



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594
Office of Marine Safety

Interview Summary – DCA23FM024

Interview of: Pradin Kumar Thakur – Master of *Sirocco*
Date/Time: March 29, 2023 - 0932 to 1120 central daylight time
Location: On board the *Sirocco* – ships meeting room
Interviewed by: CWO [REDACTED] – USCG, Adam Tucker – NTSB
Attendees: John Musser – Murphy, Rogers, Sloss, Gambel and Tompkins (representing *Sirocco* owners), Gareth Fernandes – Newship, Inc. (representing *Sirocco* interests), Jorge Leon – V. Ships (representing *Sirocco* operator interests)
Accident: March 27, 2023, breakaway of the bulk carrier *Sirocco*, and subsequent contact with barge MEM 5087 moored at the Mosaic Uncle Sam dock in Covert, Louisiana (NTSB No. DCA23FM024).

This interview summary has been compiled based on NTSB and Coast Guard investigator notes taken during the interview of Captain Pradin Kumar Thakur, Master of the *Sirocco*.

- Captain Thakur said they docked starboard side alongside the CMT dock on March 26. Before that, the ship was at anchor in Kenner Bend. The ship arrived at Kenner bend on March 24 and at 1200, they were finished with engines at anchor.
- The port captain came on board with the cargo hold inspectors and they inspected all the cargo holds except cargo hold no. 4 which had ballast water in it so they could decrease the air draft of the ship for the transit under the bridges.
- The cargo hold inspectors looked at the ships certificates and inspected the mooring ropes all on the same day. There were no issues reported to Captain Thakur related to the mooring ropes. The hold inspection certificate was issued by the port captain. No certificate was issued for the mooring ropes.
- The *Sirocco* arrived at the CMT dock on March 26 and was docked at 0100. Captain Thakur said he had 4 headlines, 2 breast lines and 2 springs forward. Aft was the same arrangement. Captain Thakur said there were 2 to 3 Yokohama fenders which pushed the stern out but the midship section was alongside. Because of that, they had to use the gangway from CMT, not the ships.
- During the maneuver to the dock, they used three tugs. The pilot said that once moored, one of the tugs would be sent away and that the big tug would standby pushing all the time forward. The stern was coming out, so Captain Thakur told the pilot they needed another tug, so the pilot arranged for a second tug to come and push on the stern.
- When they moored, all the lines were tight. Captain Thakur explained that during the loading, the ships draft increases, so they need to take up the slack in the mooring lines all the time.

- Captain Thakur said he knew from the port captain and terminal personnel that all the lines needed to be tight.
- On the second day, the port captain told him that they need two tugs for a draft 35 feet or greater (10.67 meters).
- At the time the ship moored at CMT, Captain Thakur said he did not know the river stage and noted that usually the ships agent would communicate this.
- They started loading the Sirocco about 0300 on March 26 and de-ballasting operations were carried out during loading. The chief officer was in charge of loading. They were expecting the loading to be about 28 hours.
- Captain Thakur said the port captain came on board the Sirocco and said that tugs were no longer required to hold the Sirocco to the dock. At that time, they still had two hold-in tugs.
- The port captain told Captain Thakur that the requirement for a second hold in tug was for a draft of 35 feet or more. Since the Sirocco was not at that draft, the second tug could be released.
- They dismissed the second tug at 1315 and kept the first hold in tug which was near the bow. Captain Thakur said all lines were tight at that time.
- Later, the port captain returned and said the other tug was not required and said the agent sent a message stating the gage is falling and hold in tugs were no longer needed. Captain Thakur said he was “surprised” by that given the strength of the current. He wanted a tug to remain. At that time, the current was fluctuating between 3.5 to 4 knots. He recalled the port captain saying if the current was below 3.5 knots, a standby tug was not required.
- The port captain talked with the tug about what notice was needed to come back and the tug said they needed to confirm with the company.
- Once the mooring lines were all checked and ok, the forward hold in tug was removed. Around that time, Captain Thakur said he noticed the current was more than 4 knots. The forward hold in tug left at 1500. The second officer was on deck checking the mooring lines at that time.
- Captain Thakur said the watch rotation in port was for a six on and six off schedule between the second and third officer. The second officer worked 1200 to 1800 and from 0000 to 0600 and the third officer worked from 1800 to 0000 and from 0600 to 1200. The duty officers check the lines as required. The chief officer is always assisting and around.
- Captain Thakur recalled receiving a call from the second officer at 0150. The second officer told him the lines were very tight and the ship was away from the dock about 1.5 meters, and that he could not bring the ship back to the dock by heaving the lines. Captain Thakur noted he went to bed early that evening, about 2000.
- Captain Thakur got up and went to the bridge where he saw the starboard side was off the dock. He called the ships agent via the satellite phone and told him they need a tug ASAP, and they needed immediate assistance. Paul Clancy was the agent that took the call. Captain Thakur informed the engine control room to keep the engine in standby. He then made an announcement for “all crew on deck”. He noted this all happened very fast.

