

Press Release

Chief Secretary Reviews Oil Spillage mitigation works in Ennore Creek, Chennai

Thiru. Shiv Das Meena, IAS, Chief Secretary to the Government chaired a High Level Committee meeting of the State Oil Spill Crisis Management Group (SOS-CMG) which was constituted in May, 2023. The meeting was attended by Senior Officers including Thiru S.K. Prabhakar, Additional Chief Secretary and Commissioner of Revenue & Disaster Management, Tmt Supriya Sahu, Additional Chief Secretary, Environment, Climate Change & Forests Department, Dr Sandeep Saxena, Additional Chief Secretary, Water Resources Department, Thiru Mangat Ram Sharma, Additional Chief Secretary, Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries Department, Thiru Abhash Kumar, Director General of Police (Fire and Rescue Services), Thiru Sandeep Rai Rathore, Commissioner of Police, Thiru Vijayakumar, DIG, Coast Guard and senior officials from Chennai Petro Chemicals Limited, Manali Industrial Association and Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board.

The Chief Secretary reviewed the extent of oil spillage in the Ennore Creek Area and Buckingham Canal and surrounding villages. In this regard, the Department of Environment, Climate Change & Forests had constituted a Technical Committee on 10.12.2023 headed by the Member Secretary, Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board with expert members from Anna University, NEERI, Central Pollution Control Board and Coast Guard. The Expert Committee had made extensive field visits and concluded that oil spillage had happened from the premises of CPCL entering into Buckingham Canal from Guard ponds and Storm Water Drain ponds finally reaching Ennore Creek. This had adversely impacted people living in the nearby fishing villages. Field inspection carried out by the Chief Secretary and Senior Officers had revealed significant oil deposits in Ennore Creek Area. The oil mixed water which entered the houses of several coastal communities had spoiled their personal belongings and adversely impacted their livelihood as the boats were found coated with oil. District Collector Chennai and Greater Chennai Corporation have been directed to enumerate the number of families affected by oil spillage. Taking note of the report of the Technical Committee, CPCL was directed to deploy mitigation efforts on war footing basis with necessary men and machinery under expert guidance. CPCL was also asked to ramp up mitigation measures and complete the task at the earliest.

Department of health has already deployed a team of doctors to provide treatment to the needy with specialized services from Dermatologists. An estimation of impacted families belonging to fishermen communities is under way by the Fisheries Department. The ECC&F Department is also undertaking an assessment of the biodiversity loss in the area due to the oil spillage. A special camp for treatment of domestic and stray animals has been organized by the Animal Husbandry, Dairying, Fisheries and Fishermen Welfare Department. Coast Guard was requested to provide technical assistance to ground level teams in carrying out mitigation measures as per the norms. Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board has also issued a notice to M/s. CPCL under section 33(A) of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) with directions to comply with the norms prescribed under the extant rules.

Government of Tamil Nadu has already mobilized a team of senior officials to undertake immediate mitigation measures and provide relief to affected families including fishermen. Additional Chief Secretary, Environment, Climate Change and Forest highlighted that agencies specializing in such oil spillage management were mobilized from Chennai and Ennore Ports. These agencies have planned to deploy oil barriers, and specialized machinery like gully suckers etc. to absorb excess oil. Twenty boats with men and materials were pressed into service on 11.12.2023 onwards in the Ennore Creek area for mitigation works. A team of senior officers from TNPCB, Forest and Revenue Departments were working in close coordination with District Collectors and monitoring officers to expedite the mitigation and the relief works. The Chief Secretary also directed District Collectors of Tiruvallur and Chennai to convene the meeting of the District Level Oil Spill Crisis Management Group. The State Oil Spill Crisis Management Group decided to monitor the matter on a daily basis till the completion of mitigation and relief works.

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