



DG Shipping has Instituted an inquiry in the Collision of two ships off Kamrajar Harbour MoS Shipping Shri Pon. Radhakrishnan in Chennai today to take stock of Clean Up Operations

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Two vessels namely, M.T. BW MAPLE and M.T. DAWN KANCHIPURAM while crossing each other collided at 03.45AM on 28th January, 2017 outside the Kamrajar harbour. The Oil Tanker, M.T. DAWN KANCHIPURAM, which was carrying 32813 Tonnes of POL, suffered a rupture which led to engine oil spill (and not the POL being carried as cargo). There was no casualty or injury to the crew members.

Kamarajar Port had immediately deployed oil boom around the vessel after bringing it to a safe location at 07.00 AM on 28th January, 2017 to contain seepage if any. No further seepage was discovered. The situation was closely monitored by top officials of the Port from the time of accident and the required assistance was rendered to both vessels. Since the oil tanker M.T. Kanchipuram was loaded with a huge amount of POL cargo, it was critical to ensure that this vessel is safely berthed and its cargo discharged to obviate the possibility of any further catastrophic accident and a major oil spill.

Immediate steps were taken to assess the damage to the vessel. The diving team of Kamarajar Port carried out under-water inspections. The port officials consulted the respective Classification Societies and DG, Shipping officials who carried out inspection of the vessels internally and externally. After examining the stability of the vessel, it was decided to berth the M.T. Kanchipuram at the port to immediately discharge cargo to prevent any environmental damage. The Kamarajar Port carefully brought this vessel to the port which was a very challenging task since the main engine of the vessel was not in operation and the berthing movement had to be carried out as a cold move. This major step averted the possibility of a major oil spill disaster. This vessel has now completely discharged the POL cargo.

The National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan provides that while the port is responsible for responding to an oil spill within the port area, the Coast Guard is responsible for acting as the Central Coordinating Agency for combating oil pollution in the maritime zone and the State Governments are responsible for shore line response. Equipment required to handle Tier-1 Oil Spill Response was available with the Kamarajar Port and was also deployed.

The Coast Guard was informed by 06.15 AM on 28.01.2017 soon after the collision of the incident by the Kamarajar Port. The Coast Guard deployed their ships and helicopters by 07.15 AM on the same date to survey and keep a watch on the oil spill.

As soon as the oil leak was tracked, the Coast Guard started mobilizing equipment and manpower for clean-up at various locations and coordinated these operations. A massive clean-up operation was launched in Tiruvallur, Chennai and Kancheepuram Districts by engaging more than 2000 persons at various sites including Ernavur, Chennai Fishing Harbour, Marine Beach, Besant Nagar, Kottivakkam, Palavakkam, Neelankarai and Injambakkam beaches. The Coast Guard has been coordinating the cleaning operations jointly with personnel from the Chennai Port and Kamarajar Port, the State Government and its agencies, Indian Oil Corporation, NGOs, Cadet Trainees from maritime educational institutions, student volunteers and fishermen. Groups were formed and cleaning work was undertaken at different places of the shoreline.

Shri Pon. Radhakrishnan Minister of State for Shipping visited the accident site on 30th January, 2017 and inspected the area where the vessels were anchored and gave directions to the Kamarajar Port to keep a close watch on the situation. Additional Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Joint Secretary (Ports), Ministry of Shipping, and Additional D.G. Shipping were sent for an on the spot inspection of the affected areas and to coordinate and review the oil spillage cleaning operations. They also met the Chief Secretary, Govt. of Tamil Nadu who has also held review meetings and is regularly monitoring the remedial measures being taken. The District administration is actively involved in the clean-up operations. The Chennai Port and Kamarajar Port have set up Control Rooms. Kamarajar Port has Tier-I Oil Spill Response Equipment, which was deployed by the Port. National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management, an autonomous centre of MoEF&CC, has been engaged by Kamarajar Port to study the impact on the environment.

At Ernavur, which had the maximum drift of sludge, booms have been deployed along the shore line to contain the oil spread. More than 1000 people were deployed here with portable pollution cleaning equipment for shore line cleaning. The required logistics and equipment support has been provided by the Chennai and Kamarajar Ports. Sufficient gum boots, gloves, buckets, mugs, liquid hand wash and drums have been provided to facilitate manual cleaning. In addition, 3 Super Suckers and submersible pumps have also been deployed to remove the oil spill. Coast Guard has also sprayed Oil Spill Dispersants for removal of oil slick. ICGS Varad with TC-3 and Oil Spill Dispersant (OSD) sailed out and neutralized remaining Oil slick near Chennai Lighthouse.

The total quantity of sludge (mixture of oil, water, ocean material etc.) which was removed till 2nd February, 2017 was 65 tonnes. In addition, Super Suckers had removed 54 tonnes which contained 70% water. On 3rd February, 2017 about 21.1 tonnes of additional sludge was removed from Ernavoor. Sludges at R.K. Nagar 3.40 tonnes, Marina 7.50 tonnes, Sakthi Nagar & Gandhi Nagar 5.40 tonnes, Elliot 0.62 tonnes were recovered. This quantity includes water and sand also. It is observed that there is a vast difference between quantity of oil spilled and sludge recovered due to the fact that the oil gets coagulated and becomes puffy when it is mixed with water, sand etc. More than 90% of the work has been completed and most of the residual work is expected to be completed in a couple of days.

Chennai Port and State Govt. have organized medical camps from 31st January, 2017 at Ernavoor and Kasimedu fisheries harbour.

The Indian Oil Corporation has provided special bio-remediation material for treatment of the collected oil sludge for its safe disposal. HPCL has arranged for Trailers and manpower for transporting collected sludge to Kamarajar Port area for bioremediation treatment under the expert guidance of IOC R&D experts where 2000 Sq.M. pit has been created for the purpose. The bioremediation will be undertaken by IOCL under supervision of Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board which will be completed within six to eight weeks

The Coast Guard ship and helicopters are carrying out regular sorties for continuous monitoring of oil slick. If oil spillage accumulation is spotted anywhere, manpower and material under the overall supervision of Coast Guard will be deployed.

Directorate General of Shipping has instituted a statutory inquiry under the Merchant Shipping Act to ascertain the causes and contributory factors that led to the accident. Both the ships have been restrained from leaving the Port. D.G. Shipping is also holding discussions with the owners of the ships and the mechanism of distribution of compensation and payment of claims by the insurers will be shortly in place. The P&I insurers of M.T.

DAWN KANCHIPURAM are in the process of establishing a local 'Claims Desk' and specifying the procedures for submitting and handling claims. The representative from the International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation Limited (a specialised international agency on 'Oil Spill Response' – arranged by the owner / P&I insurers of M.T. DAWN KANCHIPURAM is already in Chennai.

Government is taking all the measures to manage the situation. Authorities involved in the operations are confident that the situation is under control and the entire cleaning up operation will be completed in a couple of days. Shri Pon. Radhakrishnan, Minister of State for Shipping is in Chennai today to take stock of the situation.

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