

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
OFFICE OF MARINE SAFETY
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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SELENDANG AYU :
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INTERVIEW OF 3RD ENGINEER :
MUTHA BALAUBRAMANIAM :
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An interview in the above entitled matter was held
on Friday, December 18, 2004, commencing at 9:35 a.m.,
before:

BRIAN CURTIS, NTSB
DARRELL HOWELLS, USCG
CAPTAIN LEW KWOK YUE, IMC

1 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yes.

2 MR. CURTIS: If you could just take me through
3 the --

4 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yeah, we started
5 our work just after the breakfast. It's around 7:00. When
6 preparation for removing the head, like removing the
7 connections and everything is done. When we were lifting
8 the head, the rolling of ship was too much. So, we have to
9 tie the cylinder head at least three, four --
10 (indiscernible) anything -- four or five ropes have been
11 tied on all directions. Long ropes, and triple, from deck
12 also, we have taken for help to hold the ropes, and we took
13 off the head.

14 The moment it came out of the studs, the rolling,
15 the swinging of head was more even than even when we were
16 holding it so tight. Even the swinging was there, and by
17 the time we brought it, and we have decided that we'll keep
18 it beside the top platform.

19 The swinging was (indiscernible) it could damage
20 anywhere, but luckily we could not -- we did not damage
21 anything. Specifically, we have secured it, and tied it
22 with a rope and two chain drop wheel latched, because at
23 that time, even after placing it, when we were tying the
24 rope, it was slipping away, because we have kept it
25 underneath wooden planks. It is trying to --

1 MR. CURTIS: What time is that? I'm sorry.

2 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: When we terminate
3 the (indiscernible) it was about 11:30 down (indiscernible).

4 MR. CURTIS: I'm sorry?

5 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Second engineer
6 and (indiscernible) that to stop the work now, and wait for
7 the conditions to improve so that we can plan to do the
8 work.

9 MR. CURTIS: When did you start again?

10 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Work actually
11 started on next day. The clamping work we are doing in the
12 afternoon, piston clamping up, piston and keeping it ready
13 (indiscernible), but we could not pull out the piston,
14 actually, on that day.

15 MR. CURTIS: What time the next morning, do you
16 recall, you started work?

17 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: It was in the
18 morning time. I cannot remember, maybe early in the morning
19 that is, between 6:30 to 7:00 maybe. I'm not sure.

20 MR. CURTIS: So, what were you doing in the
21 meantime from -- you were doing other work on it you said,
22 what else was being done?

23 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Oh,
24 about -- before dinner, the dinner is 6:00 to 7:00, so
25 before that I took my main -- my (indiscernible) rounds that

1 is janitor and boiler and other part of (indiscernible). I
2 took (indiscernible) round. Then, I saw chief engineer and
3 second engineer in the control room discussing
4 (indiscernible). Then they said you take rest. Anytime
5 we'll call you. It's better that you take rest, go. Then,
6 I went back, had my dinner. It was about 8 o'clock or 9
7 o'clock, came down again, took my -- one more round, and
8 went to take rest.

9 MR. CURTIS: Do you know if anybody else was doing
10 any other work in that time?

11 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: No.

12 MR. CURTIS: Did you stop standing watches at some
13 point there? Were you on watch at that time?

14 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: No, main engine is
15 not running, so that -- all is (indiscernible).

16 MR. CURTIS: Did you break up into different
17 groups, or did you split up in any way? How would everybody
18 know when you're going to start working again?

19 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Second engineer
20 was -- he decided what to do with the -- told a lot of
21 people how to do it, and (indiscernible) there and work, and
22 two groups in the same (indiscernible), myself and fourth
23 engineer. (Indiscernible.) Also, the time we relieve each
24 other.

25 MR. CURTIS: Was one of you in the engine room at

1 all times?

2 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: No, maybe all
3 (indiscernible). Maybe I stay the top (indiscernible) 30
4 minutes more or one hour.

5 MR. CURTIS: So, you didn't keep a crew in the
6 engine room on standby, or did you, through the night?

7 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Engine room? I
8 don't think so. I was told to take rest, not to tell --

9 MR. CURTIS: Who was doing the clamping of the
10 piston in the afternoon? You said that afternoon --

11 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yeah, we were
12 there.

13 MR. CURTIS: All these events, were you still
14 keeping a log book at that point? All through this whole
15 time frame, were you keeping log entries in the engine room
16 log book?

