
Criminal case over Polesie-8 wreck sent to court



The investigating bodies of the West Siberian Transport Investigations Directorate of the Russia's Investigative Committee have finished investigating a criminal case against captain of Polesie-8 MV Yuri Ratko. He is charged with a crime under part 3 of article 263 of the RF Penal Code (violation of safety rules for traffic and operation of internal water transport involving by negligence death of two or more people).

According to investigators on August 17, 2013, the accused was drunk while steering The Polesiye-8 passenger shallow-draught high-speed with hydrofoils owned by OAO Omsk River Port and on an excursion voyage Omsk – Achair. There were 3 crewmembers and 53 passengers aboard. About 01:40 PM on 1,856th km of the Irtysh river the accused saw a barge on its course sailing in the opposite direction and agreed with the barge's captain to pass port sides. However, in violation of internal waters navigation rules Ratko did not lowered the speed right before the maneuver, as well as was distracted to have a chat with the crew and as a consequence lost the view over the course of the motor vessel. This was the reason why he approached the barge to the distance apparently not enough for passing. Despite Ratko's attempt to put rudder over right, the two vessels collided. As a result of the collision the motor vessel was damaged and sunken partly; 4 passengers died on the site and two more died the same day in hospital; 11 people sustained grievous bodily harm; 36 passengers and 3 crewmembers were injured. The Omsk River Port suffered a loss of 6 million rubles.

The investigators have gathered enough evidence, therefore the criminal case with the approved indictment has been sent to court to be tried on the merits.

During the probe investigators have also found out that on August 17, 2013, the chief of passenger traffic service in the Omsk River Port when checking the crew of Polesie-8 to go on the voyage found that the captain had not been examined by doctors before the voyage and was drunk. Realizing that if Ratko was suspended, the voyage would have been delayed or cancelled, the chief of passenger traffic service did not fulfilled his duty and did not removed Ratko from steering the ship of high risk – Polesie-8 MV. The West Siberian Transport Investigations Directorate of the Russia's Investigative Committee opened a criminal case against the chief of passenger traffic service in the Omsk River Port under part 3 of article 238 of the RF Penal Code (rendering services not meeting safety standards).

At present investigating operations are underway to find out all the circumstances of the crime. Investigation is ongoing.

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