

Titanic sub disaster caused by operator failures: probe

OceanGate had a "toxic workplace environment"

● Company used "intimidation tactics... to evade regulatory scrutiny."

● US Coast Guard investigation outlined a litany of issues

● Debris was found on the ocean floor

AFP | Washington, United States

Multiple failures to follow basic safety protocol led to the deadly implosion of a private submersible visiting the Titanic wreck in 2023, according to a final report published yesterday.

The US Coast Guard investigation outlined a litany of issues with OceanGate's operations, as well as design flaws on its Titan submersible, that led to the high-profile disaster in which all five passengers were killed.

The probe said "OceanGate's failure to follow established engineering protocols for safety, testing, and maintenance of their submersible, was the primary causal factor for the implosion."

It also accused the company of "intimidation tactics...to evade regulatory scrutiny."

OceanGate had a "toxic workplace environment which used firings of senior staff members and the looming threat of being fired to dissuade employees and contractors from expressing safety concerns," the report said.

Explorers and tourists

Company chief executive Stockton Rush, British explorer Hamish Harding, French deep-sea explorer Paul-Henri Nargeolet, and Pakistani-British tycoon Shahzada Dawood and his son Suleman died when the submersible failed on its expedition in the North Atlantic Ocean.

After a loss of communication with the Titan,



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In its report, the Coast Guard said that OceanGate continued to use Titan "after a series of incidents that compromised the integrity of the hull and other critical components of the submersible without properly assessing or inspecting the hull."

It also identified design flaws with Titan's carbon fiber hull "that weakened the overall structural integrity."

The wreckage of the Titanic sits 400 miles off the coast of Newfoundland and has become a lure for nautical experts and underwater tourists since its discovery in 1985.



OceanGate's Titan submersible was built with a carbon-fiber cylinder mated to titanium end caps—a radical combination designed to reduce weight and costs. However, experts later raised concerns that this design made structural fatigue difficult to detect. Most deep-sea submersibles are spherical, which more evenly distributes pressure. In contrast, Titan's unconventional cylindrical hull, made from filament-wound carbon fiber, was nearly impossible to inspect for damage, which is believed to have contributed to the catastrophic implosion in 2023.

Philippines' Marcos strikes defence deals in India

New Delhi, India

The Philippines and India signed a raft of security deals yesterday aimed at strengthening strategic ties between the nations as they navigate tensions with China across the Asia-Pacific.

President Ferdinand Marcos, on a five-day visit to India, was accorded a red carpet welcome and honour guard before he met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi.

The leaders agreed deals including bolstering ties between their respective armed forces -- the army, and air force as well as their navies -- with Indian warships currently taking part in patrols of the disputed South China Sea with their Philippine counterparts for the first time.

The Philippines has heightened defence cooperation with a range of allies over the past year after a series of clashes with China in the contested waterway.

"India and the Philippines are friends by choice and partners by destiny," Modi told Marcos in a speech. "From the Indian Ocean to the Pacific, we are united by shared values."



Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos (2R) and his wife Louise Marcos (L) pose along with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (R) and India's President Droupadi Murmu (2L) during the ceremonial reception at India's presidential palace Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi

Marcos' visit follows the Philippines' acquisition of India's BrahMos supersonic cruise missile system -- the first such export by New Delhi -- with deliveries beginning in April under a \$375 million deal signed in 2022.

Marcos said the two sides engaged in "far-reaching, productive and forward looking" discussions.

"We expressed satisfaction over the rapid pace of the Philippines' ongoing defence modernisation and the expanding capabilities... of India's indigenous defence industry as a partner in this undertaking, exemplified by our BrahMos project," he said.

Talks also included setting out the terms of reference for the negotiations on a "preferential trade agreement" between Manila and New Delhi.