

The Hindu 20.03.2013

Plastic bags make fighting fire difficult

The challenge of fighting the flames in the more than two-decade-old dump yard of Namakkal Municipality at Kosavampatti — less than two kilometres from the district head quarters — became difficult after the fire that was brought under control during the late hours of Sunday spread over a wider area on Tuesday.

“The force of the water could not penetrate the flames for more than a foot or two from the surface, as tonnes of plastic carry bags helped the water drain away from where water was sprayed.

Due to this, water could not go deep below, where the fire was still burning,” Fire and Rescue Services personnel said. Fire fighters said that the height of the garbage stood close to 40 feet in the middle of the dump yard that sprawls over an area of more than 14 acres.

“The fire which was under control on the surface spread through the lower layer and reached the other end of the yard where there was no fire.

“We realised that we will have to take water deep below the surface to completely put out the flames. Repeated attempts were made to hire earth movers with metal chain wheels that could climb over the heaps of burning garbage and remove the top layer of garbage, so that the water could be gushed to the lower portions and out the fire.

“Only one came forward for the job and has been employed since Monday night, while others were not ready to take the risk of driving the vehicles on burning garbage,” an official said.