17 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: No. Log entries
18 or for the running machineries that is (indiscernible).
19 There is, like as usual, in the port, how you write the log
20 book, because (indiscernible). Not those work or even
21 (indiscernible).

22 MR. CURTIS: So, the main engine work being
23 performed wasn't necessarily the log?

24 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: No, second
25 engineer and I together. After I finish the work, he writes

1 whatever it was they decided. You know, what I'm saying?

2 MR. CURTIS: Thank you. Captain Lew?

3 CAPTAIN LEW KWOK YUE: (Non-verbal response.)

4 MR. HOWELLS: This is Darrell Howells. I just
5 want to make sure my notes are correct. Started work at
6 sometime after breakfast on the 7th?

7 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yes. MR.
8 HOWELLS: And got the head off, got it tied down, with the
9 help of the deck force, and that was 11:00, 11:30, it was
10 before lunch, okay, and then, the work started to clamp the
11 rings --

12 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: No.

13 MR. HOWELLS: -- and prepping to --

14 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Clamp the piston.

15 MR. HOWELLS: Yes.

16 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Okay.

17 MR. HOWELLS: Thank you. Okay, and then that was
18 finished, did you say before dinner time, or after? Do you
19 recall?

20 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Like this piston
21 clamping on boat?

22 MR. HOWELLS: Yes.

23 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: It's not a
24 big -- how big it is, only to (indiscernible) the group.

25 MR. HOWELLS: Oh, okay.

1 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: The piston and
2 this triangle ship of (indiscernible). You just put it and
3 tighten it (indiscernible).

4 MR. HOWELLS: So, are you saying that would take,
5 maybe, an hour?

6 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: (Indiscernible)
7 not more than that.

8 MR. HOWELLS: Not more than an hour? So, they
9 were working -- had them with the head 11:00, 11:30,
10 somewhere. Then, the clamping, so that puts it around noon
11 or 12:30, maybe?

12 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yes. MR.
13 HOWELLS: And at this time, is this when you said that the
14 seas were really bad?

15 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: No, the sea was
16 bad when -- even when we were lifting the -- in the
17 process --

18 MR. HOWELLS: Okay.

19 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: -- of lifting the
20 cylinder head, and (indiscernible).

21 MR. HOWELLS: Okay.

22 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: It was ridiculous.

23 MR. HOWELLS: And it was you, the fourth engineer,
24 and an oiler doing that? Was that what you said?

25 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Doing which work?

1 MR. HOWELLS: Clamping the piston and prepping it
2 for the rings?

3 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: No, the fourth
4 engineer thing is not that.

5 MR. HOWELLS: Okay, not the fourth engineer.

6 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Second engineer,
7 and myself --

8 MR. HOWELLS: (Indiscernible) second?

9 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: -- and some of
10 them (indiscernible).

11 MR. HOWELLS: So, you started the prep work. That
12 took about an hour. Lunch time, is that when you went to
13 rest?

14 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: No.

15 MR. HOWELLS: Did you eat dinner that night?

16 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yes.

17 MR. HOWELLS: Then, did you go back to the engine
18 room, or go back to rest?

19 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: No, I go back to
20 engine room (indiscernible).

21 MR. HOWELLS: Maybe around 20:00, about 8:00 or 9
22 o'clock at night?

23 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yeah, I went about
24 that time.

25 MR. HOWELLS: When you made your round, what did

1 you see? Who was down there? What was going on?

2 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: After dinner, only
3 the oiler was there.

4 MR. HOWELLS: Okay.

5 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Evening time, I
6 saw chief engineer and the second engineer. Before dinner,
7 I took a round, at that time, I saw chief engineer and
8 second engineer.

9 MR. HOWELLS: Okay, so, before dinner, you saw the
10 chief engineer?

11 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yeah.

12 MR. HOWELLS: And the second?

13 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yeah.

14 MR. HOWELLS: Then you had dinner?

15 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yeah.

16 MR. HOWELLS: Then you came down, checked things
17 out, is that right?

18 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: (Non-verbal
19 response.)

20 MR. HOWELLS: Okay, and at that time, just the
21 oiler was there?

22 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yeah.

23 MR. HOWELLS: How long does it take to make a
24 round?

25 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Generally, I take

1 round in the sense I -- it's not that I just start from one
2 point to other point, finish like a -- not like a running.
3 I take a -- go around the boiler platform, then the
4 generator platform, then top -- top platform. Then, come
5 back, enter room, then look for the parameters again. Five,
6 ten minutes, I again, go down.

7 It's not a continuous or rigorous stint of a
8 round. It was I just -- this even -- you have a problem and
9 I cannot just take it -- taking (indiscernible) from the
10 cabin.

