OSI™

OIL SPILL INDIA

Newsletter

The Newsletter of the Global Spill community

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THE OSI NEWSLETTER

The OSI Newsletter is published quarterly by Oil Spill India, an industry led forum supported by its advisory board. One of the central goals of OSI is brining together the global spill response industry & its stakeholders in the region for enhanced cooperation in planning, prevention and response of any spill or disaster in marine ecosystem, concurrently building an informative schedule of the raising Global Standards. It is intended to function as a thought - starter, change - agent and signpost through the intellectual capital that accrues through the rich assortment of diverse, pertinent and eminently interesting subjects of concern to the spill, salvage, wreck removal & marine disaster industries besides showcasing the technological depth and knowledge repertoire of the industry.

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With leading experts on environment, natural resources and energy, the Advisory Board of ENCIS provides the key impetus to the organisation's initiatives & strategic insights on the evolving global industry, steering an immensely profound impact on the economic, environmental and strategic landscapes of the future.

ICG Conducts Regional Level Marine Oil Spill Response Exercise

Indian Coast Guard coordinated a marine oil spill mock drill at sea off the coast off Port Blair as part of Regional level marine oil spill response exercise "Clean Sea" on 06 Dec 2018. The mock drill was undertaken by Indian Coast Guard in conjunction with stakeholders which included the A&N Administration, Pollution Control Committee (A&N) ANC, PMB, PBMC, DSS, IOC, DMA, tourism and fisheries departments.

Code named as "Clean Sea -2018", the mock drill was a full scale event for evaluating the capabilities and response mechanism of all stake holders and augmenting regional level emergency preparedness with regard to risk factors associated with marine oil spill.

Two offshore patrol vessel (OPV), two fast patrol vessels (FPVs), four Interceptor Boats (IB), one Dornier fixed wing aircraft and one helicopter of Indian Coast Guard along with tugs and vessel belonging to ANC, PMB & DSS participated in various manoeuvres and procedures as part of exercise.

As part of the event, a maiden mock drill for shore clean-up was also conducted at Corbyn's cove beach by PCC with support from Coast Guard District HQ -14 and various stake holders including PBMC, Forest & Health services departments.

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International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds Celebrate 40 Years

The International Oil Pollution Compensation (IOPC) Funds have provided financial help in 150 oil spill incidents since 1978.

The IOPC Funds are two intergovernmental organizations (the 1992 Fund and the Supplementary Fund) which provide compensation for oil pollution damage resulting from spills of persistent oil from tankers. The fund was established after the Torrey Canyon ran aground near the Scilly Isles in 1967, fouling U.K. and French coastlines. The incident exposed a number of serious shortcomings, in particular the absence of an international agreement on liability and compensation in the event of such a spill.

The International Convention on the Establishment of an International Fund for Compensation for Oil Pollution Damage, 1971 (1971 Fund Convention) entered into force in October 1978 with 14 Member States. A few weeks later, the very first 1971 Fund Assembly was held, and a new organization, the IOPC Fund, was established.

Adopted under the auspices of the IMO, the entry into force of the 1971 Fund Convention, together with that of the International Convention on Civil Liability for Oil Pollution Damage, 1969 (1969 Civil Liability Convention) in 1975, created a new international regime to compensate victims of oil pollution damage resulting from tanker spills.

The IOPC Funds brings governments, shipowners and the oil industry together to protect victims of oil pollution damage and is financed by contributions from organizations receiving major oil shipments by sea in ports and terminals located in the IOPC member states. It has continued to grow in membership, with the 1992 Fund now including 115 States as members.

