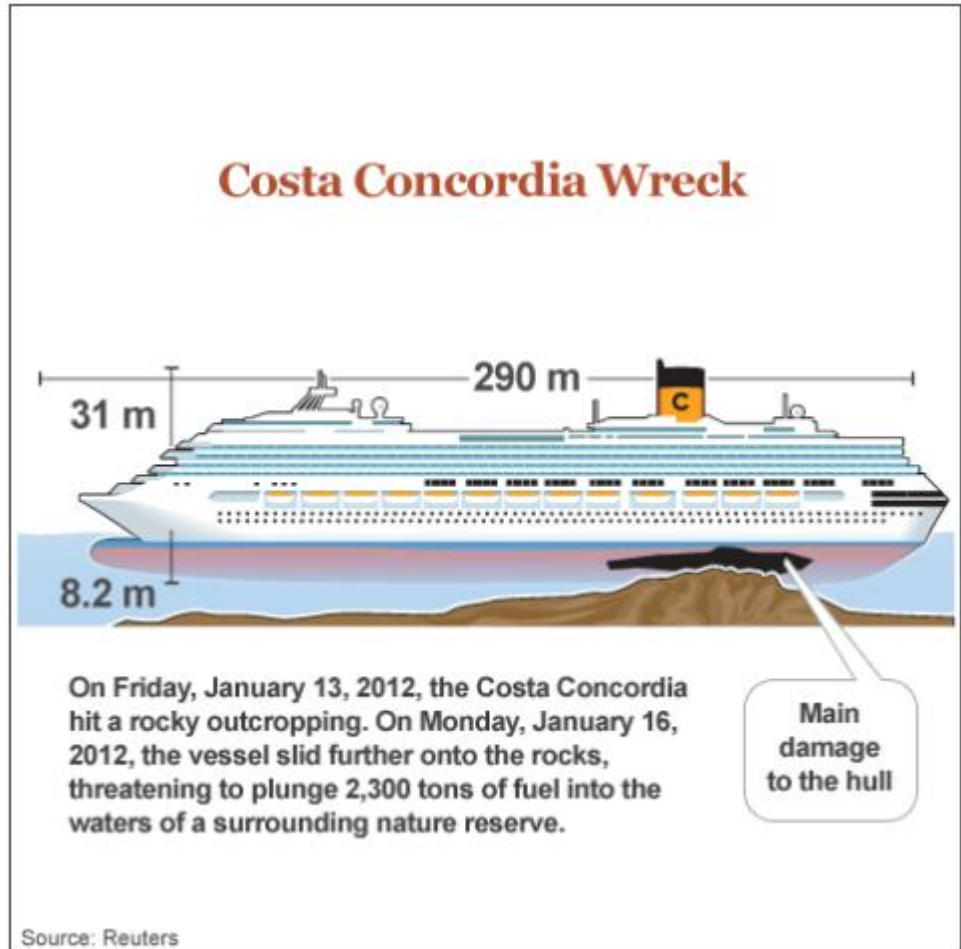


## Seeking Answers in Shipwreck in Italy

This is IN THE NEWS in VOA Special English.

The wreck of the cruise ship Costa Concordia in Italy comes just before the one hundredth anniversary of a much worse disaster at sea. This April will mark a century since the wreck of the Titanic.

The Titanic was the biggest cruise ship of its time. It struck an iceberg on its way from England to New York. The ship was carrying more than two thousand people. Most of them died.



The sinking of the Titanic not only led to major motion pictures. The Titanic disaster led to new requirements including safety training for passengers within twenty-four hours of sailing. The passengers on the Concordia had been at sea for just a few hours when it struck rocks off Italy's northwestern coast last Friday night. Their safety training had been planned for the next day.



**Reuters**

The cruise ship ran aground off the west coast of Italy

Passengers say the ship turned onto its side so quickly that many lifeboats could not be lowered into the water. Passengers were sitting down to late dinner when the ship hits rocks. They were told the ship was having electrical problems. Some said there was no organization among the crew during the crisis. Some people jumped into the cold sea and swam toward land.

There were four thousand two hundred passengers and crew members on the ship. Rescuers used lifeboats and helicopters to take most of them to

the island of Giglio and to Porto Santo Stefano on the mainland. Officials said at least twelve people died and twenty others were missing.

Movements of the grounded ship and concerns about bad weather have interfered with efforts by divers to search underwater areas. The concern is that the ship could move off its rocky resting place and slide into deeper water. Bad weather could also delay work to remove fuel from the ship and protect the environment along the Tuscan coast.

The ship is part of Carnival, the world's largest operator of cruise ships. Carnival is based in the American city of Miami, Florida. Its one hundred one ships carry about half of the world's fifteen million sea-going tourists each year. Carnival Corporation says it will closely examine safety at all of its cruise lines, including Costa Cruises, which operated the Concordia.

**Reuters**

A diver inspects the wreck

Shortly after the accident, the ship's owners blamed the captain of the Concordia. They said he had made an unapproved change in direction and brought the ship too close to the coast.

A judge released Captain Francesco Schettino from jail on Tuesday and placed him under house arrest. He faces charges of causing deaths and fleeing his ship before all the passengers were rescued.



A recording (<http://bit.ly/xVhyKf>) of an exchange with an Italian coast guard officer showed that Captain Schettino refused orders to get back on the ship. Coast Guard Captain Gregory De Falco demanded that Captain Schettino use a

ladder to climb back onto the Concordia and report how many people were still on the ship. But Captain Schettino said he was not going anywhere, that it was too dark. He said he was handling the rescue from a lifeboat. An angry Captain De Falco shouted that Captain Schettino was "going to pay" for his actions.

And that's IN THE NEWS in VOA Special English. I'm Steve Ember.