11 MR. HOWELLS: Right.

12 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Also it was
13 rolling really. You could not stay in the cabin. That day
14 I was taking the round, also I was taking engine room.

15 MR. HOWELLS: Sure.

16 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Maybe, it would be
17 like that.

18 MR. HOWELLS: Would it be safe to say you spent
19 maybe an hour down there?

20 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: No, more than
21 that.

22 MR. HOWELLS: More than an hour? More than two
23 hours, or less than two hours?

24 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: No, about one
25 hour, one (indiscernible).

1 MR. HOWELLS: So, you think you finished up about
2 9 o'clock that night?

3 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yeah, a round,
4 8:30 to 9:00.

5 MR. HOWELLS: Is when you finished, you think?

6 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yeah.

7 MR. HOWELLS: Then you went back up to your
8 cabin --

9 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yeah.

10 MR. HOWELLS: -- for rest. What time did you come
11 back down?

12 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Next day.

13 MR. HOWELLS: The next day, normal time, 8
14 o'clock?

15 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: No, next day
16 morning, I told early at around 6:30, 7:00, just after the
17 (indiscernible) first we started.

18 MR. HOWELLS: Started back up at the work?

19 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Right that -- just
20 pull up the piston up to the required level, and put
21 out -- then blank and remove any of the rings.

22 MR. HOWELLS: That's all I have.

23 CAPTAIN LEW KWOK YUE: Captain Lew here. Who was
24 it that instruct you to leave the engine room, to evacuate,
25 and go to the helicopter?

1 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Second engineer
2 himself, personally came, and I was inside crankcase. I
3 finished tightening the piston (indiscernible). Some
4 (indiscernible) I already had completed. Piston
5 (indiscernible) there are four. Two on the port side, and
6 two on the starboard side. Port side, I'd completed.
7 Starboard side -- port side completed means tightening is
8 finished. Lashing of port side bolts finished. Starboard
9 side, I was flashing the (indiscernible).

10 At that time, we (indiscernible) from the
11 crankcase door, and called me out. Hurry up, go and take
12 the helicopter, take whatever is possible. I started
13 running from the -- no one else was there in the engine
14 room.

15 CAPTAIN LEW KWOK YUE: Would you think that the
16 job would be 90, 95 percent complete, itself?

17 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: From the -- from
18 my side of it, I almost finished my work. I had to finish
19 the lashing, then close the crankcase door. Then, the rest
20 of the work, from the head part was remaining. Head was in
21 place. I could see starts without (indiscernible).

22 CAPTAIN LEW KWOK YUE: Okay, thank you.

23 MR. CURTIS: I just have one more question. I
24 couldn't find it in any of the paperwork. I'm just going to
25 ask you, the three generators, how many kilowatts were they

1 apiece?

2 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Five hundred, 520.

3 MR. CURTIS: Five hundred twenty KW each, and
4 there's three of them --

5 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Yes.

6 MR. CURTIS: -- and I believe you said they had
7 Diatsu (phonetic sp.) engines?

8 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Five would be K20.

9 MR. CURTIS: Five would be K20, okay, and what
10 type of --

11 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: (Indiscernible)
12 and heavy oil.

13 MR. CURTIS: What type generators were they? Same
14 manufacturer?

15 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Perhaps was the
16 (indiscernible) maker, Diatsu.

17 MR. CURTIS: So the engine and the generator were
18 Diatsu?

19 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Engine is
20 (indiscernible) BMW, and make of the -- different makers.

21 MR. CURTIS: Do you know the model engine the
22 generators were?

23 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Generator is
24 5TK20.

25 MR. CURTIS: And the MAN'S?

1 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: 6S60MC.

2 MR. CURTIS: 6S60MC? Thank you, I couldn't find
3 that.

4 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: You're welcome.

5 MR. CURTIS: That's all we have today, and this
6 concludes the interview. It's 09:50. Thanks a lot Mutha.

7 THIRD ENGINEER BALAUBRAMANIAM: Thank you.

8 (Whereupon, at 9:50 a.m., the interview was
9 concluded.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

DEPOSITION SERVICES, INC., hereby certifies that the attached pages represent an accurate transcript of the electronic sound recording of the proceedings of the National Transportation Safety Board Interview regarding the grounding of the Selendang Ayu on December 9, 2004.

INTERVIEW OF THIRD ENGINEER:
MUTHA BALAUBRAMANIAM

Eve Jemison, Transcriber