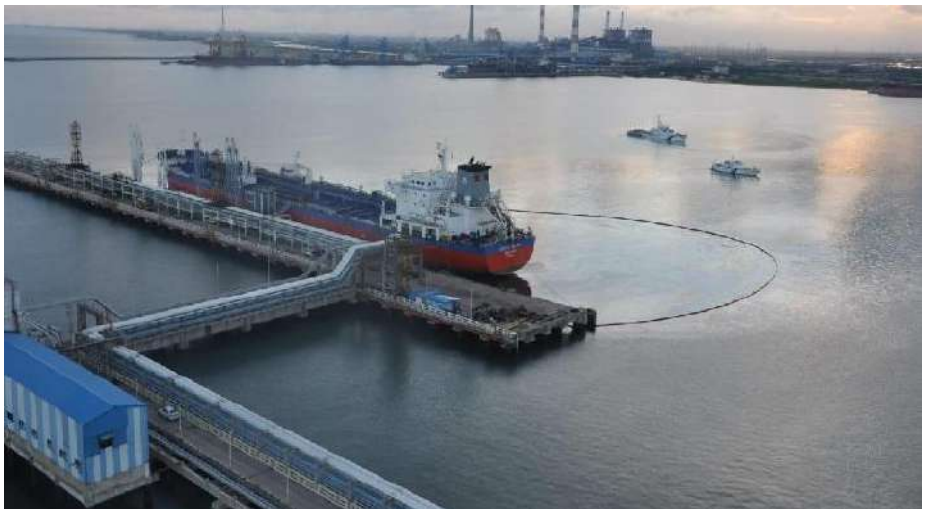
>>> ICG Conducts Continued

The preparedness of all agencies during the drill was witnessed by Mr. Chetan Bhushan Sanghi, IAS, Chief Secretary (Andaman & Nicobar) along with Inspector General MV Pathak, Commander, Coast Guard Region (A&N), both of whom were embarked onboard ICG ship along with representatives of other stake holder agencies.

The participation and cooperation provided by all stakeholders towards the conduct of the drill, is indicative of our resolve to combat pollution for protecting the flora and fauna of these islands. The mock drill successfully validated and reinforced response mechanism for Oil Pollution incidents and enabled Indian Coast Guard to fine tune the actions required in such eventualities by improving coordination and communication with different agencies. Representatives from electronic and print media also witnessed the exercise.

A communiqué received from PRO Coast Guard. "Vayam Rakshamah – We Protect".

Ennore port oil spill: Ensure cleanup or face action, Coast Guard writes to ship company



A day after a tanker MT Coral Stars spilled 1 tonne of oil at Ennore port in Tamil Nadu on the early hours of Sunday, the Coast Guard has sent a notice to Atlantic Shipping Private Ltd, the company that the tanker belonged to, directing the company to clean up the oil and make sure that the coastal environment is not harmed.

MT Coral Star is an oil/chemical tanker with a gross tonnage of 25,400. The vessel built in 2004 was carrying furnace oil. Authorities at the Kamarajar Port stated that the spill took place at 4.03 am on Sunday, when the fuel was being discharged into the port through a flexible hose at Marine Liquid Terminal 1.

The notice to the company states that while the port had taken few measures to contain the oil spill, the ship and the company have not yet taken suitable measures to remove the spill.

The notice demands the cleanup of the spilled oil and directs that those concerned, "undertake containment and recovery of oil spilled, take all other necessary action to keep the environment clean as it was prevailing before the incident and take necessary action to prevent further spillage of oil into the sea, including removal of oil from the damaged tanks by transfer."

"The oil spill likely to drift towards the coast which is likely to affect the coast line. Hence, you are advised to undertake above remedial actions either through local agent or other agencies. Non-compliance of the same will entail this headquarters to take action under 356(K) of part XIA of Indian Merchant Shipping Act 1958," the notice adds.

After the spill, concerned authorities rushed to the site and the Tamil Nadu government was also informed of the spill. A fence boom was immediately deployed, according to port authorities, around the vessel to arrest the drift of spilled fuel oil.

In connection to the current leak, environmentalists state that if the oil is contained within the harbour, it will be easy to clean up.

Meanwhile, the port authorities and the Indian Coast Guard said that a major portion of the spillage has been cleared.

According to a report in Times of India, an official communication from the Kamarajar Port in Ennore on Monday stated that almost all the visible patches of oil have been cleared and only a thin layer of oil remains from the spill. An assessment on the recovery will be undertaken on Tuesday after consulting with the Indian Coast Guard and Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) authorities.

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited, which is the consignee of the furnace oil has been told to collect the furnace oil that was spilled and dispose it off later in an environment-friendly manner with inputs from the TNPCB. A report has also been submitted by the District Environment Engineer of Tiruvallur to the TNPCB Chairman after assessing the area.

