



CEP E-Bulletin



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Our Programme Since We Last Met:

2 nd Pollution Regional Advisory Group Meeting, Tehran , 6 th - 7 th February 2005

The second meeting of the Interim Caspian Pollution Regional Advisory Group (PRAG) was held in Tehran on February 6 th -7 th , 2005. The main objectives of the meeting was to discuss the assessment of the impact of key transboundary contaminants in water and sediments in the Caspian Sea and to develop a work plan for further surveys of sediments and water of the Caspian Sea by conducting of a Scientific Sea Cruise in summer 2005.

Biomarkers Meeting, Baku , 22 nd - 24 th February 2005

The Workshop on Application of Biomarker Technique in Environmental Monitoring and Management was held in Baku on 22nd-24th February 2005. The objectives of the workshop was to discuss the biological-effect measurements as environmental diagnostic methods, biomarkers used in Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), adaptation of biomarkers to Caspian species and validation of biomarker responses, Environmental Risk Assessment (ERA) in connection with offshore studies, and the role of biomarkers in a sustainable management of the marine environment. The promotion of applying Biomarkers as an EIA instrument in the region was also discussed.



PPS Regional Meeting, Baku , 24 th -25 th February 2005

A two days Public Participation Strategy workshop was organized on 24 th -25 th February 2005 in Baku with the participation of NGO representatives and other stakeholders from each littoral country to build on the knowledge of the region to draw up a final Public Participation Strategy. The PPS is being produced in line with the requirement of the CEP-SAP Project Document to assist the Caspian countries as a voluntary guideline in planning and coordinating Caspian related public participation activities. The structure of the PPS at regional, national and local levels with linkages between them was established during the workshop.

Upcommings:

POPs Meeting in Tehran , March 6-8 2005

The POPs regional meeting will be hold on March 6/8 in Tehran at the PCU office. The objectives of this meeting is to identify initiating actions towards the development of a Regional Action Plan for addressing the activities contributing to the transboundary PTS including POPs, hydrocarbons and heavy metal pollution; selecting two pilot areas to undertake a survey of usage and stockpiling of pesticides and to undertake a regional public awareness campaign against use of nabbed pesticides and other PTS. Moreover, the regional consultant for Enabling Programme in Iran and EU/TACIS representative in the region will also participate in this endeavor.

EIA Meeting, Moscow , 9-12 March 2005

The four day conference organized by UNEP will be held in Moscow from 9 th to 12 th of March 2005. It encompasses three separate meetings including the First Meeting of Government-designated experts on Rules of Procedure and financial rules for the Framework Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea, First Meeting of Government-designated experts on the Protocol on EIA to the Framework Convention, and Information session on state of preparation for the signing of the Protocol concerning regional cooperation in combating oil pollution in cases of emergency.

General NEWS:

RSE Meeting, Istanbul , 11 th -13 th February 2005

Religion, Science and Environment (RSE) met the representatives of the Caspian countries as well as the pertinent international organizations in Istanbul on 11 th – 13 th February 2005. The meeting aimed to plan for organizing a symposium on a ship sailing round the Caspian Sea . In this water-borne conference, religious leaders, scientists, ecologists, policy-makers and media will participate to work together to help save the environment. This voyage, tentatively scheduled for September 2005, is being jointly supported by the Ecumenical Patriarch of the Christian Orthodox Church and Mr. Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General. For further information please visit RSE website, <http://www.rsesymposia.org/rse/mission.htm> .

DOE Farm for Migratory Swans

February 3 rd , 2005 (Iran Daily): The plan to establish a bird farm in Salakeh wetland in Somesara, Gilan province, got underway with the aim to help protect migratory swans in the region, said a representative of Gilan Nature Front Association. Mohsen Namkalian told IRNA that an estimated six hectares of the Salakeh protected area have been considered for this purpose, adding a number of migratory white swans are currently under protection in the area. "The project is expected to provide the swans with a safe haven where there is plenty of food, appropriate temperature and no hunting," he said, predicting the birds will colonize the area to reproduce. Stating that the species has already been pushed to the brink of extinction, he said the number of migratory swans in Salakeh has declined in recent years. "Figures indicate that the number of white swans has decreased to 130 in 2003 and 70 in 2004 from 30,000 in 2002" he stated. The swans migrate to Somesara wetland every November from Volga River shores and Siberia plains, spending the whole winter there. Gilan province has 2,000 hectares of natural wetlands.

Crew of Arrested Azeri Vessel May Face 2-Year Imprisonment

February 17th, 2005 (Baku Today Net): The 8-member crew of Azerbaijan 's "Compass" vessel, which was recently arrested by the Russian law-enforcement agency for illegal fishing in the northern part of the Caspian Sea , may face 2-year imprisonment. The investigation into the case has not been completed yet due to delays in sending appropriate documents on the vessel from Azerbaijan . On board the trawler, approximately 3.5 t of beluga, stellate and sturgeon were discovered. Four members of the crew are currently being imprisoned in Mahachkala and are charged under Article 256.3 of the Criminal Code of Russia.

