

ICG conducts 10th NATPOLREX-X & 27th NOSDCP off Chennai Coast

Participation of 40 Foreign Observers from 32 Countries & 105 National Delegates

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The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) successfully conducted the 10th edition of the National Level Pollution Response Exercise (NATPOLREX-X) along with the 27th National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan (NOSDCP) & Preparedness Meeting on October 05-06, 2025, off the coast of Chennai, Tamil Nadu. A total of 40 foreign observers from 32 countries and over 105 national delegates attended the exercise and contributed to discussions during the 27th NOSDCP meeting held concurrently. The biennial flagship exercise, a cornerstone of India's marine environmental protection framework, is aimed at strengthening national preparedness and inter-agency coordination to effectively combat marine oil spills in line with the National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan (NOSDCP).

A key highlight of NATPOLREX-X was the first-ever shoreline clean-up drill conducted at Marina Beach by the Greater Chennai Corporation, State Pollution Control Board, State Disaster Management Authority, Police, and other agencies of the Tamil Nadu administration, as part of the simulated incident. The ICG deployed a comprehensive range of assets, including Pollution Control Vessels (PCVs), Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs), Fast Patrol Vessels (FPVs), as well as Chetak and Dornier aircraft configured for aerial surveillance and pollution response.

The technical sessions of NATPOLREX-X featured insightful presentations on contemporary topics such as Nurdle Spills and their Environmental Impact, Case Studies on Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS), Post-Spill Monitoring & Environmental Impact Assessments and Shoreline Cleanup following MV MSC ELSA 3 Incident. These sessions provided a vital knowledge-sharing platform for environmental scientists, policy makers, and operational experts to deliberate on strategies for effective spill response and post-incident recovery.

The large-scale exercise was overseen by Director General (DG) ICG and Chairperson, NOSDCP DG Paramesh Sivamani who reviewed the operational readiness, response coordination, and inter-agency synergy among participating stakeholders. The event witnessed active participation from central ministries, coastal state governments, major ports, oil handling agencies, and maritime organizations.

The demonstrations validated the efficiency and readiness of the ICG's multi-layered pollution response mechanism, underscoring the importance of joint operations with ports, coastal authorities, and state agencies. In alignment with the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat, the exercise also showcased India's growing self-reliance in maritime technology and indigenous manufacturing under the Make in India initiative. Several stakeholders, including major ports, deployed homegrown assets, reflecting a unified national approach towards marine environmental protection.

Entrusted with the responsibility of protecting India's marine environment since March 1986, the ICG continues to serve as the Central Coordinating Authority for oil spill response. The NOSDCP, drafted by the ICG and approved in 1993, remains the foundational framework for national oil spill preparedness. To operationalize this plan, the ICG has established four Pollution Response Centres at Mumbai, Chennai, Port Blair, and Vadinar.

With over 75% of India's energy needs met through seaborne oil imports, maintaining a robust and coordinated oil spill response system is of strategic importance. NATPOLREX-X has reaffirmed India's unwavering commitment to preserving the marine ecosystem and has further strengthened national and international collaboration in pollution response preparedness.

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