This is a second major spill in the region since 2017. In 2017, two ships collided near Chennai coast, resulting in a spillage of over 20 tonnes of oil into the sea. One of the ships was an oil tanker, MT Kanchipuram, which carried oil to the port. The statement issued by the Indian Coast Guard three days after the spill, pegged the spillage at over 20 tonnes, and revealed the cover up by the port authorities which had stated that the oil spilled into the sea was not more than 2-3 tonnes.

AUV Developed to Track and Map Oil Spills

The Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute (MBARI) has demonstrated a new use for its long-range autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs) - detecting and tracking oil spills.

Working with the U.S. Coast Guard and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI), MBARI engineers outfitted an AUV with fluorometers that can detect oil in water. They then tested the system by simulating an oil spill using non-toxic, biodegradable dye. After instruments on the AUV detected the plume, the AUV continued on its path, measuring the concentrations of dye within the plume and recording the areas of highest intensity. When the AUV crossed the outer edge of the plume, it automatically turned around and headed back toward the plume. By doing this repeatedly, it was able to track the plume as it drifted through the water for several hours.

The Coast Guard is particularly interested in testing AUVs that can find and track oil spills under ice, and the test involved using instruments that allow the AUV to navigate beneath sea ice.

The research was funded by a grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to Jim Bellingham, director of the Center for Marine Robotics at WHOI. In his previous position as an engineer at MBARI, Bellingham conceptualized and helped design the first AUV.

The present study builds on a previous MBARI effort to track oil in the deep waters of the Gulf of Mexico following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, using one of MBARI's larger Dorado-class AUVs.

Toxic Algae

In August this year, MBARI and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) tested one of the AUVs for mapping toxic algae blooms. The AUV swam around Lake Erie measuring the amount of microcystin and algae in the water and sent its findings back to shore in real time.

For the last eight years, MBARI's scientists and engineers have been building long-range AUVs and using them to study microscopic algae and ocean chemistry off the California coast. In 2018, they built a new model that carries a robotic biochemistry lab called a third-generation Environmental Sample Processor (3G ESP). While the AUV moves through the water the 3G ESP collects samples of water, filters them and then processes the samples to detect microscopic organisms or toxins such as microcystin. After analyzing the samples, the 3G ESP can send its findings to scientists on shore via satellite link.

MBARI engineer Brian Kieft and SURF Center Director Jim Birch work on a long-range AUV at NOAA's Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory. Image courtesy of NOAA.

14-year Gulf of Mexico oil spill could be worst in American history

Oil has been leaking into the Gulf of Mexico for the last 14 years in what may soon become the worst oil spill in US history.

In 2004, Hurricane Ivan disrupted an offshore drilling operation owned by Taylor Energy. Between 300 and 700 barrels leak into the gulf each day. That's 12,600 to 29,400 gallons per day for 14 years, and it continues to this day, just 12 miles off the coast of Louisiana.

The apparently leaking wells are under 400 feet of water and 60 to 100 feet of mud. Taylor Energy has argued that there's no evidence to prove any of the wells are leaking.

An independent analysis submitted by the Justice Department last month, showed that the spill was much larger than the one-to-55 barrels per day that the US Coast Guard National Response Center (NRC) said, having used data supplied by the oil company.

To date, the biggest oil spill in the world was in 1991 in the Persian Gulf, with 380 to 520 million gallons of oil spilled. In the US, an oil spill in Kern County, California in 1910 and 1911 resulted in 378 million gallons spilled.

Scientists develop reusable wood sponge that can clean up oil spills

Scientists have developed reusable sponges made from wood that can soak up oil spills from water bodies. Although oil and water don't mix, separating and recovering each component can be challenging.

The material, developed by researchers at the Chinese Academy of Forestry, selectively absorbs oil, and can be squeezed out and used again.

Over the years, scientists have developed numerous techniques to clean up oily water. However, many of these methods suffer from limitations, such as low efficiency, secondary pollution and high cost.

More recently, researchers have explored 3D porous materials, such as aerogels or sponges, based on various building blocks including synthetic polymers, silica or cellulose nanofibers.

