



Dangerous Goods - Hazardous Materials Group & Network

Release 2011 – 792 Newsy Stuff

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December 31 2011



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CHINA, GUANGDONG PROVINCE, ZHUHAI, DECEMBER 21 2011. CNOOC SHUTS S CHINA SEA PLATFORMS



A long-range view of the Oriental 1-1 natural gas field owned by CNOOC Ltd in the South China Sea. The field has a daily output of 187 million cubic feet.

China National Offshore Oil Corp Ltd (CNOOC), China's largest offshore energy producer, has shut down its operation in the South China Sea after gas leak being detected from one of its sub-sea pipelines. The pipeline leak is about 12 kilometers from the company's Zhuhai Hengqin gas processing terminal in Guangdong province. Most of the gas from there is distributed to local power stations, while a small portion goes for residential use, CNOOC said in a statement on Tuesday. The company said that it has shut down the production of relevant platforms of Panyu 30-1 and Huizhou 21-1 fields supplying gas to the pipe. It is rushing to release the pressure in the leaking pipeline, which it expects to be done by Wednesday, and then it will start the repair work. "While it's still unclear how long it will take CNOOC to fix the problem, we expect it to take normally around 3-4

months to fix a subsea pipeline problem," analysts at Sanford C. Bernstein wrote in a note yesterday. The brokerage and investment group CLSA said in a report that the suspended gas fields may remain shut for as long as two months. That, in turn, may lead to gas shortages in Guangdong province, the country's industrial powerhouse. The Beijing-based CNOOC will lose the equivalent of around 26,700 barrels of oil daily, said Lin Zhongming, director of the Shenzhen branch's Party committee office. The Zhuhai Maritime Safety Administration has issued notices to evacuate nearby boats and to inform local residents about the leak. No injury or environmental pollution has been reported and the situation is under control, CNOOC said. The cause of the incident is still under investigation. CNOOC was ordered all production to be suspended at its 51-percent owned Penglai 19-3 oilfield in the Bohai Bay following two oil leaks that began in June. The Penglai 19-3 oilfield in Bohai Bay, in which CNOOC holds a 51 percent stake, was forced to shut down in September after about 700 barrels of crude oil leaked from the field in June. The company also reported detecting a small oil spill in Bohai Bay's Jinzhou 9-3 West oilfield in October.

http://www.china.org.cn/environment/2011-12/21/content_24207947.htm

USA, GA, GAINESVILLE, DECEMBER 21 2011. EXPLOSION AT GAINESVILLE'S MYCELX KILLS AN EMPLOYEE >> VICTIM'S NAME NOT RELEASED, PENDING FAMILY NOTIFICATION

patrick stoker



Gainesville Fire and Police secure the scene of an explosion this afternoon at MyCelx Technologies Corp. on Woods Mill Road

An employee at a business near downtown Gainesville was killed Tuesday following a small explosion due to the malfunction of a piece of equipment used to clean filters. Gainesville and Hall County firefighters responded to the incident at MyCelx Technologies Corp. on Woods Mill Road. "It looks like (a chemical) solution created the explosion," Gainesville Deputy Fire Chief Jerome Yarbrough said. He added that it was similar to what happens when gas builds up in a grill and then flames up when it is lit. Authorities did not release the victim's name, pending notification of family. Employees exchanged hugs Tuesday before re-entering the building but none

wanted to comment on the situation. The company produces clean water technology solutions for commercial industrial markets worldwide, according to its website. In the summer of 2010, the company helped with cleanup efforts during the Gulf of Mexico oil spill. Employees demonstrated the company's unique technology to BP executives and government officials before they were approved to help with the efforts in Panama City, Fla., and Orange Beach, Ala.

<http://www.gainesvilletimes.com/section/6/article/60792/>

USA, W.VA, CHARLESTON, DECEMBER 21 2011. PENNZOIL-QUAKER STATE INK AGREEMENT TO CLEAN UP CLENDENIN SITE

West Virginia has reached an agreement with an oil company to clean up an old refinery site in Kanawha County. The state Department of Environmental Protection and Pennzoil-Quaker State Co. have signed an agreement for the 44-acre site, which



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is located at 100 Reamer Road, Clendenin, according to a news release from the DEP. The site was home to the Elk Refining Co. from 1913 to 1982, the news release states. Starting in 1983, Hannah Lumber Co. operated a wood chipping facility on part of the site. Under the agreement, Pennzoil-Quaker State will address environmental conditions at the site, the news release states. The company and the department's Office of Environmental Remediation have negotiated a Voluntary Remediation Agreement, which has provisions for finding human health and ecological risks at the site. The company and OER will work to develop a cleanup plan for the site, according to the news release.

<http://www.wowktv.com/story/16360875/wva>

IRAN, ISFAHAN, DECEMBER 21 2011. FIRE AT IRAN REFINERY PROMPTS STATE OF EMERGENCY >> MALFUNCTION IN ISFAHAN REFINERY, THE SECOND LARGEST IN IRAN, RESULTS IN BLACK OUT, BURNING OF GAS, OIL RESIDUES

dudi cohen

A malfunction at an Isfahan refinery caused a leakage of cooling water from its generators - the latest in a string of mysterious mishaps in [Iran](#) in the past few months. A power outage was created as a result and a state of emergency was declared at the refinery, the Iranian Mehr news agency reported. According to the report, one person was injured and taken to hospital. Various eye-witnesses reported seeing flames and thick smoke covering the area. The report stated that workers burned off the excess oil and gas in pipes to prevent a blast in the site. Traffic to the site was blocked and all phone lines were disconnected to prevent an explosion. The Isfahan refinery is the second largest in Iran. A local oil company official said that the situation was under control and that the malfunction would be repaired within several hours. He denied that a fire had broken out. A senior employee at the refinery denied there was a blast, explaining that the flames and smoke seen in the area were caused due to the burning of excess materials in the pipes. He explained that power had been cut off due to safety reasons. Iran ranks second in the world in work accidents. Last week, a blast at a [steel factory](#) in Yazd left at least 18 dead.

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4164453,00.html>

NIGERIA, LAGOS, DECEMBER 22 2011. SHELL SHUTS NIGERIA'S BONGA ON POSSIBLE WORST LEAK IN DECADE

eduard gismatullin & elisha bala-gbogbo



Shell said that the leak was believed to stem from an export line and occurred during the transfer of oil from a floating vessel to a waiting tanker. No-one was hurt and the export lines were shut, halting the flow.

[Royal Dutch Shell](#), Europe's largest oil company, shut its 200,000 barrel-a-day Bonga field off Nigeria after a leak during a tanker loading caused what may be the country's worst offshore spill in more than a decade. An export line from the field's floating production, storage and offloading vessel was probably the cause of the leak, estimated at below 40,000 barrels of crude, Shell said in a statement today. The oil flow has been halted, it said. "We're aware of the incident and we're working hard with Shell to contain the spill," Idris Musa at the [National Oil Spill Detection and](#)

[Response Agency](#) said today from the capital. The leak is expected to be the worst since a January 1998 Exxon Mobil Corp. spill dumped an estimated 40,000 barrels into the sea from its Idoho platform, with slicks reported as far west as Lagos. Shell, the largest foreign oil producer in Nigeria, has been criticized by some local people and foreign groups for spills of crude from its onshore fields. The Anglo-Dutch company, operating in Nigeria since 1937, says most spills occur because of pipeline sabotage and oil theft and it has set up a website to disclose data on leaks. "Spill response procedures have been initiated and emergency control and spill risk procedures are up and running," a Shell spokesman, said by phone from Lagos, the commercial capital. Shell is sorry for the leak, Mutiu Sunmonu, its Nigerian chairman, said in the statement.

