain a proper lookout.
2. Additional causal factors that may have contributed to this very serious marine casualty included:
 - (a) JABAL HAFIT's Master's conclusion that a collision had not occurred was accepted by the 3/O and J3/O, the report of a possible collision was not pursued further, and the vessel did not stop to render assistance to NIRALI, which may have limited opportunities for SAR;
 - (b) JABAL HAFIT's Master's inaction to locate and assist NIRALI after being informed that a collision may have occurred;
 - (c) the lack of requirements for the qualification and certification of the crew on board NIRALI as the Skipper and Side Skipper's minimum competence on action to be taken to avoid a close-quarters situation to prevent a collision with another vessel was not in accordance with COLREGs; and
 - (d) a deviation of JABAL HAFIT Company's SMS when the ASD was reassigned from Lookout duties.

3. Additional issues that were identified but that did not contribute to this very serious marine casualty include:
 - (a) the known presence of fishing vessels in the area was not fully anticipated and appreciated by JABAL HAFIT's watchstanders; and
 - (b) JABAL HAFIT's 3/O's hesitance to use the main engine which indicated poor understanding of procedures or a lack of guidance on such procedures.

PART 5: PREVENTIVE ACTIONS

In response to this very serious marine casualty, the Company has taken the following Preventive Actions.

1. The Company circulated the findings of their investigation as a Learning from Incidents flyer.
2. The 3/O and J3/O were sent for Radar / ARPA and BRM training before joining their next vessel.
3. A safety campaign for BRM, including "Calling the Master", was carried out.
4. A procedure was implemented for Masters to attend pre-joining briefings in the Company's office where the incident is discussed.

PART 6: RECOMMENDATIONS

The following Recommendations are based on the above Conclusions and in consideration of the Preventive Actions taken.

1. It is recommended that the Company:
 - (a) establish a procedure for monitoring and assessing the performance of navigation watchstanders on board Company-managed vessels;
 - (b) implement the use of external navigation audit verification to test the effectiveness and application of navigational watchkeeping standards; and
 - (c) review OOW familiarization on the use of Bridge navigation equipment including the use of main engines.

The Administrator's marine safety investigation is closed. It will be reopened if additional information is received that warrants further review.