# CHAPTER 4
# SCENE AFTER THE EXPLOSION

It is not very clear how the local authority, IOCL (Marketing and Pipeline Division) and other oil company officials (HPCL & BPCL) present during the time of accident reacted or put up effort just after the explosion, because everybody was awestruck by the ferocity of the incident and totally at a loss what to do. But it is learnt that the district authorities immediately geared up for emergency, police and army personnel started evacuating people around, barricaded the national highway, railway tracks, running next to the terminal and all roads around, brought all fire fighting tenders from local administration, HPCL, BPCL, army cantonment to the site for fire fighting. But since there were intermittent explosions occurring and all the tanks burning with full fury inside the terminal by then, it was decided not to venture inside or making any attempts to douse the fire, to avoid any further risk of greater danger involving lives. By next morning (30.10.2009) fire and foam tenders with fire fighting team from Mathura and Panipat Refinery also reached the site but none was permitted to carry out any fire fighting operation.

On 31.10.2009, Hon'ble Petroleum Minister Shri Murli Deoraji along with IOCL Chairman, Shri S. Behuria, reached the terminal location. Along with local administration, State Ministers and officials, emergency meetings were held and instructions were given for giving compensation to dead and injured and also to constitute an independent enquiry committee under the aegis of MoPNG to investigate into the root cause of the accident and suggest remedial measures.

## 4.1 DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

Following the blast the steel structures as well as all buildings inside the terminal were extensively damaged; specific details are given hereunder:

i. the RCC buildings, viz., S&D office/BCC, Amenity building, Administrative building, Canteen, Control Room, Car Parking Shade, Temple at Plant Gate, Maintenance & Repair Office had most of their walls collapsed and in case of few ones e.g., Car Parking Shade roof along with the columns, collapsed totally. Distinct burning marks were seen on the northern and part of the north western wall of the BCC building.

ii. A large industrial building belonging to M/s Genus Industries, very close to the western boundary wall has been extensively damaged and it has collapsed from west to easterly direction. Three personnel of this factory were killed and reportedly a large number (approx. 45 persons) were injured.

iii. Structural buildings/shades and other structures including tank lorry loading bay had their roof totally blown out and certain structures had bent in the eastern direction.

iv. A major portion of the hydrant line running north south on the western side of the plant road approaching Tank 401 tank farm area was moved substantially towards east.

v. A number of large diameter pipelenghts kept in the open storage area in the north south direction parallel to the same road on the western side have been blown substantial distance from west to east.

vi. A large number of lube oil drums in the drum yards along the western side of the same were found flattened.

vii. The empty fire water tanks roof had been blown out in the south easterly direction.

viii. Among five MS tanks (floating roof), tank No.401-A roof had collapsed inside its heavily deformed shell. Tank No.401-B was partly deformed with its roof inside. This tank had little material. Tank No.401-C is in better shape than the other two with its roof too collapsed inside. This tank too had little material. Shells of both 409 A&B were deformed with 409-A (had large inventory) being the worse and had collapsed roof inside.

ix. Six numbers fixed roof tanks (SKO and HSD) have heavily deformed shell again because of fire and roof of one of the SKO tanks being blown away a large distance towards south.

x. In the pipeline division the explosion damages appear to be more extensive with control room building front and other buildings/structures totally collapsing and the roof blown out. The roofs of DG buildings totally collapsed with the structural roof blown out.

xi. The crude pumping shed was very extensively damaged and some of its tall structure was found significantly bent again from west to east.

xii. At a short distance from this pumping shed the direction of the explosion damage reversed as structures/poles beyond this area have been bent from east to westerly direction.

xiii. A large industrial building (RCC construction) very close to eastern boundary wall have been extremely damaged and portion of the building as well as the IOC terminal eastern boundary wall (RCC) have collapsed from east to westerly direction. A number of heavy structures including a steel stair case of this industrial building have been blown sufficient distance from west to east and found lying inside the IOC boundary at a substantial distance inside eastern boundary wall.

xiv. The IOC Terminal had extensive greenery with large number of fully grown trees covering large part of the plot. The road running north south direction starting from plant gate up to the approach of tank farm 401 area had closely lined trees fully grown as well as substantial growth of apparently thick bushes along the big tree lines. In addition there were extensive greenery along the boundary on the southern side and south western side. The south western corner of the plot as well as a large rectangular patch between control room and the tank farm area had closely laid large trees. All trees and bushes, except very few ones, close to the southern area, have been completely charred, and snapped at different heights and were totally devoid of any leaves because of the effect of the blast.

**4.2** The position and the status of the valves connected with the tank from which the leak had initially started is discussed in detail in Chapter 7 under “Site Observations”.

Out of the 3 Km boundary wall, around 1.7 Km had collapsed.

**4.3** The following photographs depict the magnitude of devastation at site after the explosion and fire.