Shares Advance

Bonga, Nigeria's first deepwater discovery, produces almost 10 percent of the country's crude 120 kilometers (75 miles) off the coast. Shell planned to export five cargoes of 1 million barrels each of Bonga crude every month from December to February, loading programs obtained by Bloomberg News show. "They averted a potentially much more serious situation, they figured it out very quickly," Fadel Gheit, an analyst at Oppenheimer & Co. in New York, said in a telephone interview today. "I think the market is recognizing the responsiveness of the company." While the amount of oil spilled is substantial, he said, this isn't a



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"runaway field" like what BP Plc dealt with in the Gulf of Mexico last year. Yesterday Shell said a Gulf of Mexico drilling operation will stop for weeks after spilling 319 barrels of drilling fluid.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-12-21/shell-shuts-nigeria-s-bonga-field-after-oil-leak-at-platform.html>

USA, N.Y, MANHATTAN, DECEMBER 22 2011. GETTY PETROLEUM SEEKS BANKRUPTCY PROTECTION FOR OIL CLEANUP COSTS

john clark

Getty Petroleum Marketing Inc., a major fuel marketer that serves as a liaison between oil distributors and gasoline retailers filed for bankruptcy this week after high environmental cleanup costs left the company in a financially vulnerable position. In its bankruptcy petition, which was filed in U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Manhattan, the company claims that it had assets of more than \$50 million, but that its total debts topped this lofty sum, as well, according to a recent report from Bloomberg BusinessWeek. The largest creditor listed for the fuel marketer is Bionol Clearfield LLC, to whom Getty Petroleum owes \$230 million after an arbitrator awarded Bionol that sum for a disputed ethanol supply contract. The key here, though, is that Getty seems to be disputing this claim. While the bankruptcy judge will have to sort out the ramifications of this disputer creditor claim, Getty and its [bankruptcy attorneys](#) hope that the filing will help the company emerge "operationally stronger and with a better balance sheet." In addition, the company spun its bankruptcy filing as an effort to "hasten environmental cleanup" of various spills for which Getty Petroleum holds some responsibility. The company also assured its contractors and employees that it would remain in business while it was [filing bankruptcy](#). According to a Getty press release, the company promise to continue purchasing and delivering gasoline to retailers, paying its truckers, compensating utility and maintenance companies, and continuing to "honor its environmental remediation obligations." In its Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing, the company hopes to take advantage of corporate bankruptcy law and reorganize the group into a leaner, more profitable outfit. The future still holds some promise for the relatively young company, which was started in 1997 during headier economic times. Currently, the company helps service 765 different leases between landlords and gas station operators. In short, Getty Petroleum helps keep gas stations operating. The company's financial struggles, however, ensure that it will likely emerge from bankruptcy with an entirely different look. In fact, serious alterations to the company have already begun, as Getty Petroleum was recently purchased by Cambridge Petroleum Holding Inc. The buyer certainly hopes that bankruptcy will help stem the flow of leaking money from the firm's cash wells.

<http://www.totalbankruptcy.com/bankruptcy-news/news-section/getty-petroleum-seeks-bankruptcy-800777567.aspx>

AUSTRALIA, NEW SOUTH WALES, KARUAH, DECEMBER 22 2011. PACIFIC HIGHWAY DELAYS AFTER TANKER ACCIDENT



As holiday traffic builds on the Pacific Highway, efforts are underway to clear the site of a truck accident north of Newcastle. The prime mover carrying carbon dioxide gas overturned near Karuah just after midnight and the highway was closed in both directions for five hours. A contra-flow is now in place, and Dave Wright from the Transport Management Centre says motorists are moving through the area slowly. He says there will be short closures of the highway as work continues to salvage the truck's load. "The actual salvage and decanting will be a lengthy process," he said. "The highway will be closed intermittently to assist with salvage efforts as the CO2 is decanted. "We're just waiting to see what happens when we re-right this truck because if it all goes bad, it could have a significant impact for a while. "If it all goes

to plan then hopefully it's going to be little impact if any."

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2011-12-21/highway-delays-after-tanker-accident/3741580/?site=sydney>

CHINA, SHANGHAI, DECEMBER 22 2011. CHINESE MAN JAILED FOR RUNNING GAS STATION FROM APARTMENT

A Chinese man was sentenced to five days in administrative detention for running a gas station from his village home, the Shanghai Daily reported Wednesday. Police found five tanks filled with at least one ton (0.91 tonnes) of gasoline in the apartment of Liu Shimin at his home in Damozi Village in Chongqing, southwestern China. The ground-floor apartment smelled heavily of gasoline when policemen raided following tip-offs that motorcycles, cars and pickup trucks often lined up outside, the paper said. Liu admitted storing and selling fuel from his home. He said he bought the fuel from a gas station



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around eight miles (12 kilometers) away and resold it to drivers at a five percent premium. He earned more than 4,000 yuan (\$631) from the business in almost a year. His neighbors upstairs in the three-story building said they had no idea they were living above a potentially hazardous gas station.

<http://www.myfoxdc.com/dpp/news/offbeat/chinese-man-jailed-for-running-gas-station-from-apartment-122111>

CANADA, ONT, ST. CLAIR TOWNSHIP, DECEMBER 22 2011. MARINA FIRE ENGULFS 75 BOATS, ANTIQUE CARS >> BLAZE NEAR SARNIA, ONT., CAUSES DAMAGE 'IN THE MILLIONS OF DOLLARS': OPP CONSTABLE

 **Watch the Video** <http://www.wxyz.com/dpp/news/boat-house-ablaze-in-st-clair-county>

 **Watch the Video** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/story/2011/12/20/wdr-marina-fire-port-lambton.html>

 **Photo's** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/story/2011/12/20/wdr-marina-fire-port-lambton.html>



A storage building at Port Lambton, south of Sarnia, that housed more than 65 boats, burns Tuesday morning, creating thick black smoke visible for kilometres. Damage is estimated in the millions.

A large storage facility that houses as many as 75 boats and several antique and collectible cars has burned at a marina near Sarnia, Ont. "The damage will be in the millions of dollars," Lambton OPP Const. Chrystal Jones said. The fire began Tuesday around 7 a.m. ET in Port Lambton. At least three fire detachments responded to the call on Old River Road, just south of St. Clair Parkway. Residents living near the property reported hearing explosions from inside or near the building. "I heard a couple of pops but a friend of mine lives pretty well across the street there and he said that's what woke him up [Tuesday] morning was an explosion," said Mike Walton, who lives near the scene. "So, he looked out the window and he said

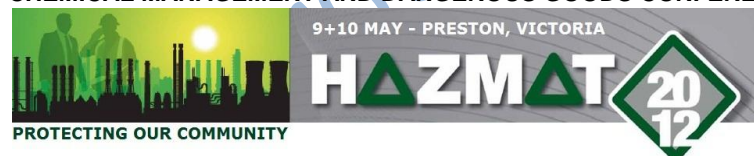
the one door on the far end of the building was already gone." By 10 a.m. flames had engulfed the entire structure and efforts to battle the blaze involved every available firefighter in St. Clair Township.

Residents Told "Stay Clear of the Area"

Thick black smoke billowed from the building on the shores of the St. Clair River and blew across the water toward Michigan, but a number of homes in Port Lambton were directly in its path. Emergency officials have told Port Lambton residents to stay inside with their windows and doors shut to avoid exposure to smoke. "Apparently, the fiberglass that's burning is causing some toxic fumes. We're asking people to stay clear of the area and to keep an eye on the smoke, to stay indoors and to stay out of the path of that because it could cause you respiratory or lung problems," Jones said. Police officers went door to door to notify residents they could be asked to evacuate at a moment's notice. The Ministry of the Environment is monitoring the situation.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/story/2011/12/20/wdr-marina-fire-port-lambton.html>

AUSTRALIA, VICTORIA, MELBOURNE, DECEMBER 22 2011. HAZMAT 2012, THE KEY HAZARDOUS MATERIALS, CHEMICAL MANAGEMENT AND DANGEROUS GOODS CONFERENCE/EXHIBITION IN AUSTRALIA



Registration and Program Now Open!