However, these are often difficult to fabricate, lack mechanical robustness or are made from nonrenewable, nondegradable materials. Xiaoqing Wang and colleagues from Chinese Academy of Forestry wanted to develop a sponge made from wood -- a renewable resource -- that would absorb oil and tolerate repeated squeezing without structural failure.

Bahrain allows 100pc foreign ownership in oil spill services

Bahrain's cabinet approved 100 per cent ownership of firms offering oil spill treatment services by foreign companies and investors.

The approval was granted in the light of a memorandum submitted by the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Tourism, and based on a proposal by the Minister of Oil, said a Bahrain News Agency report.

The Cabinet meeting was chaired by His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa and attended by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and First Deputy Premier.

The Cabinet also agreed to allow Thai nationals to carry out commercial activities by 100 per cent ownership in the Dragon City mall, based a proposal by the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Tourism.

The request, which was approved by the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry, was submitted by the Diyar Al-Muharraq Company.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet instructed all ministries and government departments to submit reports to the Ministerial Committee for Financial Affairs and Rationalisation of Expenditure on their achievements regarding their programmes to reduce in the short and medium terms.

Multi-agency oil spill exercise held off Pulau Semakau

A mock collision and oil spill was staged in Singapore waters near Pulau Semakau in a response exercise.

More than 250 people from 26 agencies were involved in the exercise led by the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) - the lead agency for maritime emergencies.

An "octopus" skimmer system was deployed for the first time in the biennial exercise, which allows oil to be collected more effectively using brushes that run in multiple directions. A conventional oil skimmer collects oil from one direction.

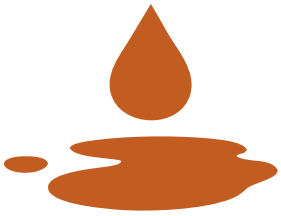
The spill response teams also used equipment such as oil containment booms, and sprayed dispersants from a C-130 aircraft, while a Police Coast Guard patrol craft carried out cordon duty.

Captain M. Segar, assistant chief executive (operations) at MPA, said that as Singapore is one of the world's busiest ports, ensuring it has the means and ability to respond to any contingencies, including oil spills, is important.

"Today's exercise not only allows us to test our inter-agency responses but also to share best practices and test new technologies in combating oil spills," he added.

The teams responded as if a collision between two tanker vessels, one of which sustained damage to its two cargo oil tanks, caused a spillage of about 10,000 metric tonnes of oil.

Oil Spill Management Market to touch US$ 120 billion by 2022



The report covers detailed competitive outlook including the market share and company profiles of the key participants operating in the global market. Key players profiled in the report include National Oilwell Varco, Cameron International Corporation, Control Flow Inc., Northern Tanker Company Oy, Fender & Spill Response Services L.L.C., SkimOil, Inc., GE Oil & Gas, COSCO Shipyard Group Co., Ltd., Hyundai Heavy Industries Co., Ltd., Ecolab Inc., and CURA Emergency Services Company profile includes assign such as company summary, financial summary, business strategy and planning, SWOT analysis and current developments.

The scope of the report includes a detailed study of global and regional markets for various types of coatings with the reasons given for variations in the growth of the industry in certain regions.

Once oil is spilled by sea this oil will naturally disperse, spread and fragment under the control of waves, currents and wind. In coastal waters when oil is spills then it will frequently waft towards the beach and turn into stranded because of the action of tides and waves. Increase in drilling action worldwide will increase demand for energy for business development. This is a main feature for enhancing the requirement for pressure control tools includes preventers and blowout. The oil spill management will mainly classify into two types such as pre oil spill management and post oil management.

Minister observes oil spill response exercise

A LIVE exercise was conducted in Seria, Belait District to test Brunei Shell Petroleum Company Sdn Bhd's (BSP) Incident Management Team and Crisis Management Team in handling oil spill incidents.

The National Oil Spill Contingency Plan Management Committee (NOSCOP MC) and BSP conducted the live exercise on the Tier 2 Oil Spill Response to strengthen ties between NOSCOP MC and BSP and to test the interface between various agencies involved in an oil spill response.

