

**Hon'ble Minister for Environment and Climate Change  
Thiru Siva. V. Meyyanathan Press Release Related to  
Smokeless Bhogi - 2023**

In Tamil Nadu auspicious Thai Ponagl is celebrated with high spirit and devotion every year as thanks giving to the Mother Nature and to the cattle which are helping in the agricultural fields. The same festival is celebrated as Makar Sankaranthi in many part of India. Our ancestors traditionally celebrated the Bhogi festival just a day before Pongal festival based on hope by discarding negative thoughts and cheering the positive thoughts so as to celebrate the Pongal festival. They have celebrated Bhogi festival by burning old materials and goods made up of natural materials and these activities did not cause much pollution to the Air without affecting the Environment. Even in sangam –literature it has been mentioned as,

***“Pazhayana kazhithalum Puthiyana puguthalum  
Vazhuvala Kala Vagaiyinane“***

***Which means the old order change yielding place to new***







However, now the city dwellers have the habit of burning the rubber tyres, tubes, plastic items like mat, wires etc., The bonfires lit by residents in the presence of high humidity and low temperature cause smog which causes various health hazards besides disrupting visibility and putting motorists in great hardship and over disturbance in flight operations during the early morning hours of the day.

As per the guidance of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board has launched awareness campaign on 11.01.2023 through all the Print, Electronic and other Social medias in Greater Chennai City Corporation and also in all the District Head quarters of the state of Tamil Nadu to propagate the ill effects of the burning of plastic and rubber materials.

In order to monitor the ambient air quality in Greater Chennai City Corporation

limits, the TNPCB has conducted air quality survey for 24 hours on Pre-Bhogi (11.01.2023 to 12.01.2023) and on Bhogi day (13.01.2023 to 14.01.2023) in all the 15 zones of Greater Chennai City Corporation.

The Air Quality Index value for the various air quality categories are as given below:

<b>AQI</b>	<b>Remark</b>	<b>Color Code</b>	<b>Possible Health Impacts</b>
0-50	Good		Minimal impact
51-100	Satisfactory		Minor breathing discomfort to sensitive people
101-200	Moderate		Breathing discomfort to the people with lungs, asthma and heart diseases
201-300	Poor		Breathing discomfort to most people on prolonged exposure
301-400	Very Poor		Respiratory illness on prolonged exposure
401-500	Severe		Affects healthy people and seriously impacts those with existing diseases

As per the report of Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board Laboratory, the following findings were observed.

- The overall status of gaseous pollutant viz., Sulphur Dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) and Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) at all 15 stations are found to be well within the prescribed standards of 80 µg/m<sup>3</sup> for 24 hours average) on both Pre-Bhogi day and on Bhogi day.
- During the Bhogi day, the Particulate Matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) level was in the range of 50-113 µg/m<sup>3</sup> as against the prescribed standard of 60 µg/m<sup>3</sup> (24 hours average) and Particulate Matter (PM<sub>10</sub>) was in the range of 148-203 µg/m<sup>3</sup> as against the prescribed standard of 100 µg/m<sup>3</sup> (24 hours average).
- Based on the Air Quality Index, the minimum AQI value observed is 135 (AQI remarks - Moderate) at Anna Nagar and maximum AQI Value is 277 (AQI remarks – Poor) at Valasaravakkam.

On the day of Bhogi (14.01.2023) there was no disruption in the flight operations with Air Quality Index was in moderate the visibility was reasonably good. Due to low humidity, moderate temperature and moderate wind speed ensured the visibility.

Due to the effort of awareness programme by TNPCB, other Government Departments and NGOs, the burning of waste materials like rubber tyres, tubes, plastics etc., have considerably reduced among the public was observed during the night patrolling on the day of Bhogi.

In this regard the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board thanks all the Government Departments, NGOs, Residential Welfare Associations, Press and Media and especially General public for their co-operation to celebrate the smoke less Bhogi.

Happy Pongal.....

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