HazMat 2012 is the key hazardous materials, chemical management and dangerous goods conference and exhibition in Australia. This year will

see a focus on protecting the community and how the industry is addressing environmental and public concerns of safety. Held over two days, presentations by leading industry experts and an international keynote speakers will cover current and future issues. There are also industry workshops the day prior to the conference held by John Frangos and Richard Greenwood. Download the [Registration & Program brochure](#) for the full program, pricing and more information. You can also download the [Speaker Profiles directory](#) for more information about the presenters. Sponsorship & Exhibition Opportunities Still Available! Opportunities are now open for organisations wishing to associate themselves with the conference. With attendance of several hundred delegates from this niche industry you would have a captive audience relevant to your



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business. This has proved beneficial to many organisations who continue to return each year. For More Information & Registration: Download the [Sponsorship and Exhibition brochure](#) Click Here to [View Online](#)
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NORTHERN IRELAND, SOUTH ARMAGH, DECEMBER 22 2011. TWO HELD AFTER ILLEGAL FUEL PLANT UNCOVERED

john mulgrew



Two men are being questioned after the fuel plant was discovered.

An illegal fuel plant thought to be worth over £5m in lost revenue to the Exchequer has been uncovered in Co Armagh. The site was uncovered by police and officers from HM Revenue & Customs at a large corrugated shed on farmland in the Drummond Road area of south Armagh on Tuesday. Around five tonnes of highly toxic waste was also discovered — a by-product of the laundering process — including a fuel tanker containing 20,000 litres of illegal diesel. It is believed the site had the capacity to produce up to eight million litres of fuel a year. Officers also seized tanks, pumps and various other pieces of equipment used in the process of fuel laundering. It's the second plant uncovered in Co Armagh in the space of just

over a week. Graeme Anderson of HMRC said those buying fuel were helping to encourage and support "fuel criminality in our communities and the dumping of toxic waste". According to HMRC, two men are currently assisting them with their enquiries and investigations.

Related Links [Arrest as fuel plant discovered](#)

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/northern-ireland/two-held-after-illegal-fuel-plant-uncovered-16094244.html>

USA, VA, PORTSMOUTH, DECEMBER 22 2011. BARGE FAULTED FOR JET FUEL LEAK IN YORK RIVER, COAST GUARD SAYS >> VIRGINIA DEQ: NO ENVIRONMENTAL CONTAMINATION

cory nealon



A barge in the York River.

The [U.S. Coast Guard](#) believes a leaking fuel barge is responsible for a mile-long oil sheen that fouled the York River on Tuesday. The barge was carrying 1 million gallons of JP-8, a type of jet fuel commonly used by the military, said Lt. Brett Workman of the U.S. Coast Guard in Portsmouth. While the vast majority of the fuel remained on the barge, it appears that an undetermined amount leaked from one of the barge's eight holds, Workman said. Coast Guard investigators on Wednesday were still determining the exact amount. "It is far less than the full capacity" of one of the holds, Workman said. Spotted by a recreational boater where the York meets the Chesapeake Bay, the fuel mostly stayed near the water's surface and is expected to evaporate without causing serious environmental damage, Workman

said. A spokesman for the state Department of Environmental Quality, which is working with the Coast Guard, said no fisheries or recreational boating activities have been closed due to the spill. "We have no indication of any environmental impact," said spokesman Bill Hayden. The barge's owner, Baltimore-based The Vane Brothers Co., did not return a phone call seeking comment.

<http://www.dailypress.com/news/science/dead-rise-blog/dp-barge-faulted-for-jet-fuel-leak-in-york-river-coast-guard-says-20111221.0.4554242.story?track=rss>

CHINA, BEIJING, DECEMBER 22 2011. CHINA PLANS OIL SPILL RESPONSE FACILITIES

China plans to open 12 offshore oil spill response facilities before the end of the year, an official said. The move, reported Wednesday by China Daily newspaper, comes after China National Offshore Oil Corp. said in a statement Monday that a leak



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was found in near its Zhuhai Hengqin gas processing terminal in southern China, prompting an emergency shutdown of production platforms off the coast, the latest in a series of oil spills in China. The official from China's Ministry of Transport, speaking to the newspaper on condition of anonymity, said 29 oil spill response bases would eventually be opened but he wouldn't reveal a timeline or locations of the first 12 facilities. However, he said there would be four large bases near the northern port city of Dalian, the site of one of China's worst oil spills in July 2010 when a pipeline belonging to China National Petroleum Corp. exploded, causing a 170-square-mile slick. That cleanup sparked outrage when a team of workers were dispatched to recover crude oil with their bare hands. The Dalian spill resulted in a disciplinary warning last month by China's State Council for Jiang Jiemin, chairman of PetroChina Co Ltd., the company which operated the Dalian facility. The Chinese government maintains that 1,500 tons of oil leaked into the sea from the Dalian spill but environmental group Greenpeace estimated the leak at up to 60,000 tons. The Ministry of Transport official told China Daily that the larger oil spill response bases will be equipped to clean up to about 1,000 tons of oil and mid-size bases will be able to handle up to 500 tons. "China's growing oil demand has led to a rapid increase in crude oil transportation by sea and domestic offshore oil exploration, which has exposed our oceans to a larger oil spill threat," said Ma Jun, director of the Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs, an independent environment non-governmental organization. "It's urgent to develop the response system to reduce the harm resulting from oil spills," Ma said. In July, China's State Oceanic Administration ordered ConocoPhillips to suspend operations at two of its offshore platforms in the Penglai oil field in Bohai Bay which the oil giant operated under an arrangement with CNOOC, following oil leaks first detected in June. That spill, SOA says, polluted 2,400 square miles of Bohai Bay.

http://www.upi.com/Business_News/Energy-Resources/2011/12/21/China-plans-oil-spill-response-facilities/UPI-67111324488117/

USA, CA, SAN RAMON, DECEMBER 22 2011. CHEVRON SAYS BRAZIL TO INDICT EMPLOYEES INVOLVED IN OIL LEAK

joe carroll

Brazil plans to indict Chevron Corp employees involved in exploratory drilling that triggered an oil leak hundreds of miles offshore last month, the company said. Chevron will defend its employees in the matter, Kurt Glaubit, a spokesman for the San Ramon, California-based company, said today in an e-mailed statement. Chevron, the second-largest U.S. energy company by market value, has been fined 50 million reais (\$26.9 million) and ordered to halt all drilling and crude production off Brazil's coast after oil seeped from sea floor fissures near its \$3.6 billion Frade development. "We will vigorously defend the company and its employees," Glaubit said in the e-mailed statement. "Chevron is confident that once all the facts are fully examined, they will demonstrate that Chevron responded appropriately and responsibly to the incident." Last month, Chevron estimated the volume of the seeps at 3,000 barrels (126,000 gallons) over the eight days it took for the company to locate and halt the leaks. Exxon Mobil Corp of Irving, Texas, is the biggest U.S. energy company by market value.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-12-22/chevron-says-brazil-to-indict-employees-involved-in-oil-leak-1-.html>

NEW ZEALAND, TAURANGA, DECEMBER 22 2011. RENA PAIR FACE PERVERSION-OF-JUSTICE CHARGES

kiri gillespie



Collapsing containers on the Rena.

