

JOINT COMMITTEE REPORT IN RESPECT OF O.A NO.248 OF 2020 TAKEN UP SUO MOTU BASED ON THE NEWS ITEM IN TIMES OF INDIA NEWSPAPER DATED 9.11.2020, CHENNAI SUPPLEMENTARY " CHOKED BUCKINGHAM CANAL MAY KEEP STREETS FLOODED DURING HEAVY RAINFALL" BY THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL(SZ)

The Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (NGT), Southern Zone(SZ), Chennai has taken up suo motu case based on the News item in Times of India Newspaper dated 9.11.2020, Chennai Supplementary " Choked Buckingham Canal may keep streets flooded during heavy rainfall "

The Hon'ble Tribunal in its order dated 23.11.2020 in Original Application No.248 of 2020 has given direction to constitute a Joint Committee comprising of the (1) the District Collector, Chennai District, (2) the Superintending Engineer of Public Works Department (PWD) and Water Resources Organization (WRO) of the respective area, (3) a Senior Officer from the Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (CMWSSB), (4) a Senior Officer from the Greater Chennai Corporation as deputed by its Commissioner, (5) a Senior Officer from Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) as designated by its Chairman and (6) a Senior Officer from Tamil Nadu Coastal Zone Management Authority (TNCZMA) to inspect the area in question and submit a factual as well as action taken report. Further the committee is also directed to ascertain the quality of the water in that canal and if there is any contamination caused on account of any such unauthorized act including the discharge of untreated sewage into that canal, what are all the remedial measures to be taken to restore the same to its original position.

Accordingly in due compliance of the orders of the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal, the Joint Committee is constituted and has conducted the inspection on 29.1.2021 and the water samples from the North Buckingham Canal were taken by the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board in order to ascertain the water quality of the canal.

The report of the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board comprising the various parameters of the water sample collected from the North Buckingham Canal opposite to PuratchiThalaivar Dr.M.G.Ramachandran Railway Station against the standards for the sewage as per CPCB are tabulated below:-

S.No.	Parameters	Units	Report of Analysis	Standards (Source : NGT (PB) order dt:30.4.2019 in O.A.No.1069/2018
1.	P ^H	Number	7.83	5.5-9.0
2.	Total Suspended Solids	mg/l	6	20
3.	BOD for 3 days at 27°C	mg/l	4	10
4.	Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD)	mg/l	80	50
5	Total Nitrogen	mg/l	2	10
6	Faecal Coliform	MPN/100 ml	<2	Desirable-100 Permissible-230

It can be inferred from this report that Chemical Oxygen Demand is exceeding the limits prescribed.

It is alleged in the newspaper report that that mounds of garbage especially plastic waste were seen floating, impeding the flow of water in the canal just outside the Chennai Central Railway Station. Due to unauthorized dumping of garbage and other things, free flow of water in that area has been affected. So, it is apprehended by the reporter that there is a possibility of flood being caused on account of this unauthorized blockage of flow of water in Buckingham Canal due to the unlawful dumping of garbage and other wastes.

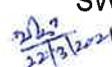
The disputed area is the North Buckingham Canal just downstream side of Poonamallee Road Bridge. At this stretch, the North Buckingham Canal is surrounded by Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) Central Square on the West side, PallavanSaalai Bridge on the Eastside, Poonamallee Road Bridge on the North side and Railway lines (Chennai Park to Chennai Fort route) on the South side. As there is no approach for deployment of heavy machineries in order to clean the floating wastes and vegetations in the North Buckingham Canal. The CMRL has been addressed by the PWD and GCC to provide approach for the deployment of heavy machineries in the Canal and they have assured to provide approach for clearing the obstructions in the Canal. Accordingly, CMRL has removed the grills abutting the western bank of the North Buckingham Canal facilitating the approach

for the movement of heavy machineries into the North Buckingham Canal. The Greater Chennai Corporation deployed Amphibian Robotic Excavator & Amphibian Multipurpose Watermaster Dredger and totally removed the obstructions such as vegetations & floating solid wastes thereby facilitating the free flow in the Canal. The photos taken before and after the execution of the work have been attached which depicts all the obstructions impeding the free flow in the canal have been completely removed which is the major issue alleged in the newspaper report. However, due to the torrential rain of 2020 which hampered the Chennai city, there was no report of out flank of flood from Buckingham Canal. Although there were floating material on its surface, the canal experienced a good sub surface flow and the flood receded quickly without causing inundation by a large.

Further the NGT (SZ) has sought to mention about the steps taken for the eviction of encroachments and the timeline for the eviction for encroachments. In this regard, PWD has already submitted detailed action plan vide NGT(SZ) O.A.556,557,558 & 559 of 2018 in the Principal Bench, New Delhi in which it is mentioned that the eviction of encroachments of the Buckingham Canal will be carried out in a phased manner based on the availability of the tenements which will be constructed by the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board. The TNSCB has proposed to rehabilitate the slum dwellers along the Buckingham canal on priority with the maximum time period of 2 years (2019-21) based on the fact that the approved Affordable Housing Projects (AHP) are being expedited, completed and allotted as and when the construction is completed. However, the curfew imposed due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, has made this timeline likely to be extended further. In pursuance to this, the Managing Director, TNSCB has also convened a meeting on 13.1.2021 with PWD and Line Department officials regarding the eviction of encroachments in the Buckingham Canal. It was decided in the meeting to evict the encroachments in the North Buckingham Canal on first priority followed by Central and South Buckingham Canal. These encroachments will be rehabilitated in a phased manner which commence by June 2021.

It is further reiterated that the Government of Tamil Nadu has accorded administrative sanction at an estimated cost of Rs.1281.88 Crore vide Municipal Administration and Water Supply (MC.I) Department G.O (D) No.419 dated 03.12.2020 for the project of comprehensive restoration and rejuvenation of Waterways & water bodies in Chennai City i.e, Buckingham Canal & its associated

drains and major drains draining into Adayar&Cooum River. This project scheme comprises of the components such as Sanitation, Resettlement & Rehabilitation, Channel Improvement, Solid Waste Removal and Urban Water Front Development which will be implemented by the line Departments such as Public Works Department and Greater Chennai Corporation. The encroachments on the banks of the Buckingham canal i.e the Project Affected Families (PAF's) living within the Right of Way (ROW) / demarcated boundary will be rehabilitated in the tenements provided by the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board. This project scheme likely to be commenced by June 2021 and scheduled to be completed within 2023. After the implementation of this comprehensive scheme, the canal will be restored to the original condition without obstruction thereby ensuring free flow of flood between Ennore to Muttukadu for a stretch of 48kms in Chennai Metropolitan Area.

 Revenue Divisional Officer, North Ghennai.	 District Environmental Engineer, Tamilnadu, Pollution Control Board, Chennai	 The Superintending Engineer, PWD, WRD Palar Basin Circle, Chepauk,	 The Superintending Engineer, Greater Chennai Corporation, SWM, 
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 The Expert
 Member,
 The Tamil Nadu
 Coastal Zone
 Management
 Authority


 The
 Superintending
 Engineer,
 CMWSSB,

**NORTH BUCKINGHAM CANAL- D/S OF POONAMALLEE ROAD BRIDGE-
BEFORE EXECUTION**



**NORTH BUCKINGHAM CANAL- D/S OF POONAMALLEE ROAD BRIDGE-
AFTER EXECUTION**