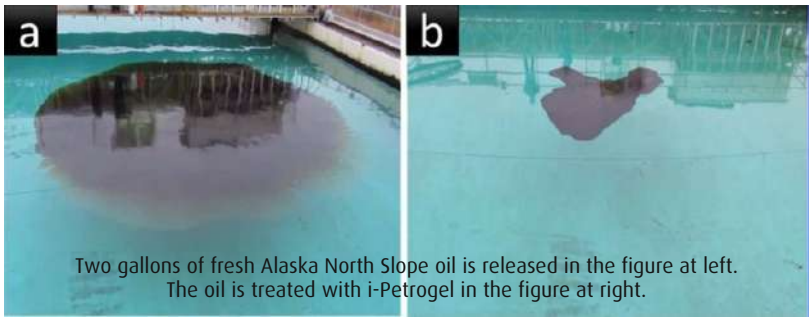
Minister of Communications Dato Seri Setia Awang Abdul Mutalib bin Pehin Orang Kaya Seri Setia Dato Paduka Haji Mohd Yusof observed the exercise.

Dato Seri Setia Awang Abdul Mutalib visited two sites where the oil spill response was deployed. The first site was at E22 beachfront in Seria for the onshore clean up followed by the river mouth near the Billionth Barrel Monument for the offshore response.

The BSP oil spill response team was supported by the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF), Royal Brunei Police Force (RBPF), the Fire and Rescue Department and National Disaster Management among others, under the incident management of NOSCOP MC.

The Minister of Communications also observed the response from BSP's Crisis Management Team at the Crisis Suite at the BSP Head Office.

Inexpensive material offers solution for ocean oil spills



Two gallons of fresh Alaska North Slope oil is released in the figure at left. The oil is treated with i-Petrogel in the figure at right.

A super-absorbent material developed by Penn State scientists could dramatically reduce the environmental impact of oil spills on oceans and allow recovered oil to be refined normally.

The synthetic material, called i-Petrogel, absorbs more than 40 times its weight in crude oil, and effectively stops the oil from spreading after a spill, according to the researchers.

The researchers designed the material to maximize its ability to absorb oil, but not water. The oil collected can then be refined by regular means and reused, further reducing environmental waste and pollution associated with other collection methods.

"If the recovered oil can't be reused, it needs to be dumped somewhere. It's useless," said T.C. Mike Chung, professor of materials science and engineering. "That's why we developed a technology that is comprehensive. i-Petrogel is a polymer made from oil. It's a pure hydrocarbon."

The researchers created i-Petrogel by mixing two polyolefin polymers in the laboratory, and then scaled up the product for use in large-scale field tests. Because the product is an oil-based polymer, it is strongly bonded to oil and also does not need to be removed before refining.

The team members recently reported their findings in Sustainable Chemistry and Engineering.

We already know what kind of polymers can absorb oil," Chung said. "Some oil is very thick and takes a long time to absorb, so we blended two polymers to provide structure with high surface area. It's a microporous structure. If you look inside there are many small holes. This morphological structure allows the viscous oil to diffuse inside, allowing for more oil to absorb through the surfaces."

The blend of two polymers — an interpenetrating polymer network of hard and soft polymers — can be optimized for different oil viscosities and other factors. The researchers have three U.S. patents on this work, and i-Petrogel is undergoing steps to become commercially produced.

During the field tests, researchers found the new polymer absorbed more than 40 times its weight in Alaska North Slope oil, double the capacity of its predecessor, Petrogel, also developed by the same Penn State researchers. The product takes on a gel-like consistency as it absorbs oil and remains at the surface. It can be readily removed using skimmers already used in clean-ups.

Previous techniques used to quell disasters like the Deepwater Horizon incident in 2010 recovered about 10 percent of the oil spilled, and the recovered oil was unusable. That generated about 80,000 tons of solid waste from soiled booms, and additional liquid oil waste mixed with salt water as responders struggled to contain the estimated 200 million gallons of spilled oil.

Chung said i-Petrogel works in any climate and pays for itself in recovered oil alone. For example, one barrel of crude oil could be recovered using less than 8 pounds of i-Petrogel, which costs $2 per pound to manufacture. Using today's crude oil prices, it would cost $16 to recover $85 worth of oil.