Rena's captain and second officer have been accused of altering the GPS location on the ship's computers and charts after it struck Astrolabe Reef. The pair faced 11 new charges when they appeared in the Tauranga District Court yesterday. The men, whose identities remain suppressed, are now charged with "wilfully attempting to pervert the course of justice" after the 236m cargo ship ran aground in the Bay of Plenty early on October 5. The captain has been charged with three additional offences under the Crimes Act and the second officer with two additional offences in relation to altering records, each carrying a maximum penalty of seven years' imprisonment. Both men have already been charged under section 65 of the Maritime Transport Act with "operating a vessel in a manner causing unnecessary danger or risk" and under the Resource Management Act relating to the "discharge of harmful substances from ships or offshore installations". The men stood side by side in the dock yesterday, poker-faced except for their eyes, which darted from their lawyers, to the media, and to the judge. The captain's QC, Paul Mabey, requested the



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matter be dealt with at a later date. He said there was concern the new charges would not be able to be dealt with in conjunction with the existing ones and there was a large volume of evidential material that had to be sorted through in relation to the new allegations. Judge Robert Wolff granted the request and the matter was adjourned until February 29.

http://www.nzherald.co.nz/environment/news/article.cfm?c_id=39&objectid=10774762

NEW ZEALAND, TAURANGA, DECEMBER 22 2011. REPORT: RENA HAD AT LEAST 17 SAFETY PROBLEMS BEFORE CRASH

nick perry

 **Watch the Video** http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10774919



The wreck of the container ship Rena off the coast of Tauranga, Bay of Plenty.

When an Australian ship inspector took a close look at a metal pin securing cargo on the Rena, he realized it wasn't an original. It was too thin and had no tab to keep it from falling out. Then he discovered that cleats securing the hatch could be removed with a single finger. Those were just two of 17 safety problems Tim Jordan and other inspectors found when the cargo ship docked in western Australia in July. Someone had tampered with an alarm. The navigation manuals were out of date. The data recorder was still wrapped in its canvas. The violations are described in records obtained by The Associated Press under Australian freedom of information laws. Inspection reports, emails and faxes tell the story of how Australia impounded the Greek-owned vessel, which like many ships is registered in Liberia, but then released it the next day after Liberian maritime authorities intervened, essentially

saying the ship was safe to sail and the problems could be fixed later. On a calm night 10 weeks later, the Rena ran full-steam into a well-charted reef off the coast of New Zealand. It spilled 400 tons of oil, killing 2,000 sea birds and fouling pristine beaches in the country's worst-ever maritime environmental disaster. In the two months since then, 89 cargo containers have fallen off the still-listing ship, some washing up on beaches 100 miles away. Whether or not the problems found in July contributed to the navigational error in October or the subsequent loss of cargo, experts say the Australian records paint a picture of an aging ship in poor repair and highlight a dangerous cost-cutting culture under the so-called flag-of-convenience system. "They nickel-and-dime things, they don't do proper maintenance, they don't pay the crews to do repairs, and they don't have enough spare parts on board," said Harry Bolton, the director of marine programs at the California Maritime Academy, who assessed the records for the AP. Pioneered by American shipowners in the 1920s to skirt Prohibition-era restrictions on serving and shipping alcohol, the system of registering ships in another country's name has become a way for shipping companies in wealthier countries to avoid taxes and employ cheap labor. Critics say it has also lowered safety standards on ships, but the International Maritime Organization, a UN agency that regulates shipping, says most flag-of-convenience countries act responsibly and follow international protocols. Annual reports by the US Coast Guard show that flag-of-convenience vessels are consistently found with more safety problems than other ships. Among the worst performers last year were ships flying flags from Sierra Leone, Bolivia, the Cook Islands and Saint Kitts and Nevis, which were detained by US port authorities at rates between nine and 40 times the average. "It's all about saving money and dodging responsibility for seafarers," said Dean Summers, the Australia coordinator for the International Transport Workers' Federation, which has campaigned against flags of convenience for more than 50 years. Liberia is considered to be among the more responsible flag-of-convenience nations thanks to the international shipping treaties it has signed. It performed better than average in the Coast Guard rankings, though in Australia, it was the sixth-worst performer of 58 visiting flag nations last year. The West African nation is the third-poorest country in the world with a per-capita GDP of \$500 a year. Yet on paper at least, Liberia has the world's second-largest shipping fleet, behind only Panama, another flag-of-convenience nation. The 774-foot Rena typifies a modern-day cargo ship. Built in 1989, it's owned by a company in Greece, chartered by another in Switzerland, employs a Filipino crew and is subject to Liberian shipping rules. This year it began plying its trade in New Zealand, Australia and Singapore. Costamare, the owner, declined to go into details about the problems identified in Australia but pointed out that the ship eventually passed all inspections. "We know that the vessel complied with all necessary regulatory requirements," the company wrote in an emailed statement. Two weeks before the Rena arrived at the Australian port of Fremantle on July 21, authorities in Shenzhen, China, found 18 problems with the ship but allowed it to sail on. Inspectors from the Australian



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Maritime Safety Authority detained the ship in Fremantle, a serious step reserved for about one in every 18 foreign vessels. They cited problems with the securing of the hatch and the shipping containers and the overall lack of maintenance. Later emails from the Australian inspectors show they worried the cargo might not remain secure in rough weather. Crew members fixed some problems quickly. They got hold of updated navigation manuals, which alert mariners of what to expect en route. The crew also removed a delay mechanism that had been wired into a bilge alarm, which alerts them if oil is being pumped overboard with water that collects in the bottom of the ship. The ship's electrician could not explain why the delay mechanism had been added, according to inspection reports. For other problems, the captain turned to the Liberia Bureau of Maritime Affairs, which contracts with an American company to run its ship registry. The Virginia-based office sent the captain a series of faxes on July 21 granting the ship one-month exemptions for some of the problems. Australian authorities could have overruled the exemptions but elected not to. Records show Australian inspectors were particularly concerned with the rusted and improperly tensioned hatch cleats and the ill-fitting pins for the cargo. In one email to colleagues, inspector Dave Anderson said the exemption didn't cite any evidence for the strength of the modified lashing equipment. "Any old bit of bar made into a 'pin' will do as long as the originals are 'not available.....'", he wrote, ending with an extended ellipsis. Colleague Naweed Omar added that a photo of one of the modified pins "is not very convincing." While letting the ship depart, Australia also gave it three months to demonstrate that its safety system was in compliance. The Rena would run aground before the deadline was up. "There are always concerns," said Mal Larsen, a spokesman for the Australian Maritime Safety Authority. "But ultimately, the guys on the ground, the inspectors, found it was acceptable." Scott Bergeron, an American who is chief executive of the Liberian ship registry, said the requests for exemptions weren't unusual. He likened it to authorities giving a motorist a month to get a broken headlight fixed rather than impounding the car. He said the detention of the Rena raised red flags in his office and that Liberian inspectors boarded the ship two weeks later in Sydney to make their own assessment. In his opinion, he said, the owners of the ship are generally good operators but the Rena "needed to tidy up its operation." The ship passed subsequent inspections by Australian authorities in Melbourne and Sydney. But on Sept. 28, inspectors in the New Zealand port of Bluff found 19 problems on the ship, though none were considered serious enough to prevent the Rena from sailing. New Zealand's maritime agency hasn't released those records, although it characterized them on its website as a follow-up to see if the Rena had resolved the problems found in China. One week later, at 2 a.m. on Oct. 5, the Rena was traveling at high speed when it ran aground on the Astrolabe reef near the port of Tauranga. The reef has been identified on charts for almost 200 years. Bergeron said the inspection problems identified in China, Australia and New Zealand are an important part of the Liberian agency's probe into the accident. "There was gross navigational error on the part of the onboard crew," Bergeron said. "But there are likely to be many reasons why it got to that point. It could be external influences, or that the crew was not properly rested." The captain and the navigating officer face criminal charges of operating a ship in a dangerous or risky manner, polluting the environment and altering the ship's documents after the crash. Maritime New Zealand, which is conducting its own investigation, rejected an AP request for transcripts of interviews with the captain and crew, saying it could prejudice the criminal case. Salvage crews are continuing the painstaking task of removing more than 1,000 6-meter and 12-meter containers that remain on the crippled ship, which still sits on the reef, grinding in the swells and threatening to break apart. Three more containers fell off in recent days. Summers, the union representative, said it's time countries did more to grow and protect their domestic fleets rather than rely on flag-of-convenience vessels, which now account for more than half the world's merchant fleet. "It's more expensive," he said. "But we need to pay a premium to protect our coastline."

