
Iron ore freighter sinks off Taiwanese coast

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It is reported that 26 Indonesian sailors are feared dead after their Panamanian registered 27,000 tonne iron ore freighter MV Mezzanine hit rough seas off Taiwan's north coast.

The accident happened as the ship, loaded with iron ore from Indonesia, was heading to the Chinese mainland.

Television images showed coast guards plucking one surviving sailor from the sea, but Mr Ho Wen chih an official with the transport ministry of Taiwan aid that he feared the others were dead. He told Agence France Presse that "I'm afraid the other people are dead. After all the chance of surviving such a bad weather for a whole day is really low."

The surviving sailor told rescuers the ship was submerged barely five minutes after tonnes of water gushed into the ship. The survivor said he was on the ship's deck when the accident happened, allowing him time to throw himself to the sea.

Indonesian authorities have dispatched two helicopters and six ships after they received distress signals on Tuesday from MV Mezzanine. The coast guards said the search for the missing sailors would not end before the 72-hour period in which they estimate people could survive is up.

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