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement funded this research.

An oil pipeline company introduces a new way of cleaning up oil spills

At the peak of the oil boom the North Dakota Department of health reports there were over 2,000 oil spills throughout the state. Now that number has dropped by at least half, but oil spills still continue to happen.

"In the past it was more if you had a hydrocarbon spill you would dig it up and take it to an industrial landfill," said David McQuade, senior environmental health director for Targa. But now there's a new way to handle these spills. "They want to consume that hydrocarbon," said McQuade.

McQuade is talking about bioremediation, where tiny organisms consume and break down environmental pollutants. "Bioremediation is activated using land farming techniques where you spread the spoil out, you apply the bacteria and then you add water cause they want water," said McQuade.

It's something that already occurs naturally. "We're just enhancing them and giving them what they need to continue to recreate and have the volume that we need," said McQuade. The technique is widely used and is also EPA approved.

"Once the bugs consume all the oil and they die the soul becomes very very fertile," said McQuade. That same soil can then be reused. Nathalie Gomez reporting: "Four months ago over 10,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil was brought to this sight in that time 85 percent of that oil has been cleaned up thanks to bio remediation". "They'll eat that hydro carbonation until it's all gone," said McQuade.

McQuade is now asking the state to streamline the permitting process so many more companies can consider land farming this process instead of taking contaminated soil to landfills. "We're doing this to protect the environment and to the keep the landowners soil on their land," said McQuade.

IMA to deal with oil spill culprits

New systems of detecting and managing oil spills are coming, the Institute of Marine Affairs (IMA) has assured.

The IMA said in a news release that it was collaborating with the Ministry of Energy and Energy Industries to install, in the near future, an ocean-atmosphere wave raider buoy network and a radar system that will monitor the Gulf of Paria for oil spills and other anomalies.

“This system will enable a rapid and much more efficient response to any pollutants in the waters of the Gulf of Paria, as well as provide scientific data and information to facilitate prosecution of entities responsible for the spills,” it noted.

“Early detection of oil spills from the combined buoys and the radar system is a major step towards environment management, whereby clean-up action can be undertaken immediately as spills occur.

“The use of the early warning network system can be used to link mystery spills to perpetrators, and be used as evidence for litigation of responsible parties,” it added.

The IMA said, in the meantime, it continued to respond to all environmental incidents, including oil spills located in the waters off Trinidad and Tobago, once reported.

Husky Energy says it is ‘deeply’ sorry for largest oil spill in N.L. history

Husky Energy submitted a preliminary report about the largest-ever oil spill in Newfoundland and Labrador and said it is “deeply sorry” for the incident.

The company says it submitted the report on the Nov. 16 oil spill to the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board (C-NLOPB) on Friday.

The C-NLOPB did confirm they had received the report, and say that they will not be publicly releasing any of the preliminary results from their investigation as it remains ongoing.

Husky Energy has confirmed that the leak, which sent an estimated 250,000 litres of crude oil into the Atlantic Ocean, was caused when a flowline connector failed near the South White Rose Extension drill centre, roughly 350 kilometres southeast of St. John’s.

60,000 Liters of Oil Spills From Pipeline Into Brazilian Bay

About 60,000 liters (15,850 gallons) of oil spilled from a pipeline into the Estrela River and spread to Rio de Janeiro's famed Guanabara Bay over the weekend, according to Reuters and local reports.

The pipeline is owned by Transpetro, the largest oil and gas transportation company in Brazil, and a subsidiary of Petroleo Brasileiro (commonly known as Petrobras). Transpetro claims the leak resulted from an attempted robbery.

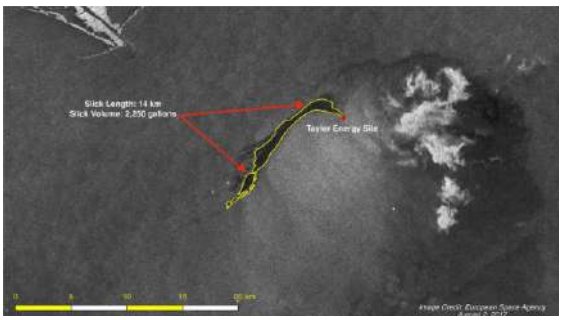
"It was a leak of significant proportions, with an impact on the mangroves," said Maurício Muniz, an analyst at the Instituto Chico Mendes, which is associated with the Brazilian environment ministry, according to Reuters.