http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10774919

USA, WA, CHERRY POINT, DECEMBER 22 2011. CREWS REMOVE GIANT TANK THAT HAD FALLEN INTO WATER OFF CHERRY POINT

zoe fraley

Crews successfully lifted a 130-foot-long cylinder from the seafloor off Cherry Point Wednesday afternoon, Dec. 21, part of a salvage operation for a multimillion-dollar piece of equipment headed to the BP refinery west of Ferndale. Salvage workers lifted the tank out of the water using two cranes mounted on floating barges. They put it down on another barge, which was to be brought up a temporary ramp workers built at the end of Gulf Road. That was scheduled to happen about 4 a.m. Thursday, around high tide. The cylinder then was to be driven to the BP Cherry Point refinery. The equipment didn't appear to have taken on any water and should be installed at the refinery by Thursday afternoon, said BP spokesman Bill Kidd. Salvage of BP cylinder is the best Christmas present I could ask for," Kidd said. "Obviously, we're kind of holding our breath, though, until it's



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in the door safely."The 475-ton cylinder was on its way to BP's Cherry Point refinery when it fell off a barge about 500 feet offshore from Gulf Road on Dec. 9. Underwater cameras showed the cylinder suffered little damage when it sank 120 feet to the seafloor, Kidd said. The tip of it remained above water. It had been filled with nitrogen gas to prevent corrosion. Even if the gas had leaked, it would not have been dangerous. Kidd and a smattering of onlookers watched from shore for several hours Wednesday as the cylinder was slowly lifted out of the water. The Washington Department of Natural Resources monitored the work because the waterway is part of the Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve. Global Diving & Salvage of Seattle directed the operation. After the accident, it took experts a while to determine the best way to salvage it and then get the equipment in place. How the cylinder fell into the water remains under investigation. Barnhart Crane & Rigging was responsible for delivering the equipment, which came from a factory in Korea. Barnhart also was responsible for getting the cylinder out of the water and making sure that it got to the refinery. The cylinder will be used as a reactor to make clean diesel; the process involves filling it with a catalyst that removes sulfur from fuel. BP is installing a \$400-million, ultra-low-sulfur unit to meet new federal environmental regulations. Kidd said the cylinder accident won't affect the timing of the project. BP officials were relieved the cylinder could be retrieved and still used after the accident. It cost several million dollars and took about 36 months to get, including ordering, manufacturing and delivery, Kidd said.

<http://www.bellinghamherald.com/2011/12/22/2320904/crews-remove-giant-tank-that-had.html>

USA, ARK, CONWAY, DECEMBER 22 2011. BAD GAS AT ONE STORE DAMAGES VEHICLES IN CONWAY

lisa hutson

 **Watch the Video** <http://www.todaysthv.com/news/article/186379/2/Bad-gas-at-one-store-damages-vehicles-in-Conway>



Contaminated gas from Julia Bellando's gas tank.

Conway residents say one local convenience store sold them bad gas and it's costing them hundreds in repair bills. The Conway Food Store says although there was water in their premium and diesel fuels this week, they are not responsible for the damages. Julia Bellando says she ended up on the side of the road Monday after filling up with premium gasoline at the Conway Food Store on Dave Ward Drive. "I didn't even get a mile down the road and my car started acting up, starting chugging," says Bellando. "I knew exactly where it came from. My husband called the owner and he wasn't willing to do anything about it. When he first spoke with

him, he said that he did not have bad gas and that we were just out of luck, that we would have to sue him. That is when Bellando called the Attorney General's Office and the Arkansas Bureau of Standards. Tim Chesser, Assistant Deputy Director, says after sending a chemist to test the fuel, Bellando had good reason to be concerned. "The premium tank contained four and a quarter inches of water. They are allowed one quarter of an inch," says Chesser. The owner of Conway Food Store declined to go on camera but told us the contamination was an accident and that he was not responsible for damages. But according to Chesser, Arkansas law disagrees. "Whoever supplied the product to the public is responsible," says Chesser. Bellando says after towing expenses and a hefty repair bill, she wants compensation. "We're going to pursue it and hold him accountable and make him pay for it because he needs too," says Bellando. The Arkansas Bureau of Standards shut off the Conway Food Store fuel pumps Tuesday and reopened them after tanks were cleaned Wednesday afternoon. The Conway Food Store was also cited in August for the same issue -- but paid customers for damages. As far as the fuel distributor, The Arkansas Bureau of Standards says the issue is still under investigation but so far, the company providing the fuel has not been proven to be at fault. If you obtained bad gas from this station, you are encouraged to contact the Arkansas Bureau of Standards.

<http://www.todaysthv.com/news/article/186379/2/Bad-gas-at-one-store-damages-vehicles-in-Conway>

USA, TX, JEFFERSON CO, DECEMBER 22 2011. BENZENE SUIT SLATED FOR TRIAL IN FEBRUARY 2013

david yates

A local judge approved a discovery control plan in a benzene lawsuit against 13 companies on Dec. 19, slating the case for a trial in early 2013. [Lee Bertrand](#) and his wife Sally filed suit against DuPont de Nemours and 12 other companies on March 28 in Jefferson County District Court, alleging the defendants manufactured and sold benzene products which allegedly caused the man's cancer. Court records show that on Dec. 19 Judge Milton Shuffield, 136th District Court, signed off on the control



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plan, which sets the deadline for mediation on July 15, 2012. The order also puts the discovery cutoff at Dec. 1, 2012, and places the trial date on the court's February 2013 docket. Bertrand says in his suit that throughout a period of many years up to the late 1990s, he was employed as an independent contractor at DuPont and ExxonMobil facilities in Beaumont. During his employment, he alleges he was exposed to benzene products. In August, Bertrand was diagnosed with renal cell carcinoma of the kidney, court records show. The suit blames the defendants for negligently placing benzene products into the stream of commerce, exposing workers such as Bertrand to carcinogenic compounds. The other defendants named in the suit include CRC Industries, Dow Chemical, Ineos Chlor America, Brance Krachy, Vallen Safety, Able Fastener, McJunkin-Cambar, Wilson Industries, PPG Industries, Exxon-Mobil, ExxonMobil Oil and Mobil Oil. The plaintiffs are suing for punitive and exemplary damages. Beaumont attorney Darren Brown of Provost Umphrey represents them. Case No. D189-664

<http://www.setexasrecord.com/news/240552-benzene-suit-slated-for-trial-in-february-2013>

USA, MISS, MINNEAPOLIS, DECEMBER 22 2011. CLEANUP IS UNDERWAY AT SUPERIOR PLATING <<SUPERFUND WILL PAY FOR REMOVAL OF POLLUTANTS FROM SOON-TO-BE-SHUTTERED FACTORY IN NORTHEAST MINNEAPOLIS.

nicole norfleet



Workers began cleaning up a chromium spill near railroad tracks behind Superior Plating in Minneapolis on Wednesday. The 92-year-old metal finishing business has filed for bankruptcy and is shutting down.