- The ship went out and broke away. About 0220 they got the engine online. Captain Thakur told the duty officer to let go the starboard anchor and recalled more than one shackle was let out. The anchor did not hold, and the ship moved to the other bank and gained speed.
- Captain Thakur recalled a tug arrived and started pushing on the port side, around the no. 2 cargo hold, because the ship was swinging to port. The tug was not tied to the ship and was able to move around.
- With the starboard anchor out, Captain Thakur started to use the engine. He noted he had to be careful using the engine because the mooring lines were in the water as well as the gangway which was hanging on the starboard side. He had to ask if the propeller was clear on the stern before using the engine.
- Once reported clear, Captain Thakur moved to slow ahead and increased propulsion after that. The tug pushed to starboard causing the ship to fall to starboard. There was no tug on the starboard side, and they crashed into a barge with the back of the ship at 0250.
- The ship then started to move ahead and clear of the berth. Captain Thakur said that he asked for a pilot by VHF.
- At 0222, the first tug recommended to Captain Thakur to let go the port anchor and at 0225 he ordered the port anchor dropped. All shackles were let out on the port anchor.
- At 0230 the second tug arrived at the Sirocco.
- The pilot came on board at 0305 via the pilot ladder on the port side. Once on the bridge, the pilot took the conn and started advising. He conned the ship to the Grandview anchorage.
- Once at the anchorage and the Sirocco was secure, Captain Thakur said he called the designated person ashore and the ships superintendent to inform them of the situation.
- When asked about alcohol testing conducted of the ship's crew, Captain Thakur said he was not instructed to carry this out and that there is no alcohol on board the Sirocco.
- Captain Thakur said that while the ship is in port, the bridge is not manned by anyone.
- In port, the watch consists of one duty officer and two crew members. The bosun is always standing by, but he was off the ship and in the hospital.
- When asked about any vessel potentially pulling the Sirocco off the dock, Captain Thakur said he saw no vessel that might have pulled the ship off. The weather was normal and nothing out of the ordinary.
- When asked how many shackles each anchor had, Captain Thakur said there were 11 on both anchors.
- When asked about the direction of rotation of the propeller, Captain Thakur said it is a right-hand turning propeller. When asked of the rudder, Captain Thakur said the Sirocco had a conventional rudder. The steering pump was off at the dock but when he got to the bridge, he turned it on, and it remained on after that.
- When asked if he was alone when he was on the bridge, Captain Thakur said that initially he was alone. The third officer and helmsman came to the bridge shortly after.
- When asked of how many crew the Sirocco had, Captain Thakur said they had 26 crew plus 5 riding crew.

- When asked of any night or standing orders for the Sirocco in port, Captain Thakur said the chief officer gives the orders in port. There are standing instructions for when the vessel is in port which are in the ship's office.
- When asked if there were any issues with communication, Captain Thakur said there were not.
- When asked how much notice was required for the engine, Captain Thakur said the engine room required 30 minutes notice.
- At the time the ship broke away from the dock, they were at the loading completion phase.
- When asked about the decision to keep hold in tugs when they arrived at the CMT dock, Captain Thakur said the pilot said they need a tug standing by all the time and Captain Thakur asked for the second tug.
- When asked about the mooring arrangement, Captain Thakur said it was a 4, 4 and 2 arrangements. The spring lines were from the winches on the main deck.
- When asked of what happened after the pilot took the conn, Captain Thakur (reading from notes) said they started heaving the starboard anchor at 0358 and it was home at 0401. They started to heave the port anchor at 0403 and at 0430 the port anchor was up.
- When asked if there were any communications with VTS at the time, Captain Thakur said there was not. The third officer turned on the navigation lights and called port control after he arrived on the bridge.
- When asked if any sound signals were made, Captain Thakur said there were not.
- When asked if there were any problems getting the engines online, Captain Thakur said there were no problems.
- When asked if the Bosun not being on board had any effect related to the accident, Captain Thakur said no. The bosun is normally stationed at the forward mooring deck but there was an AB in his place. The deck cadet was also assigned to the forward mooring deck.

End of summary