Russia is Interested in Early Adoption of Caspian Legal Status

MOSCOW, February 21st, 2005 (RIA Novosti) - Russia is doing its best to accelerate the signing of the Convention on Caspian legal status, said Igor Zonn, an academician of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences and a doctor of geographic sciences. " Russia is coming up with new initiatives on ways to accelerate the solution to this protracted issue," Mr. Zonn said at a RIA Novosti press conference Monday. "To date, as far as I know, 16 out of 23 articles of the convention on the Caspian status have been coordinated. But efforts are continuing," Mr. Zonn said. The remaining seven articles deal with the modified dividing line of the Sea, he said. He noted the latest initiatives of the Russian side, the first one being the ban on Caspian navigation for non-littoral states. According to the second initiative, only the Caspian states can use the Caspian resources, including oil and gas, and biological wealth. The third initiative is the maintenance of a stable balance of arms in the region and limitation of military development in the Caspian countries. Mr. Zonn said a delay in the convention signing could lead to economic and environmental problems.

Kazakhs say BG oil deal close, more talks due

ASTANA, Feb 21 st , 2005 (Reuters): Kazakhstan energy minister Vladimir Shkolnik reiterated on Monday that the ex-Soviet state was close to buying part of BG's stake in the consortium that will operate the Kashagan oilfield in the Caspian Sea. The Central Asian state has been seeking to buy all or part of BG's 16.67 percent stake in the Kashagan project, a move resisted for months by most other consortium members who wanted to exercise pre-emptive rights to buy BG's stake themselves. Shkolnik first announced a possible compromise late last month -- under which Kazakhstan would buy half of the BG stake for more than \$600 million -- but after talks in the capital Astana on Feb. 2 no final agreement was reached. Shkolnik repeated on Monday that he expected the deal to be completed by March. Industry sources said late last month that they expected a deal would be reached under which BG would sell its stake to partners Eni, Royal Dutch/Shell, Total, Exxon Mobil and ConocoPhillips, which would then sell part of their allotment to the state. The remaining partner in the 40-year North Caspian Production Sharing Agreement is Japan 's Inpex, which did not exercise its pre-emption right for the BG stake. Kashagan is due to start pumping oil in 2008 and is at the heart of Kazakhstan 's plans to become a major oil producer in the next decade.

Experts to Be Trained on Seal Preservation

February 23, 2005 (Iran Daily): Experts will undergo training courses to learn about Caspian seal and how to protect the marine species against environmental hazards, director of Caspian Seal Project at the Department of Environment said. Hormoz Asadi told IRNA that Iran 's Institute of Higher Education for Environment and London Zoology Society collaborated in offering the program.



He noted that a total 15 experts would undergo special training within three years (five every year). Referring to the fact that the courses would provide an opportunity for the exchange of experience and know-how among experts, Asadi noted that they can conduct research on the lives, reproduction, nutrition and other characteristics of the mammals. Mohaqqueq Entekhabi from London Zoology Institute said, "The project's chief director is Dr. Goodman from Darwin Institute who is a mammal specialist." Highlighting the role of wildlife in boosting ecotourism, Asadi said, "Ecotourists will be mainly drawn by the diversity of local flora and fauna. An all-inclusive program that collects complete information about wildlife and the best times and locations they can be spotted would strengthen ecotourism."

Russia Advocates Caspian Rapid Reaction Force

MOSCOW , February 17 th , 2005 (RIA Novosti): Russia wants to establish a naval interaction taskforce on the Caspian Sea on the lines of *BlackSeaFor* operating on the Black Sea . The force would prevent the spread of WMDs, combat terrorism and counter organized crime, according to Alexander Golovin, the Russian Foreign Ministry's ambassador at large and head of the Caspian working group. He was speaking at a round table in the Federation Council on ways of implementing a single international system of collective security in the Caspian Sea . Agreement to establish the Black Sea naval cooperation task force *BlackSeaFor* was reached in Istanbul in 2001 by six littoral states - Bulgaria , Georgia , Russia , Romania , Turkey and Ukraine . *BlackSeaFor* will be responsible for search and rescue operations, rendering humanitarian assistance, removing mines in the area and protecting the environment. It could also take part in UN and OSCE actions if all the countries involved give consent. An international headquarters has been formed to run the group. The group has been conducting joint exercises since 2002.

India Looks At Iran , China To Access Caspian Oil And Gas

NEW DELHI , Feb 21 st , 2005 (Asia Pulse): India is looking at using Iran and China to access oil and gas in Central Asian nations like Kazakhstan where its flagship firms are pitching for stake in oilfields and setting up gas processing and petrochemical plants. Changing its strategy, New Delhi is now looking at forging medium to long term relationships with countries like Iran , which will act as a transit for accessing Caspian crude oil. " Kazakhstan is an important country from hydrocarbon resources point of view. We can access oil from the Russian and Caspian region by bringing it to Iranian ports while China provides a ready market for downstream products and petrochemicals," Petroleum Secretary Sushil C Tripathi said. ONGC Videsh Ltd, the foreign arm of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (NSI:ONGC), wants a stake in Tengiz and Kashagan oilfields and hugely prospective Kurmangazy and Darkhan exploration blocks and offered its technical expertise in exploration and production (E&P) in nine others, including Akku and Shetusy. State-owned gas utility GAIL (India) Ltd wants to participate in building pipelines from Kazakhstan to China and has proposed setting up gas processing and petrochemical plants at Atyrau and Akhtau. Tripathi said pipelines could transport the Caspian and Mediterranean crude oil to Iran , from where it can be shipped to India . New Delhi is already negotiating projects worth US \$10 billion with Iran for import of gas over 25-30 years and setting up petrochemical projects.

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