

Report of TNPCB on suspected oil leak:

In a private television News channel, it was telecasted about heavy traces of oil being found in the rain water which has affected the nearby areas. A few messages about the spreading of oil in the waters of Buckingham canal consequently reaching the Ennore Creek, which stick on the vessels/ boats used by the fishermen thereby affecting their activities, causing financial loss to the fishermen community.

Based on the above information, a team of officials of Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board inspected the said area. The Team initially visited the Buckingham canal stretch from Kargil Nagar bridge up to Kodungaiyur. During the inspection, the team observed traces of oil in the Buckingham canal mainly on the banks. It is observed that the ingress of oil mainly occurred from the storm water drain from the Manali industrial area confluencing with Buckingham canal. At this juncture, the team attempted to find out the source of the oil and found that, there is some stagnant storm water along with oil, adjoining to the storm outlet near South Gate of Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited, which slowly contributing to oil traces. However, it is observed that during inspection the storm water coming out of the Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited premises on the southern side is not found to have oil.

It is submitted that the unprecedented rainfall in Chennai and surrounding areas resulted in inundation of industries in Manali area including the Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited. It is learnt that the premises of the Chennai Petroleum Corporation

Limited is not even accessible today also due to inundation, and under such circumstance, the stagnant water has been pumped outside, in order to safeguard the Refinery during the torrential rainfall. However, even today, the stagnant water flows by gravity. Therefore, when the water was pumped, the oily matter that are found in the ground of the industry premises, get collected in the storm water pond could have come out along with rain water.

It is observed that the said stagnant oil reaches the Buckingham canal through the culvert slowly, results in oil traces in the water of Buckingham Canal. CPCL authorities are instructed to remove the said floating oil using gully sucker and they immediately carried out the same. They assured to repeat the process tomorrow morning also. The storm water containing oil is taken back for further processing along with crude oil.

Further, the CPCL authorities are also instructed to provide boomer arrangement at the location where the storm water is reaching the drain, leading to Buckingham canal. The representative of industry present assured to formulate a concrete proposal in this regard and to furnish the same for approval before execution.

It is submitted that the action of removal of stagnated storm containing oil, through Gully Sucker near the South gate, would eliminate the oil traces reaching Buckingham Canal, thereby makes the water in Buckingham canal, free of oil.

However, the inspecting team found that slight traces of oil is also found coming from the upstream of the Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited from Kodungaiyur / Tondiarpet areas from

Indian Oil Corporation Limited, Tondiarpet Terminal and container Terminal located along the Buckingham Canal at Korrukupet and Kodungaiyur areas.

The team felt mild oily odour during the afternoon, when the climate was sunny, due to the volatilization of the hydrocarbon present in the oil traces. However, the same subsided in the evening.

Samples of water from the Buckingham canal and various points were collected and sent for analysis. The Team has not observed any substantial presence of oily matter in the Buckingham canal at Ennore Creek.