Workers hired by the state began an emergency cleanup Wednesday of chromium-contaminated water outside Superior Plating, only a week or two before the last production line at the northeast Minneapolis factory is expected to shut down. It wasn't the first cleanup crew to visit the heavily polluted property, and it won't be the last, as the impending closure will enable a more thorough investigation and cleanup of the contamination left behind by the business. On Tuesday afternoon, someone who lives nearby spotted a yellow substance next to railroad tracks behind the 92-year-old plant at 315 1st Av. NE. The discovery caused city workers to block off streets and halt the Northstar Line, forcing Metro Transit to put

hundreds of train passengers on buses instead. The chromium has been in the contaminated soil underneath the building for decades and was picked up by groundwater that flows under the building, said Superior Plating President Michael McMonagle. A remediation system is supposed to collect all the groundwater and pump it into a treatment system in the plant. McMonagle said he thinks the groundwater was thawed by the unusually warm temperatures and either the treatment system was overwhelmed or the polluted groundwater somehow bypassed it. Then the tainted water froze again. "The problems we have here were created a long time ago ... before people had a sense of protecting the environment," he said. Because the company filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in November, it can't pay for the emergency cleanup. "We've showed that every time we had an issue, we've taken care of it," McMonagle said. "But I just can't do that today. We don't have the authority." Instead, the money for the emergency cleanup will come from state funds reserved for sites that, like Superior Plating, have been identified by the Superfund program as hazardous. A Minnesota Pollution Control Agency report on the site says that "the seepage ... is a concern as it could come in contact with people or animals. The relatively high contaminant concentration in the liquid does classify it as hazardous." The Superior Plating property has been listed as a Superfund site since 1985. According to the MPCA, the soil and groundwater at the site are contaminated with heavy metals and solvents. The MPCA says the underground contamination at Superior Plating doesn't pose an immediate health hazard, but the groundwater and soils do pose enough of a threat that they need to be cleaned up. The soil originally became contaminated early in the company's history, when chemicals would drip through the plant's wooden floors into leaky concrete troughs, which allowed the pollutants to seep into the ground, said Pam McCurdy, an MPCA spokeswoman. Superior Plating has been cleaning up contaminants in the soil and water for years, McCurdy said. McMonagle estimates that the company has spent \$100,000 a year on investigation and remediation for the past 15 years. "We have worked diligently to try to remediate the sins of the past," he said. An affiliate of Minneapolis-based City Center Realty Partners has made a bid of \$2.5 million for the Superior Plating site, which will be auctioned in February, McMonagle said. He said he was told City Center was interested in developing a retail and residential complex on the site. A City Center representative declined to comment. The cleanup is



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expected to finish Thursday afternoon. Its cost is still unknown, but the MPCA will try to recover the money when the property is auctioned, McCurdy said.

<http://www.startribune.com/local/minneapolis/136040838.html>

CANADA, OTTAWA, DECEMBER 23 2011. 'SECRET' ENVIRONMENT CANADA PRESENTATION WARNS OF OILSANDS' IMPACT ON HABITAT

mike de souza



Contamination of a major western Canadian river basin from oilsands operations is a "high-profile concern" for downstream communities and wildlife, says a newly-released "secret" presentation prepared last spring by Environment Canada that highlighted numerous warnings about the industry's growing footprint on land, air, water and the climate.

Contamination of a major western Canadian river basin from oilsands operations is a "high-profile concern" for downstream communities and wildlife, says a newly-released "secret" presentation prepared last spring by Environment Canada that highlighted numerous warnings about the industry's growing footprint on land, air, water and the climate. The warnings from the department contrast with recent claims made by Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Environment Minister Peter

Kent that the industry is being unfairly targeted by environmentalists who exaggerate its impacts on nature and people. The presentation noted figures from the Canadian Energy Research Institute, a collaboration among industry, government and academics, that estimate the oilsands sector is responsible for more than 100,000 direct and indirect jobs in Canada, and will contribute more than \$1.7 trillion to the country's economy over the next 25 years. But it warned that Alberta and other parts of Western Canada are facing a steep economic and ecological price tag for failing to crack down on the industry's collateral damage. "Contamination of the Athabasca River is a high-profile concern," said the presentation, marked secret, but released to Postmedia News through access to information legislation. "Recent studies suggest elevated levels of pollutants near mining sites including hydrocarbons and heavy metals . . . (It) raises questions about possible effects on health of wildlife and downstream communities." The presentation was produced in May as a governmentwide oilsands task force continued to develop a new science-based monitoring program to get specifics on the impacts of oil extraction from the bitumen deposits in Western Canada that are also known as tarsands because of their tar-like appearance and odour. The deposits are considered to hold one of the largest reserves of oil in the world, but existing technology forces producers to use large quantities of water and energy, while disrupting natural ecosystems to extract the fuel from the ground. "Bitumen extraction uses between one (in situ) and three to four (mining) barrels of fresh (i.e. Not recycled) water per barrel of oil recovered," said the document. "Industry demand for water is expected to increase." A related Environment Canada document, also produced in May and released earlier this month to Postmedia News, warned the government that the industry's economic future was in jeopardy because of a lack of "credible scientific information" required to counter campaigns and foreign regulations or legislation that crack down on products and industries with poor environmental performance. In recent years, Harper's government has repeatedly pledged to deliver new regulations for the sector, but has subsequently delayed those plans. The latest document singles out the oilsands sector as the main obstacle in Canada's efforts to reduce heat-trapping greenhouse gases that warm the atmosphere and cause climate change. "The oilsands are Canada's fastest growing source of GHGs," said the document. It estimated that the industry's annual greenhouse gas emissions would rise by nearly 900 per cent from 1990 to 2020. By the end of that period, the oilsands — with an estimated annual footprint of 90 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent gases in 2020 — would exceed the carbon footprint of all cars and SUVs on Canadian roads from 2008, according to the Environment Canada document. The document also warns of other rising air pollutants that could cause acid rain or other forms of acidification to damage lakes in Saskatchewan and Alberta, along with particulate matter that could be toxic to rivers, the landscape and wildlife. "Oilsands development will continue to put pressure on vulnerable species (e.g. Woodland Caribou)," said the document. "Removal of landscape features for mining reduces available habitat." It also said that changes to existing habitat prompted by industrial activity would also threaten forest species, as well as water-dwelling species that are already seeing major changes to their own habitat. "Low flow conditions could damage fish habitat, especially during winter," said the document. "River flow has decreased over (the) past thirty years (and the) trend is expected to continue." Graham Saul, executive director of Climate Action Network, a coalition of environmental, faith-based and labour



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groups, said the warnings from Environment Canada suggest that Harper and Kent should stop trying to defend the environmental record of the oil and gas industry, making claims that the oilsands represent a "responsibly and sustainably developed resource." "It's clear that there's nothing ethical about this level of environmental destruction and greenhouse gas pollution," said Saul. "The government seems to know the level of destruction associated with the tarsands and yet they're presenting a very different face to the public and in reality, there seems to be a massive gap between what they know to be an extremely destructive project and a policy agenda that is essentially seeking to promote the rapid expansion of the tarsands." Environment Canada has been working on improving its monitoring programs on impacts of development on land, air and water as part of a process launched by former minister Jim Prentice, in collaboration with Alberta. Kent unveiled details of the plan in July, suggesting at the time that industry should be able to pick up the estimated \$50 million annual costs since they were expected to generate \$80 billion in the next year. Janet Annesley, vice-president of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, an industry lobby group, said she didn't see any "new" information in the statements from the Environment Canada document, but noted that the industry "generally agrees" with a report released last year by the Royal Society of Canada that also concluded there was a need for further monitoring, research and review of impacts.

