كلدارى و مشاركوه
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Undersea cables in off UAE

A claim has recently been lodged against a vessel for snagging a fiber optic cable with its anchor,

There is an extensive network of fiber optic cables on the sea bed off the coast of the UAE. They are marked on the charts, and chart BA 3175 clearly advises vessels not to anchor or trawl within the vicinity of these cables.

The vessel in question anchored 25 miles off Sharjah pilot station around one mile away from a section of cable connecting Kuwait to Bandar Abbas.

Because of heavy winds the vessel drifted and its anchor snagged a section of the cable. The cable operator was able to pinpoint the contact area to within metres thanks to their monitoring system, and a cable laying vessel in the area was dispatched to the coordinates to investigate.

The company that owns and operates the cables lodged a criminal complaint against the Master and Owner, and the vessel was immobilized and the Master arrested.

The structure of the cable network means that although the length of damaged cable was not significant, around 1.5 kilometers of cable will have to be replaced.

The vessel faces a claim for the cost of the replacement cable, as well as the costs of replacement using a cable laying vessel. The final bill is likely to run into hundreds of thousands of dollars.

All vessels should exercise precaution in the vicinity of undersea cables and should take care to anchor at a safe distance. Prevailing and forecast winds should be taken into account when working out what constitutes a safe distance, and the possibility of drifting in heavy winds should be factored in.

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