Guanabara Bay was also the site of a major spill in January 2000, when a pipeline released 1,300,000 liters (340,000 gallons) of oil into the waters. The leak stemmed from an oil refinery operated by Petrobras.

Muniz said Saturday's spill was the worst he has seen in the decade at his job, as quoted by the news website Project Colabora. He added that the bay has not fully recovered since the 2000 spill.

"The scene I witnessed was devastating: oil concentrated with garbage mainly at the mouth of the Rio Estrela," he explained.

Clean Up 14-Year Oil Spill or Face $40K Daily Fine, Feds Tell Taylor Energy



The U.S. Coast Guard has ordered Taylor Energy Co. to clean and contain a 14-year chronic oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico or face a fine of $40,000 a day.

Environmentalists had warned about the unrelenting leak for years after the Gulf Restoration Network and the watchdog group SkyTruth discovered oil slicks via satellite imagery while investigating the BP Deepwater Horizon spill in 2010.

The environmental catastrophe was brought to national attention last month when The Washington Post reported that Taylor's former production site is releasing up to 700 barrels (29,400 gallons) of oil per day into the gulf and could eventually surpass the Deepwater Horizon spill as the largest offshore disaster in U.S. history.

The massive spill and ongoing oil pollution in the gulf's waters was even the subject of a recent episode of the show "Patriot Act" hosted by Hasan Minhaj.

On Oct 23, a day after the Post's report was published, the U.S. Coast Guard ordered Taylor to stop the leak, WWL-TV New Orleans was first to report. Taylor was ordered to "institute a ... system to capture, contain, or remove oil" or face the $40,000-per-day penalty, according to details of the order published by The Washington Post on Tuesday.

The spill stems from a Taylor-owned production platform located 12 miles off the coast of Louisiana that was toppled by an underwater mudslide caused by Hurricane Ivan in 2004.

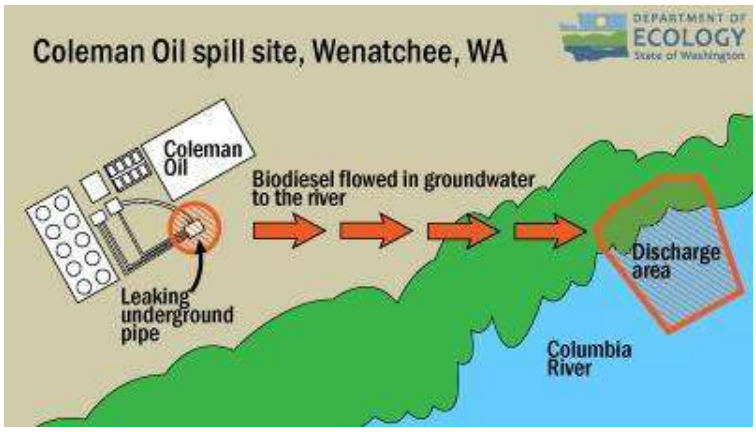
8,000 barrels of oil spill in Peruvian Amazon

Peru state oil company Petroperu said approximately 8,000 barrels of crude oil had spilled in the Amazon after vandals severed the pipeline and then impeded technicians seeking to repair the damaged pipe. The pipe began to spill oil on Tuesday night after sabotage by members of the Mayuriaga indigenous community in the Loreto region of the Amazon, Petroperu said in a statement.

“The townspeople prevented us from securing the pipe to stop petroleum from spilling from the pipe,” said Beatriz Alva Hart, a Petroperu spokeswoman in an interview with local radio station RPP. Mayuriaga community leaders could not be immediately located for comment.

The pipeline, which transports crude from oil fields in the Peruvian Amazon to Petroperu’s refinery on the Pacific coast, has suffered repeated attacks by vandals over the past two years. Petroperu said in the statement it had previously warned authorities that the community had threatened to attack that stretch of pipeline in protest of recent municipal election results in the district.