<http://www.canada.com/business/Secret+Environment+Canada+presentation+warns+oilsands+impact+habitat/5894992/story.html>

NIGERIA, LAGOS, DECEMBER 23 2011. SHELL OIL SPILL OFF NIGERIA, NOW APPROACHING SHORE, LIKELY WORST IN DECADE FOR NATION

An oil spill near the coast of Nigeria is likely the worst to hit those waters in a decade, a government official said Thursday, as slicks from the Royal Dutch Shell PLC spill approached the country's southern shoreline. The slick from Shell's Bonga field has affected 115 miles (185 kilometers) of ocean near Nigeria's coast, Peter Idabor, who leads the National Oil Spill Detection and Response Agency, told The Associated Press. Idabor said the slick continued to move toward the shore Thursday night, putting at risk birds, fish and other wildlife in the area. Shell, the major oil producer in Nigeria, said late Thursday the spill came from a "flexible export line" connecting the offshore field to a waiting tanker. The company published photographs of the spill, showing a telltale rainbow sheen in the ocean, but said it believes that about 50 percent of the leaked oil has already evaporated. The source of the leak has been plugged and experts from Britain were coming to help with the cleanup, Idabor said. Nigerian Navy ships also had been sent into the area to help control the spill, he said. Shell estimates the Bonga spill likely was less than 40,000 barrels, or 1.68 million gallons. That's about the same amount of oil spilled offshore in 1998 at a Mobil field. The 1998 spill saw oil slicks extended for more than 100 miles (some 160 kilometers) to Lagos, the country's commercial capital. "Since the Mobil spill, this is just about the most major one," Idabor said. Nigerian authorities hope to use oil booms and chemicals to disperse or collect the spilled oil, Idabor said. In a statement, Shell said its Nigerian subsidiary already had sent ships out to the slick to use dispersant on the oil sheen. The company also said it would use infrared equipment to trace places where the sheen is the thickest. However, the size of the spill may be even larger. SkyTruth, a nonprofit group based in West Virginia that uses satellite imagery to detect environmental problems, estimated the oil spill might stretch across roughly 350 square miles (920 square kilometers) of ocean — three times what Nigerian authorities believe. "The spill could be near the upper limit of what Shell has stated," John Amos, SkyTruth's founder and president, told the AP on Thursday. However, he said he needed more information to determine the spill's true scope. Bonga sits about 75 miles (120 kilometers) off Nigeria's coast. It can produce about 200,000 barrels of oil and 150 million cubic feet of gas a day, according to Shell's Nigerian subsidiary. Production at the field, which Shell operates in partnership with Italy's Eni SpA, Exxon Mobil Corp., France's Total SA and the state-run Nigerian National Petroleum Corp., has been halted since the discovery of the spill. Environmentalists blame Shell and other foreign oil firms for polluting the country's oil-rich Niger Delta. Some environmentalists say as much as 550 million gallons of oil poured into the delta during Shell's roughly 50 years of production in Nigeria — a rate roughly comparable to one Exxon Valdez disaster per year. An estimated 11 million gallons was released during the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill in Alaska. Shell in recent years has said most of the spills in the delta are caused by militant attacks or thieves tapping into pipelines to steal crude oil, which ends up sold into the black market or cooked into a crude diesel or kerosene. Company statistics kept by Shell show spills have dropped as militant attacks in the region subsided, though this single spill at Bonga roughly doubles the amount of oil spilled by Shell this year. Apparently predicting interest in the spill would grow, Shell already had taken out Internet advertising Thursday on search engines, directing those searching for the spill to their website. Jonathan French, a Shell spokesman in London, said the advertising came in the "interests of full



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transparency" so people can read the company's updates on the spill. Nigeria, an OPEC member nation producing about 2.4 million barrels of crude oil a day, is a top supplier to the U.S.

On The Web

- Royal Dutch Shell PLC: <http://www.shell.com>
- Shell's Nigeria spill website: <http://bit.ly/rqfnxi>
- SkyTruth: <http://skytruth.org/>

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/nigeria-oil-spill-manager-shell-offshore-spill-affecting-100-nautical-miles-moving-to-coast/2011/12/22/gIQAjQ4AP_story.html

FIJI, SUVA, DECEMBER 23 2011. STATIONS CLIP PUMPS, TAPS

frederica elbourne

A survey by the Consumer Council has found that air pumps and water taps - once a free service offered by service stations - are almost a thing of the past. The countrywide survey of 32 service stations found the once self-service by service stations was no longer provided. The council said it found problems with the two amenities that motorists rely on at service stations. The survey, which covered Suva, Lautoka and Labasa, followed consumer complaints that service stations did not have working air pumps. "Consumers have to drive from one service station to another looking for air pumps and water taps," council CEO Premila Kumar said. "Out of the 32 service stations surveyed, 13, or 41 per cent, did not provide accessible utilities." Mrs Kumar said such utilities were locked without notice to inform consumers if the equipment was out of order. Of the 23 service stations surveyed in the Suva-Nausori corridor, 12 or 52 per cent did not provide easy access to air pumps or had utilities that were not in working order, Ms Kumar said in a statement. She said only eight service stations provided air pumping services when asked for as opposed to the familiar system where this was accessible and readily available for customers.

<http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=189016>

PAKISTAN, PESHAWAR, DECEMBER 23 2011. 'GAS EXPLOSION' AT HOSPITAL INJURES EIGHT >>

iftikhar firdous

At least eight people were injured in an explosion caused by a gas cylinder at the Nasir Mohmand Surgical Hospital in Sheikhabad. The blast caused extensive damage to the hospital's building and nearby shops. "There was a huge explosion and ensuing fire engulfed the area. People were injured because of broken glass," said Ashraf, an eyewitness, who owns a medical store adjacent to the hospital. SSP Operations Tahir Ayub told the media that there was no trace of any explosives. "Our investigation shows that the explosion was caused by a gas cylinder," he added. As a result of the blast, a cotton dump opposite the hospital caught fire and rapidly spread to nearby shops. However, fire engines reached the spot in time and put out the blaze. Spokesperson of the Lady Reading Hospital said that they have received seven injured people, including two children.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/309974/eight-injured-in-peshawar-hospice-blast/>

CHINA, SHANGHAI, DECEMBER 23 2011. IPAD DUST MAY HAVE CAUSED CHINA FACTORY BLAST, TABLET SUPPLIES COULD BE AFFECTED

trevor mogg



It's believed that Saturday's explosion at a Shanghai factory owned by Apple supplier Pegatron may have been caused by a build-up of combustible aluminum dust. An explosion at a Foxconn factory back in May that killed three people was also thought to have been caused by the same kind of dust.

An initial investigation by China Labor Watch into Saturday's explosion at a subsidiary facility in Shanghai owned by Apple supplier Pegatron has revealed that a build-up of combustible aluminum dust was the likely cause. The incident injured 61 employees at the Riteng Computer Accessory Company factory. China Labor watch is an independent not-for-profit organization that investigates working conditions at factories throughout China. Authorities in Shanghai are now reportedly



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conducting their own investigations into the explosion. Apple spokeswoman Carolyn Wu [told](#) Bloomberg, "We are working closely with Pegatron to understand the cause of this accident. Our hearts go out to the people who were hurt." The aluminum dust comes from the iPad casing polishing process and was also thought to be the cause of an explosion at a Foxconn factory in Chengdu back in May, which killed three and injured 15. Although the two incidents took place at different companies, the link between them will still be of great concern to those already critical of working practices employed by Chinese factories producing parts for the global tech industry, as it would indicate little has been learned from May's explosion. In a statement issued by China Labor Watch on Monday, factory managers said that in some cases they had little power to change the set-up, claiming that Apple had the final say. "China Labor Watch had communicated with several of Apple's supplier factories in China in the hope that they would improve the workers' working conditions," the statement said. "However, some managers in the factories told CLW that Apple has systematic control over the operation of its supplier factories. Apple's supplier factories have to buy raw materials from companies designated by Apple. The design of the assembly line also needs to be approved by Apple. Therefore, the supplier factories have little power to make any changes on the production and the factory management." Reports have also emerged that as a result of Saturday's explosion, stocks of Apple's iPad 2 are likely to be affected, though to what extent isn't clear. Riteng is said to be in the process of ramping up its output of aluminum casings for Apple's iPad as it battles with rival Foxconn for a bigger share of the market.

