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400 acres of Ennore creek turn into landfill

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📷 Ennore creek being filled up with dredged spoils allegedly from Kamarajar Port Limited. (Photo: DC)

Chennai: At a time when Chennai experienced severe floods, which many call it a man-made disaster primarily due to chewing-up of water bodies, a similar mistake is being committed it seems in Ennore where nearly 400 acres of wet land of Ennore creek is turning into a landfill of dredged spoils and construction waste allegedly being dumped by Kamarajar Port Limited (KPL), formerly Ennore Port.

Violating almost every environmental law, KPL, which is a public enterprise, is dumping hundreds of tonnes of waste in the sprawling and hydrologically critical water course which also has sizable mangrove cover.

When Deccan Chronicle visited the site, a board was seen in middle of the Ennore creek saying the property belonged to the port and trespassers will be prosecuted. Several trucks were dumping the port's waste in the water body and earth movers were levelling the surface.

Enquiries revealed that the International Seaport Dredging Pvt Ltd, a marine and waterway contractor, was roped-in by KPL to carry out the land filling in six sites covering roughly 400 acres.

Land reclamation, bunding or construction on natural watercourses is prohibited under the CRZ Notification and Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act.

Interestingly, these wet lands are classified as Special and Hazardous Industrial Area in the master plan – 2026 of CMDA, which indicates plans are drawn for reclamation of these lands.

When contacted, a senior official of KPL categorically denied the allegations of waste dumping in water bodies. “The dumping activity, which is currently undertaken, is being carried out in salt flats that are purchased by the port from Salt Board for which no environmental clearance is needed”.

However, K. Saravanan, a fishermen activist, said the area is classified as mud and water body in the toposheet of the Survey of India and as CRZ 1 (intertidal zone) and CRZ IV (coastal water body) in Draft Coastal Zone Management Plan. Environmentalist Nityanand Jayaraman said he was planning a file a criminal case.



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