

Environment, Climate Change and Forests Department

Press Release

Tamil Nadu strengthens on-ground conservation with the induction of new recruits and further enhances the State's environmental and climate action with launch of Manali Ennore Restoration & Rejuvenation Council, Marine Resource Foundation

At a significant event held at Kalaivanar Arangam today, the Environment, Climate Change & Forests Department unveiled a series of initiatives that reinforce the State's leadership in environmental protection, climate resilience, and community empowerment. The Hon'ble Minister for Finance, Environment and Climate Change, Thiru. Thangam Thenarasu, formally launched the Manali Ennore Restoration & Rejuvenation Council (MERRC) and the Tamil Nadu Marine Resource Foundation (TN-MRF), while also giving away the Manjappai Awards 2025. To empower the Department with enhanced capacity, new appointment orders were distributed by Hon'ble Minister Mr. Raja Kannappan to 333 forest personnel selected through TNPSC, further strengthening the Tamil Nadu Forest Department with additional manpower for enforcement, fieldwork, and community engagement. Earlier this year, on June 5th, 2025, to commemorate the World Environment Day, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Thiru. M. K. Stalin had issued appointment orders to 1413 forest staff also selected through TNPSC.

Established as a Special Purpose Vehicle after a major oil spill in the region in December 2023, under the guidance of the Hon'ble Chief Minister, the MERRC will restore and rejuvenate the environmentally sensitive and economically vital Manali–Ennore region. The Council will focus on green projects, waterbody restoration, solid waste management, pollution control, and community infrastructure development, in close coordination with multiple departments. A new state-of-the-art office at Tondiarpet has been established, housing 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.

Both, the Hon'ble Minister for Finance, Environment, Climate Change and Forests, Thiru Thangam Thenarasu, and the Hon'ble Minister for Forests and Khadi, Thiru R. S. Rajakannappan, jointly laid the foundation stone for a building solely dedicated to the Manali–Ennore Restoration and Rejuvenation Council (MERRC).

Announced in the 2025–26 State Budget with an initial outlay of ₹50 crore, the TN-MRF will provide a structured, research-driven and community-inclusive approach to marine conservation. Its mission is to protect, restore and sustainably manage Tamil Nadu's marine and coastal ecosystems while strengthening climate resilience and livelihoods of coastal communities. The Foundation will focus on the conservation of endangered species like the dugongs, mangroves, coral reefs, beaches, and mudflats, promotion of sustainable fishing practices, eco-tourism and nature education, and knowledge-building and collaborations with research bodies, civil society, and industries.

Continuing the success of the “Meendum Manjappai – back to basics and into the future” campaign launched by the Hon’ble Chief Minister in December 2021, the Manjappai Awards 2025 were presented to the three best schools including Government Higher Secondary School, Belarahalli, Dharmapuri District at 1st place, Government High School, Siruvalur, Ariyalur District at 2nd place and Government Boys Higher Secondary School, Perundurai, Erode District at 3rd place, and three best colleges including Jamal Mohamed College, Tiruchirappalli District at 1st place, JKK Muniraja College of Technology, T.N. Palayam, Erode District at 2nd place and Holy Cross College, Tiruchirappalli District at 3rd place, that have successfully implemented single-use plastic (SUP) free campuses and promoted traditional eco-friendly alternatives. The awards include ₹10 lakh for first place, ₹5 lakh for second, and ₹3 lakh for third place, with a total allocation of ₹54 lakh.

Speaking at the event, Hon’ble Minister for Finance, Environment and Climate Change, Thiru. Thangam Thenarasu said, “from the industrial corridors of Manali and Ennore to the fragile marine ecosystems along our coastline, Tamil Nadu is taking decisive steps to secure a sustainable future. The launch of MERRC and the Marine Resource Foundation, along with the Manjappai Awards, shows our commitment to blend conservation with community empowerment. These initiatives will not only safeguard biodiversity but also provide jobs, strengthen institutions, and ensure Tamil Nadu continues to lead the way in climate action.”

Hon’ble Minister for Forests & Khadi, Thiru. Raja Kannapan in his address said “distributing appointment orders today gives me immense satisfaction as it symbolizes both environmental and social progress. By adding new strength to the State’s Forest Department, we are not only enhancing enforcement and conservation capacity but also creating meaningful opportunities for our youth. This is sustainability in its truest sense protecting nature while empowering people.” He further highlighted that in frontline positions such as Forester,

Forest Guard, and Forest Watcher, 10 percent of vacancies have been reserved for sportspersons who have excelled in the field of sports. Based on this provision, the Government is in the process of filling 205 posts in the Forest Department. He also added that steps are being taken to expedite the recruitment for posts such as Mahouts, Kavadis, and Veterinary Assistant Surgeons amongst other key positions, thereby strengthening field capacity and frontline conservation efforts.

“The launch of MERRC, the creation of the Marine Resource Foundation, and the Manjappai Awards are interconnected in their spirit and purpose. Together, they represent Tamil Nadu’s holistic approach of restoring critical landscapes, protecting our marine wealth, and encouraging citizens and institutions to adopt sustainable practices. The induction of new staff further strengthens the Department’s manpower, enabling more effective enforcement, on-ground conservation, and community outreach. This comprehensive model, combining innovation, enforcement and awareness, is what makes Tamil Nadu a trailblazer in environmental governance”, said Tmt. Supriya Sahu I. A. S, Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Forests.

On the occasion, Thiru Srinivas R Reddy, I.F.S., Principal Chief Conservator of Forests – Head of Forest Force, Dr. M. Jayanthi, I.F.S., Chairperson - Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board, Thiru A. R. Rahul Nadh, I.A.S., Director - Department of Environment and Climate Change, along with senior officials from the Forest Department and the Government, were present.

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