<http://www.digitaltrends.com/mobile/ipad-dust-may-have-caused-china-factory-blast-tablet-supplies-could-be-affected/>

USA, N.H, GOFFSTOWN, DECEMBER 23 2011. RESIDENTS EVACUATED AFTER PROPANE CRASH IN GOFFSTOWN, NH

eileen curran

 **Photo Gallery** <http://www.wmur.com/slideshow/news/30054291/detail.html>

 **Watch the Video** <http://www.wmur.com/r/30053193/detail.html>



Residents in Goffstown, N.H. had to evacuate their homes on Thursday morning, after a propane gas truck crashed, sending dangerous vapors into the air. The truck, full of 2,500 gallons of propane, lay precariously on its side, after smashing into a utility pole at the corner of Mast and Daniel Plumber Roads. The crash happened about 5:40 a.m. The driver of the Irving Gas truck told police he lost control on the icy road. When he hit the pole, propane started leaking out of the tank. Crews arrived to the strong smell of gas. "They could not only smell it, they could see it," said Goffstown Fire Chief Richard O'Brien. "There was liquid propane vapors leaking from the back of the truck. We immediately went into defensive mode to protect resident, evacuate them from the immediate area and isolate the area." Ten families had to leave their home and some nearby businesses were forced to close, while firefighters trained their hoses on the vapors to disperse them.

They were able to contain the leak. A few businesses in a nearby shopping center remained open, but because all the roads leading there were closed, the place remained a ghost town. "We don't have anyone in here now," said Planet Fitness employee Chris McMurray, who was working when the accident happened. "Everyone pretty much left when it happened." Crews carefully off loaded the propane from one truck to another at a rate of 10 gallons per minute. Considering what could have happened, the chief said they got lucky. "A lot of things could have gone bad, we're doing well," said Chief O'Brien. The driver was lucky, too. He was uninjured in the crash. Fire officials hoped to get residents back into their homes by mid-afternoon

http://www.necn.com/12/22/11/Residents-evacuated-after-propane-crash-landing_newengland.html?blockID=617388&feedID=4206

ENGLAND, DEVON, DECEMBER 23 2011. PROBE INTO TRAWLER AND TANKER NEAR MISS

Inquiries are under way after a Brixham trawler was involved in a near miss with an Italian crude oil tanker. Sasha Emiel, a 23-metre fishing trawler, was trawling 26 miles off Start Point when it narrowly avoided a collision with the 250-metre long Netherlands Angel. The Marine Accident Investigation Branch has confirmed it is looking into the matter, but stopped short of saying an investigation had been launched. The two vessels came within 20 metres of each other in the close quarter incident,



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reported to Brixham Coastguards shortly before 1pm on Monday, December 19. The Sasha Emiel reported a 'close quarter' situation with the Italy flagged tanker vessel Netherlands Angel when it was trawling mid-Channel off the South Devon coast. Speaking afterwards, a Brixham Coastguards spokeswoman said: "The fishing vessel told us the near miss was between 10 and 20 metres. "We spoke to the Italian tanker to try to get his side of the story but he did not seem to think there was any panic. "We filed a report after the incident. It was sent after the incident. The fishing vessel will send a report when it returns to port on Wednesday." Coastguards say a fishing protection vessel overheard the incident and also sent information using an Automatic Identification System. The Sasha Emiel is owned by Graham Perkes of Seafield and Emiel Trawlers Ltd. When approached by the Herald Express, he said he had not heard about the incident and was waiting to speak to the crew when they returned to Brixham. A spokeswoman for the Marine Accident Investigation Branch said: "We are aware of the incident. We are making inquiries about it. We have not launched an investigation at this stage." Earlier the same day the crew of a fishing boat issued the mayday distress signal 'I think we're going down' after their nets got caught. The 12-metre Betty G II, which had sailed from Brixham, almost keeled over into the water. Exmouth RNLI lifeboat was sent after the crew issued a mayday. But when the lifeboat reached the distress point five and half miles off Straight Point they found the crew had cut the nets and the boat was upright. Kevin Riley, operations manager for Exmouth Lifeboat, said: "They thought they were going over but managed to sort themselves out. "They managed to get the engine started again and we escorted them half way back to Brixham." Nobody was hurt in the incident and coastguard confirmed a second vessel, the Sarah Jane, had responded to the initial distress call and come to scene. The Betty G II is registered to Newhaven in East Sussex but is a regular visitor to Brixham. The coastguard said the crew planned to go back to the scene of the incident and try to pick up any equipment left at the scene. A coastguard spokesman said: "The Betty G II caught its nets on the bottom and leant over a little bit but did not capsize. "The Sarah Jane came alongside and offered initial assistance and then went round collecting some of the gear and fishboxes which had fallen into the sea."

<http://www.thisissouthdevon.co.uk/Probe-trawler-tanker-near-miss/story-14209499-detail/story.html>

KENYA, MALABA, DECEMBER 23 2011. TANKER RAMS INTO HOSPITAL WARD

sammy jakaa



A petroleum tanker, suspected to have been overspeeding, lost control and rammed into Amagoro Nursing Home in Malaba. The driver and his conductor ran away to escape the wrath of angry residents.

A petroleum tanker lost control and rammed into Amagoro Nursing Home in Malaba. The tanker, which was suspected to be over speeding, crushed into the hospital ward along the Bungoma-Malaba highway just after midnight on Wednesday. No one was injured but the crash destroyed hospital facilities estimated to be worth hundreds of thousands of shillings. Patients who had been admitted at the facility had luckily all been discharged earlier in the day. Bishop Zakayo Epus of the Anglican Church Katakwa Diocese said it was a miracle since the tanker did not burst into flames on impact. The police suspect that the driver had fallen asleep or was drunk since the road was very clear at the time of the accident. The driver and his conductor ran away as they feared attacks from angry residents who said Amagoro Nursing Home was their most reliable hospital in the area. "How can a driver leave the road that is clear and run into a hospital ward? We need the driver to explain to us what happened before we conclude it to be another terror attempt. What if the patients were in?" asked Peter Odikor, a resident. This accident happened against a backdrop of

the absence of fire engines in the whole of Busia County. Despite the county being a transit point for large fuel tankers crossing over to Uganda, Malaba Town Council does not have a single fire engine. The nearest fire brigade to Malaba is about 130 kilometers away in Eldoret, a distance that can take over two hours to cover. Bishop Epus said they phoned the Kenya Power office in Bungoma in vain as their calls went unanswered. This continued to expose the area to risk of a fire outbreak and residents were advised to keep away from the scene. "Something must be done to these power guys in Bungoma and Busia because they either ignore distress calls or they are unable to respond. You can imagine if this tanker burst into flames," said Isaac Etyang.

<http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/InsidePage.php?id=2000048778&cid=4&ttl=Tanker%20rams%20into%20hospital%20ward>



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