

Tamil Nadu government launches ₹50 crore Marine Resource Foundation

Chennai, Sept 9: Aimed at conserving marine biodiversity, the Tamil Nadu government on Tuesday launched the Marine Resource Foundation with an outlay of Rs 50 crore, finance minister Thangam Thennarasu said.

The foundation, set up here, follows an announcement made by Thennarasu while presenting the state budget in March.

Participating in the launch along with his cabinet colleague, Minister for Forests and Khadi R S Rajakannappan, Thennarasu said, "For the first time in the country, such a foundation has been set up in Tamil Nadu."

"We must protect marginalised people in coastal areas because climate change and other factors threaten their livelihoods. This foundation has been established to provide them with the support they need," the minister added.

Thennarasu also unveiled



Ministers Thangam Thennarasu and R.S. Rajakannappan give appointment orders to newly recruited forest officials, launch marine and coastal restoration initiatives and honour environmental contributors with 'Manjappai Awards' at Kalaivanar Arangam, on Tuesday.

—E.K.Sanjay

the logo for the Tamil Nadu Maritime Resource Foundation during the event.

According to a press release, the foundation aims to promote marine biodiversity conservation, sustainable livelihoods, eco-tourism, environmental education, research, and innovation.

Tamil Nadu's coastal waters are home to over 450 marine species, 117 coral reefs, and

more than 80 species of whales and dolphins. Threats such as sea erosion, climate change, and plastic pollution endanger these marine species, it added.

The foundation will play a key role in empowering coastal communities, protecting natural resources, restoring mangroves and seagrass, promoting blue tourism and awareness, and supporting cli-

mate action through blue carbon initiatives, it further said.

Later, Thangam Thennarasu launched the Manali Ennore Restoration and Rejuvenation Council (MERRC) and distributed appointment orders to recruits in the Forest Department.

He also released a book on MERRC, with the first copy received by Rajakannappan.

According to a press release, the council integrates the services of multiple departments, including the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board, Greater Chennai Corporation, Fisheries Department, and Labour Department.

The council has been established to protect the Manali-Ennore region, a major industrial zone that also features rivers, canals, and mangrove forests, the release said.

"To protect this environmentally sensitive and economically vital zone, the office of

MERRC has been set up in Manali," it added.

A 24x7 emergency centre has been established to respond swiftly to events such as cyclones, sea surges, and industrial accidents.

Projects aimed at improving livelihoods in the Manali-Ennore area will continue to be expanded through the council, the release said.

While presenting the appointment orders, Supriya Sahu, Additional Chief Secretary to the Department of Environment, Climate Change, and Forests, said about 333 recruits, including forest guards and forest watchers, received their orders from the minister.

She added that all critical vacancies in the department have now been filled. "We have a new young energy in this auditorium today. With your support, there will definitely be a brighter future for the climate and all wildlife," she said.

—PTI

Council to revive Manali-Ennore region

Focus On Restoring Biodiversity

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: Tamil Nadu govt on Tuesday launched two initiatives: the Manali-Ennore Restoration and Rejuvenation Company (MERRC), a special purpose vehicle to tackle pollution, restore wetlands, and protect livelihoods in one of the state's most industrialised coastal belts and the Tamil Nadu Marine Resource Foundation (TN-MRF).

Registered as a not-for-profit company fully owned by the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board, MERRC will lead the revival of the Manali-Ennore region, which is

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> **Flying squads** | Crack down on illegal effluents

> **Emergency Response Centre** | Quick

action on spills and disasters

> **Eco push** | Restore mangroves, creek & canals

> **Collaboration with the public on** | Jobs, skills, health, clean habitat



dotted with petrochemical complexes, fertilizer and chemical units, thermal plants, and the Ennore Port, but is also home to Ennore Creek, Kosasthalaiyar River, and Buckingham Canal. Years of effluent discharge, fly ash leaks, and encroachments have damaged biodiversity and battered the fishing community in the region.

Launching the initiative at Kalaivanar Arangam, finance and environment mi-

nister Thangam Thennarasu said the council was created in response to recurring environmental crises, including the 2023 oil spill. "From industrial corridors to fragile marine ecosystems, the govt is taking decisive steps to secure a sustainable future," he said.

The council will take up greening projects, mangrove and mudflat restoration, desilting of waterways, solid waste management, and community infrastructure,

said Supriya Sahu, additional chief secretary, department of environment, climate change and forests. It has set up an emergency response centre at Tondiarpet and two flying squads for surprise inspections, besides mandating safety audits for industries.

Fisheries department will maintain a database of local fishers and promote sustainable practices, while TNPCB officers will monitor Tangedco to curb fly ash and hot water discharge into the Kosasthalaiyar River.

