

**Cabinet approves MoU between India and South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme for Co-operation on the response to Oil and Chemical Pollution in the South Asian Seas Region**

Cabinet

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The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and South Asian Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) for cooperation on the response to Oil and Chemical Pollution in the South Asian Seas Region.

**Impact:**

The MoU intends to promote closer cooperation between India and other maritime nations comprising the South Asian seas region namely Bangladesh, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka for protection and preservation of marine environment in the region.

**Implementation:**

Indian Coast Guard (ICG) will be the Competent National Authority and national operational contact point for implementation of "Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan" under the MoU and shall respond to oil and chemical spills on behalf of Government of India. Further, ICG Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres (MRCCs) will be the national emergency response centre for marine incidents.

**Background:**

In order to promote and support protection, management and enhancement of the environment in the South Asian region, the Governments of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka established the SACEP in 1982 in Sri Lanka. The SACEP jointly with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) developed a "Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan" to facilitate international co-operation and mutual assistance in preparing and responding to a major oil pollution incident in the seas around the Maritime States of Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

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