The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Tankers Caught in Storm May Have Leaked 3K Tons of Oil Products – State Media

December 16, 2024



Video grab

More than 3,000 metric tons of oil products may have leaked into the Kerch Strait after two aging Russian oil tankers were caught in a storm, the state-run TASS news agency reported Monday, citing satellite imagery.

Together, the tankers were carrying around 9,000 metric tons of mazut, a low-grade heavy fuel oil used in power plants in the former Soviet Union, an unnamed emergency official told TASS earlier.

Russia's Natural Resources and Environment Minister Alexander Kozlov told reporters it was "too early" to assess the extent of the spillage.

Specialists were deployed to the strait off the coast of Crimea and are "completing preparatory work to clean up the spilled fuel oil," the government said in a statement.

Krasnodar region Governor Veniamin Kondratyev said he was working with federal authorities to prevent the oil products from reaching shore, where at least four settlements were put on high alert on Monday afternoon.

Related article: Sailors Rescued From Second Russian Oil Tanker Damaged in Storm

The tanker Volgoneft 212 split in two and sank when it was caught in a storm in the Kerch Strait on Sunday, while Volgoneft 239 was severely damaged and ran aground. Authorities said one crew member died from hypothermia while a total of 26 were saved from both tankers.

Russian media reported that both vessels were more than 50 years old.

Ukraine's Environmental Ministry said the oil leak had been "significant" and threatened a "large-scale environmental disaster in the Black Sea," which could have "catastrophic consequences for the marine ecosystem." It accused Russia of failing to comply with maritime safety rules.

AFP contributed reporting.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/12/16/russian-tankers-caught-in-storm-may-have-leaked-3k-tons-of-oil-products-state-media-a87359