**PRESS RELEASE**

**MAIDEN IMO OPRC COURSE HOSTED FOR FRIENDLY COUNTRIES BY INDIAN COAST GUARD REGIONAL MARINE POLLUTION RESPONSE CENTRE**

**New Delhi, 22 Aug 2024**: The maiden two-week International Maritime Organisation (IMO), Oil Preparedness Response and Cooperation (OPRC) course for Friendly Foreign Countries (FFCs) commenced at the Regional Marine Pollution Response Centre (RMPRC), Chennai on 19 Aug 24. This inaugural course is hosting participants from seven ASEAN countries, with two officers each from Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines, Cambodia, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Hon'ble Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath recently inaugurated the ICG RMPRC on 18 Aug 24.The establishment of the RMPRC fulfills a key commitment made during the maiden India-ASEAN Defense Ministers’ meeting in Cambodia on 22 Nov 22. The RMPRC is a pioneer facility in the region, specifically designed to coordinate and enhance responses to marine pollution incidents, including Oil and Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS), affecting the coastal waters of the Indian Ocean Region. As the Central Coordinating Agency for marine oil spill responses at the national level, the ICG is dedicated to supporting regional countries in building their capabilities for effective pollution management.

The center will oversee emergency incidents by providing advisory and support through a dedicated Emergency Response Centre. A 24/7 emergency hotline has been established at the centre to offer real-time assistance to response managers, guiding them on response strategies, techniques, and equipment. The centre will focus on capacity building through meaningful training by conducting regular Pollution Response training (IMO OPRC Level I & II courses) for FFCs in the region.

The establishment of the RMPRC represents a significant advancement in regional cooperation and capacity building for marine pollution response, underscoring our commitment to protecting our oceans and coastal environments.

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