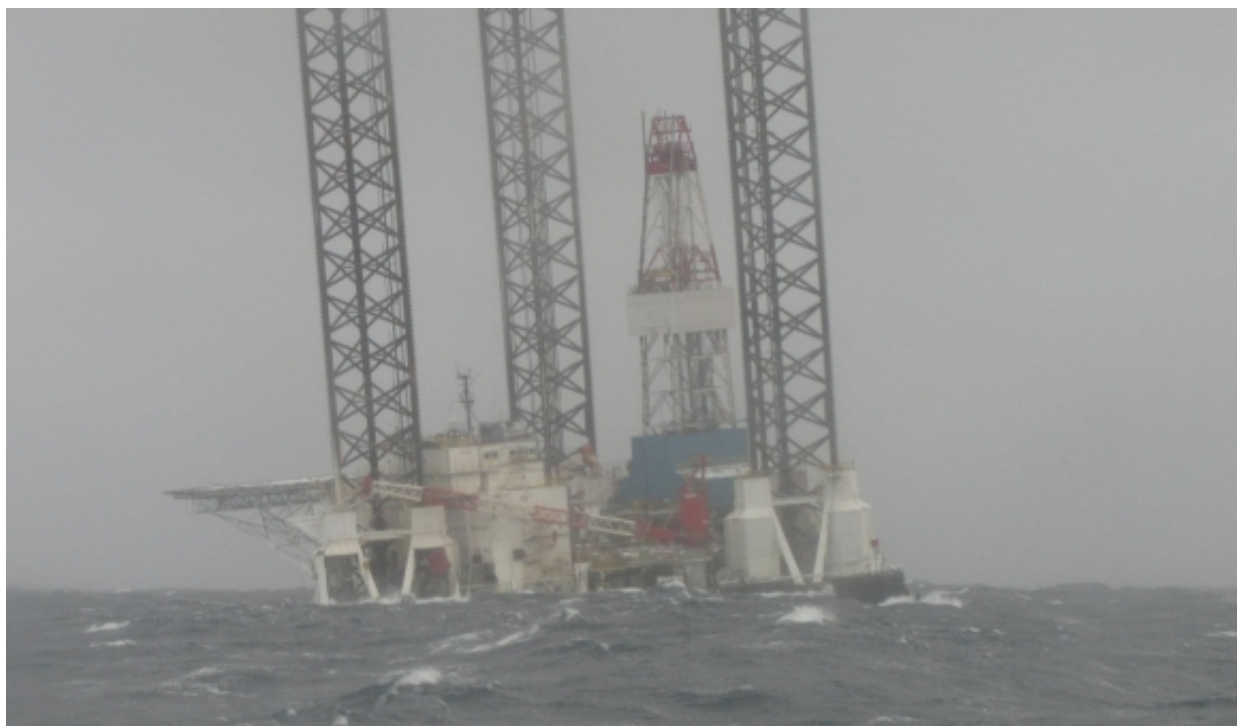

In Khabarovsk Territory investigation in Kolskaya oil rig case finished



The Far Eastern Transport Directorate of the Russia's Investigative Committee has finished investigating the criminal case against two top managers of OAO Arcticmorneftegazrazvedka (OJSC) (Kolskaya owner): acting deputy general director for safety of navigation Boris Likhvan and acting chief engineer Leonid Bordzilovsky charged with the wrecking of the Kolskaya floating oil rig with 67 crew members aboard in the Sea of Okhotsk (part 3 of article 263 of the RF Penal Code - violation of safety rules for traffic and operation of sea transport by a person, who by virtue of their official position was obliged to observe those rules, entailing by negligence death of two or more people).

According to investigators, in April 2011, OAO AMNGR and OOO Gazflot concluded a contract on construction of prospecting borehole Pervoocherednaya-1. Under the contract the Kolskaya oil rig drilled the borehole in the West section of Kamchatka offshore in the period between August and December of 2011. On finishing the drilling, OAO Far Eastern Marine Steamship Line and OAO AMNGR agreed on towing the Kolskaya oil rig from the drilling site to the port of Korsakov, Sakhalin Region. The Magadan icebreaker and the Neftegaz-55 towing vessel were employed to do

the job.

Under the agreement the route of the towing went along the west shore of Kamchatka and Kuril Islands. The towing distance amounted to 917 miles. Under the requirements of Safe Towing Regulations the maximum towing speed should not be over 3.2 knots and if the waves are over 4 meters high and wind speed is over 17.1 m/s the pillars have to be lowered by two flights (about 13.12 m lower than the level of the main deck) and drift should be started. Head of OAO AMNGR Fleet Operation and Navigation Safety Service was appointed responsible for the towing.

On the order of deputy general director for safety of navigation Boris Likhvan the Kolskaya oil rig with 67 crew members aboard started to be towed away on 11 December 2011. Acting chief engineer Bordzilovsky ignored repeated demands of chief of the Kolskaya oil rig that it was necessary to evacuate 28 people not involved in towing and forbade the evacuation by an oral order. During 5 days the towing went on normally. Then the weather suddenly worsened. The responsible for the towing operation, wanted to outrun the cyclone and made an unauthorized decision to raise the speed up to 4.8 knots, which he reported to Likhvan and Bordzilovsky. The latter did not give orders to drop the speed to the allowed limits. As a result of the excess of the maximum speed allowed for towing the plating of the oil rig got deformed and then got cracks in it. Water started coming inside the platform and sometime later the oil rig was brought down by the bow. The accused received several reports through satellite communication that it was necessary to lower the leg chords to make the rig drift. The two men, however, hoping on the favorable outcome, ignored these alarming signals and did not take any timely measures to lower the leg chords. Up to 25 m/sec squalls of wind and 4-5m high waves tore away the pod of the bow. The damaged plating started to let the water in ballast tanks and the oil rig got a trim. Leaktightness of water-proof shutoffs at the top deck was broken. The water kept going into the machine room, while the pumps could not manage, which caused further draught and trim and subsequent progressing flooding of not damaged compartments of the oil rig. Almost 24 hours later the accused gave a belated order to lower the leg chords, but the trim (list) made it impossible.

Realizing that the situation was critical with the trim getting bigger and bigger and foreseeing unavoidable wreck of the rig and death of people aboard, the accused did nothing to organize a rescue operation in order to save some money. They ignored recommendations of the duty officer of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk Marine Rescue Center to timely send SOS signal and did not dispatch rescue helicopters. Despite the prohibition and inaction of the leadership, at 9:45 AM, on 18 December 2011, due to the critical situation the captain sent an SOS, but, unfortunately, it was too late. At 12:46 PM, the same day, the Kolskaya oil rig capsized and sank in the Sea of Okhotsk at the depth of over 1,000 meters killing 53 crew members and injuring 3.

The incident and its consequences were caused by not one violation of traffic and operation safety rules and requirements, improper discharge by Bordzilovsky and Likhvan of their duties, but by a complex of violations, each of which jointly with others created a real threat of harmful consequences and was a necessary factor.

During the inquest, a unique underwater examination was run. The oil rig was examined over a kilometer deep under water using deep-water apparatus Triton. Over 200 witnesses, victims and officials of different state agencies were questioned. There were a lot of searches, seizures, examinations of documents, pictures and video footage showing the technical condition of the Kolskaya oil rig. Over 60 forensic inquiries were run, including a complex comprehensive technical operation expert examination, numerous forensic medical and situational examinations. There are 28 files in the case.

The investigators have enough evidence, so the criminal case with the signed indictment has been referred to court.

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