Oil spill creates mess for Lewiston firm: Coleman Oil expected to pay more than $1 million in fines, costs related to contamination in Wenatchee



The Washington Department of Ecology has fined Coleman Oil of Lewiston $189,000 for an oil spill at its Wenatchee facility, and total fines and damages related to the incident are expected to reach more than $1 million.

According to a news release from the agency, a corroded underground pipe at the company's Wenatchee bulk oil plant was responsible for the spill. The fuel contaminated nearby soil and groundwater, and seeped into the Columbia River, creating a visible sheen that appeared off and on for more than a year. The property is now a toxic cleanup site, according to the news release.

The agency cited Coleman Oil for negligence and not monitoring levels in the 20,000-gallon, above-ground storage tank connected to the corroded pipe. Although Coleman Oil believed the underground pipe had been in place since 1935, the company did not follow its own inventory control procedures or industry guidance for buried piping, according to the release.

"This spill happened over a long period of time and impacted the health of the river system," said Dale Jensen, who manages the Department of Ecology Spills Program. "It could easily have been prevented if the company had been properly monitoring the fuel level in that tank."

Agency officials first responded to the site when the sheen was reported in March of last year. Its source remained a mystery until lab results identified the pollution as biodiesel. Responders then traced the product to the Coleman Oil facility.

The company was cooperative and has worked with the department on cleanup. Groundwater monitoring wells are in place and are being sampled regularly to determine how much, if any, contamination remains in the groundwater. If fuel is found in the wells, it will be pumped out to prevent it from reaching the river. The next phase of the investigation is to determine whether river sediments have been contaminated.

In addition to the fine, the company must reimburse the state $213,400 for its spill response costs. It is also faces a resource damage assessment, which may be an environmental restoration or enhancement project, or a payment into a fund that pays for such projects. The combination of the state's penalty, cost reimbursement and damage assessment is expected to total more than $1 million.

Funds collected from the penalty will go into the state's Coastal Protection Fund. The company also faces a potential resource damage assessment from tribes. The company can appeal the penalty to the state Pollution Control Hearings Board.

Court confirms $1.9 billion compensation for Prestige oil spill

It confirmed an earlier ruling handed down in November 2017 by a lower court in the northwestern city of La Coruna, in Galicia off whose coast the Prestige tanker broke in two.

Neighbouring France, which was also affected, was awarded 61 million.

The Bahama-flagged Liberian tanker went down after sailing for six days damaged and adrift, spilling 63,000 tonnes of oil into the sea and coating 2,980 kilometres (1,852 miles) of shoreline in Spain, France and Portugal with black sludge.

The spill caused huge damage to wildlife and the environment, as well as to the region's fishing industry, leading to an international cleanup effort.

The court said the final ruling on civil liability "fixes compensation at above 1.5 billion euros" to be paid by the vessel's insurance company and its skipper.

The vast majority of the compensation will go to the Spanish state. The remainder will be split between the Galician authorities and local authorities, including in French areas. Firms, particularly in the fishing industry, which was badly hit, will also receive a small cut.

The ruling ends a legal marathon after Spain's worst ecological disaster.

More than 300,000 volunteers from across Europe descended on the region to help with the clean-up.

Spain's Supreme Court in 2016 found the Prestige's Greek captain, Apostolos Mangouras, and its British insurer, The London P&I Club, as well as its owner Mare Shipping Inc, liable for the disaster.

It also sentenced Mangouras, who was 67 when the Prestige went down, to two years in jail.

The court said at the time that two major energy companies -- Spain's Repsol and Britain's BP -- had advised against using the Prestige tanker, a 26-year-old vessel with a carrying capacity of 81,000 tonnes.

It also cited in its ruling notes from the Prestige's former captain, Stratos Kostazos, who had complained that the tanker was in bad shape and had refused to sail in it.

Mangouras blamed the spill on the Spanish authorities which ordered the ship out to sea after it sent out a distress call due to a crack in its hull.

The total cost of the damage had been estimated by Spanish courts in 2012 at €4.1 billion, of which 3.8 billion should be given to the Spanish state.