

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS
RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO-31
ANSWERED ON-24.07.2023

LEAKAGE OF CRUDE OIL AT NAGAPATTINAM, TAMIL NADU

*31. Shri P. Wilson:

Will the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government was able to find out the reasons for the leak of crude oil in Nagapattinam which affected the air and environment due to the presence of hydrocarbons;

(b) the steps Government has taken to ensure no leak of crude oil takes place in Tamil Nadu after the recent leak which was plugged in Nagapattinam coast; and

(c) if so, the details thereof, if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS
(SHRI HARDEEP SINGH PURI)

(a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to parts (a) to (c) of Rajya Sabha Starred Question No. 31 for reply on 24.07.2023 regarding Leakage of crude oil at Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu asked by Shri P. Wilson.

(a) : The Chennai Petroleum Corporation Ltd (CPCL), Cauvery Basin Refinery (CBR) at Nagapattinam was decommissioned in April 2019 and the crude pipeline was used intermittently once in six weeks or so to transfer crude from CPCL CBR crude tanks to Karaikal port. The last such consignment was pumped on 14 February, 2023 and the crude pipeline had been idle since then. A leak was noticed in the crude oil pipeline on 02 March, 2023 near Nagore offshore in Cauvery delta. The crude oil pumping was not operational at the time of leak. On 03 March, 2023 during low tide, sand bund was prepared in the surrounding area of the leak. The pipeline was clamped and leak was arrested on 04 March, 2023 and online sealing was also completed by 05 March, 2023. CPCL swiftly acted and used mobile oil recovery unit and also applied Bio dispersant on the oil slick. As per standard protocol, Oil Industry Safety Directorate (OISD), a technical directorate under aegis of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, carried out an investigation into the incident of leakage. CPCL has also carried out internal investigation into the incident engaging experts from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), etc. OISD has reported probable reasons of leakage as shore erosion leading to loss of soil support, health deterioration of pipeline over the years and the visible mechanical damage on the pipeline suspected to be caused by the heavy impact of hull of fisheries boat as the area is known for fishing activity.

The crude oil pipeline in which incident occurred at Nagapattinam was decommissioned and about 850 mtr of the pipeline has been removed by CPCL on 16 April, 2023.

(b) & (c) OISD has established standards for pipelines covering design, laying, operation and maintenance. As per OISD, no major reportable incident of crude pipeline leakage as defined in Disaster Management Plan (DMP), 2021 of Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas has been reported during 2018-19 to 2021-22. However, two incidents of leakage of crude oil pipeline, including Nagapattinam incident has been reported during 2022-23. In order to avoid such incidents in future, OISD has made recommendations in its report which include laying of pipelines at sufficient distance from seashore, re-routing of pipeline if required, conduct of internal and external safety audit, etc. OISD has also circulated the Case Study to Oil and Gas PSUs and uploaded on its website for their reference. After the receipt of OISD report on the incident of Nagapattinam, an advisory has been issued to all Oil and Gas PSUs including CPCL.