Thennarasu also launched the Tamil Nadu Marine Resource Foundation (TN-MRF), announced in the 2025-26 budget with an initial ₹50 crore outlay, to conserve dugongs, coral reefs, mangroves, and beaches, and promote eco-tourism and sustainable fishing, in partnership with research

institutions and local communities.

Forests and khadi minister RS Rajakannappan handed appointment orders to 333 new recruits—foresters, forest guards, and watchers. He said recruitment of mahouts, kavadis, and veterinary staff was being expedited.

The event also featured the 2025 Meendum Manjappai Awards, with six schools and colleges from Dharmapuri, Ariyalur, Erode, and Trichy winning ₹54 lakh for creating single-use plastic-free campuses.

"The launch of MERRC, the creation of the Marine Resource Foundation, and the Manjappai Awards are interconnected in their purpose. They represent Tamil Nadu's approach of restoring critical landscapes, protecting marine wealth, and encouraging sustainable practices," said Sahu.

State government launches foundation to protect and restore marine biodiversity

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The State government on Tuesday launched the Tamil Nadu Marine Resources Foundation (TNMRF) to protect and restore marine biodiversity by safeguarding endangered species, rehabilitating ecosystems such as coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass, and expanding the protected areas.

Launched by Minister for Environment and Climate Change Thangam Thennarasu and Minister for Forests R.S. Rajakanappan, along with Supriya Sahu, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Forests, and Srinivas R. Reddy, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Head of Forest Force), the TNMRF will support sustainable livelihood by training fisherfolk in eco-friendly practices and promoting alternatives



Minister Thangam Thennarasu handing over an appointment order to a new recruit of the Forest Department. S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

such as aquaculture, seaweed farming, and coastal crafts.

The Foundation will facilitate eco-tourism, environmental education and awareness-building, cutting-edge research in marine geographic information systems, and biodiversity-mapping. Its mission is to protect, restore and sustainably manage Tamil Nadu's marine and coastal ecosystems while strengthening cli-

mate resilience and the livelihood of coastal communities.

At the event, the Ministers gave away appointment orders to 333 forest personnel selected through the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission.

The Environment Minister also launched the Manali Ennore Restoration and Rejuvenation Council (MERRC), a special purpose vehicle, to restore the

environmentally sensitive Manali-Ennore region. Established after a major oil spill in December 2023, MERRC will focus on green projects, waterbody restoration, solid waste management, pollution control, and community infrastructure development, in coordination with multiple departments.

A new state-of-the-art office has been established at Tondiarpet. It houses the District Environmental Engineer's office, two flying squad offices, and a modern emergency response centre equipped to respond swiftly to floods, cyclones, and industrial accidents in the Ennore-Manali region.

The Manjappai Awards 2025 were given away by the Ministers to three schools and three colleges that successfully created single-use plastic-free campuses and promoted traditional eco-friendly alternatives.

In the school category, the awards were presented to Government Higher Secondary School, Belarahalli, Dharmapuri district (first place); Government High School, Siruvalur, Ariyalur district (second place); and Government Boys Higher Secondary School, Perundurai, Erode district (third place). In the college category, the recipients were Jamal Mohamed College, Tiruchi (first place); JKK Muniraja College of Technology, T.N. Palayam, Erode district (second place); and Holy Cross College, Tiruchi (third place). The award comprises a cash prize of ₹10 lakh for the first place, ₹5 lakh for the second place, and ₹3 lakh for the third place.

M. Jayanthi, Chairperson, Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board, and A.R. Rahul Nadh, Director, Department of Environment and Climate Change, were present.

TN launches India's 1st marine resource body

CHENNAI: Aimed at conserving marine biodiversity, the Tamil Nadu government on Tuesday launched the Marine Resource Foundation with an outlay of Rs 50 crore, State Finance Minister Thangam Thennarasu said.

Participating in the launch along with his cabinet colleague, Minister for Forests and Khadi RS Rajakannappan, Thennarasu said, "For the first time in the country, such a foundation has been set up in Tamil Nadu."

"We must protect marginalised people in coastal areas because climate change and other factors threaten their livelihoods. This foundation has been established to provide them with the support they need," the minister added. Thennarasu also unveiled the logo for the Tamil Nadu Maritime Resource Foundation during the event.

According to a press release, the foundation will play a key role in empowering coastal communities, protecting natural resources, restoring mangroves

and seagrass, promoting blue tourism and awareness, and supporting climate action through blue carbon initiatives.

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"To protect this environmentally sensitive and economically vital zone, the office of MERRC has been set up in Manali," it added. A 24x7 emergency centre has been established to respond swiftly to events such as cyclones, sea surges, and industrial accidents. Projects aimed at improving livelihoods in the Manali-Ennore area will continue to be expanded through the council, the release said.



Ministers Thangam Thennarasu, Rajakannappan and others with a book on MERRC released during the event