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Media alert from the Media Scanning & Verification Cell, IDSP-NCDC.

Alert ID	Publication Date	Reporting Date	Place Name	News Source/Publication Language
5074	16.12.2018	17.12.2018	Raigad Maharashtra	www.news18.com/English <a href="https://www.news18.com/news/india/31-monkeys-14-pigeons-die-in-suspected-gas-leak-from-industrial-unit-in-maharashtra-1975145.html">https://www.news18.com/news/india/31-monkeys-14-pigeons-die-in-suspected-gas-leak-from-industrial-unit-in-maharashtra-1975145.html</a>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>31 Monkeys, 14 Pigeons die in suspected gas leak from Industrial Unit in district Raigad, Maharashtra</b>			
Action By CSU, IDSP -NCDC	Information communicated to DSU-Raigad, SSU-Maharashtra			

Around 30 monkeys and 14 pigeons died after suspected gas leak from an industrial unit in Raigad district of Maharashtra, officials said Sunday.

The carcasses of the animals were buried in pits near the place following the incident that took place on Thursday night at the unit located in Posri area of Panvel taluka, around 10 km from the Karnala Bird Sanctuary, they said.

A senior official at the Directorate of Industrial Safety and Health (DISH) at Raigad said fumes that leaked out of a chemical storage tank might have spread in the atmosphere and caused the mishap.

Terming the incident as "unfortunate", Raigad District Collector Vijay Suryavanshi said the gas leaked from one of the Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) plants, which was previously a unit of the Hindustan Organic Chemicals Limited (HOCL)

Acting on a tip-off, teams of the forest department, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board and police visited the site for an inspection on Saturday, Chief Conservator of Forests S R Kadam said.

They exhumed carcasses of 31 monkeys and 14 pigeons buried in pits dug up at the site, he said.

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**Disclaimer:- This is a media alert subject to verification.**

**Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), National Centre for Disease Control,  
Ministry Of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India**

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A raw acid leaked from one of the old plants leading to the incident, Suryavanshi said, adding that various agencies were conducting a probe into it.

Eight people, including seven attached to the BPCL and a driver of the JCB excavating machine, were detained in connection with the incident but later let-off, he said.

Notably, the Centre had last year announced a restructuring plan to close loss-making PSU's non-viable unit at Rasayani in Raigad except the di-nitrogen tetroxide (N<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub>) plant, which was to be transferred to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

"Prima facie there seems to be no lapses from any quarter," Suryavanshi said, adding that he has directed the chief conservator of forests and the ISRO to conduct a detailed investigation into the causes of gas leakage and lapses, if any. "A comprehensive probe is being carried out into the incident," the collector said. The authorities concerned have also been asked to suggest ways to prevent such incidents in the future, he said. There was no senior officer present at the site on the day of the incident as they had gone for a meeting in Mumbai, he said.

Kadam said the autopsy was conducted by a veterinary doctor in Panvel and some parts were sent to the Haffkine Institute, a premier biomedical research facility, in Mumbai for further examination.

A case was registered under the Wildlife Protection Act, Rasayani police station inspector Ashok Jagdale said. M R Patil, joint director, DISH, Raigad, told PTI that some part of the premises originally owned by HOCL had been given to BPCL and that the leakage took place from the latter's plant on December 13.

He said DISH officials were camping in the premises and carrying out a probe to find out the cause and extent of the acid leakage. "The fumes that leaked out of the storage tank might have spread in the atmosphere and caused the mishap," he said, adding the plant has a nitric acid storage tank.

Terming the death of animals as "unnatural", he said there was surely an acid leakage as without that, the death of so many monkeys and pigeons may not be possible under natural circumstances. "The exact cause of the leakage will be known only after the detailed investigation," he added. As regards the role of ISRO in the premises, Patil said he was not competent to comment on it.

According to District Disaster Control Officer Sagar Phatak, the plant was shut for some weeks and restarted on Thursday.

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