

Speech of Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in 25th Meeting of the Southern Zonal Council at Bangalore on 16-11-2012 - read by Hon. Minister for Finance on behalf of Hon. C.M.

Hon'ble Union Home Minister
Shri Sushil Kumar Shinde Ji,
Hon'ble Chief Ministers,
Senior Officers of the Union Government,
Chief Secretaries and Senior Officers of the participating States and Union Territory,

I extend my warm greetings and best wishes to all the participants in this meeting, which is being held after a long gap of 5 years. The Union Home Minister is to be appreciated for reviving this forum, thereby facilitating a free and frank exchange of views between the States / Union Territory in the Southern region, besides crystallizing issues which may later be taken up in a national forum for resolution. The Zonal Councils are purely advisory in nature, constituted in the wake of the reorganization of States in 1956, and it is to be hoped that this Council has not outlived its utility. I do find that there are several common issues concerning the States in the region and there are areas of co-operation that make deliberations in such a forum useful. This effort should be orchestrated towards a meaningful dialogue facilitating mutually beneficial approaches leading to win-win solutions.

The agenda notes have been prepared after deliberations in the Standing Committee consisting of Chief Secretaries. I wish to briefly draw

your attention to the subjects that comprise the current Agenda for consideration.

The Government of Tamil Nadu has demanded that in respect of the formula for Central allocation of funds for Poverty Alleviation and Rural Development programmes pertaining to Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department, the formula may not be changed at present and the status quo may be maintained.

In respect of the issues relating to Fisheries, fishing is one of the oldest and most hazardous occupations in the world. Tamil Nadu has a long coast line of 1,076 kms, covering 591 fishing villages in 13 coastal districts. About 5,200 mechanized fishing crafts and 34,000 country crafts exploit the fishery resources in the continental shelf of 41,412 sq.kms in the State. The Government of Tamil Nadu is formulating many schemes for increasing fish production in the State and enhancing the socio-economic conditions of the fishing community. The following are some of the important issues which need detailed discussion in this august forum.

The Tamil Nadu fishermen who conduct fishing in the deep sea off Andhra Pradesh are often abducted by the Andhra Pradesh fishermen and are released after alleged payment of ransom. After mutual consultations held at the Ministers' level, in 2007, it was decided to issue fishing licenses for regularizing fishing in the disputed waters. No decision has been taken in this regard by the Government of Andhra Pradesh. Moreover, the boats of Tamil Nadu enter into territorial waters to seek anchorage or idle berthing only at times of cyclonic storms and inclement weather. Some boats are held by Andhra Pradesh even during idle passage. Such incidents may be avoided in future, as the fishermen cannot take the law into their own hands.

The fishermen of Kanniyakumari district along the west coast conduct fishing in the Arabian Sea using modern fishing techniques and also are hired by the mechanized boat owners of Kerala for conducting fishing for commercially important fish species like squid, cuttlefish and tuna. Due to professional rivalry, the boats and other fishing implements of the Kanniyakumari district fishermen who conduct fishing in Kerala waters have been at times damaged by the Kerala fishermen in the past.

The payment of compensation for boats of a coastal State damaged by the fishermen of another State while fishing and regulating the issue of fishing licenses needs to be discussed for safeguarding the lives and properties of fishermen.

In the Coastal Regulatory Zone (CRZ) Notification recently issued, Coastal Regulatory Zone (CRZ) IV deals with the activities on the seaward side. Many infrastructural facilities like construction of Fish Processing Parks/ development of Fishing Harbour/Fish Landing Centres etc., which are essential for the fishing industry fall under this zone. There is no clarity and no clear cut instructions in the recent notification for construction relating to these activities. Hence, construction/ improvement of Fish Processing Facilities/ Fish Processing Parks/Fishing Harbour/Fish landing Centres etc., need to be exempted for the benefit of the fishermen community and the Coastal Regulatory Zone (CRZ) Notification needs to be suitably amended.

The draft MOU on fisheries between India and Sri Lanka has not yet fructified. The fishing rights of the fishermen in their traditional area in the Palk Bay should be protected, as it is their constitutional right to conduct

fishing for their livelihood and the Council may discuss the steps to be taken to prevent the occurrence of attacks and incidents of harassment against the Tamil Nadu and Puducherry (Karaikal) fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy.

To reduce the operational cost of mechanized fishing boats and motorized traditional crafts, the Government of India introduced a scheme for reimbursement of central excise duty on HSD oil (High Speed Diesel) supplied to mechanized fishing boats below 20 metres length and registered prior to the Tenth Five Year Plan. The Government of Tamil Nadu is giving exemption from sales tax on HSD oil to mechanized fishing boat owners and hence is eligible to get 100% rebate on the same.

The reimbursement amount has been enhanced by the Government of India to Rs.3.00 per litre of HSD with a ceiling of 500 litres per boat per month during active fishing months from 2009-2010 onwards. The Government of India has stipulated that the subsidy will be provided to vessels of size less than 20 metres registered before the 10th Five Year Plan which are owned by fishermen in the BPL category. The conditions imposed by the Government of India for the above scheme and the ceiling of rebate for 500 litres only per boat per month need to be relaxed.

The fishermen of all the coastal States have decided not to avail of the subsidy on central excise duty reimbursement unless the conditions imposed in the guidelines are completely scrapped. The amount sanctioned by the Government of India for each State remains unutilized year after year.

According due importance to the quality of life of the citizens, the Drugs Control Organisation of Tamil Nadu endeavours to improve the public

medical services in the State. The Tamil Nadu Medical Services Corporation (TNMSC) Limited was established on 01.07.1994 in Tamil Nadu during my first tenure as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu with the primary objective of procuring and supplying drugs to various Government Medical Institutions in the State. Over a period of time, in addition to drugs and medicines, the role of the Tamil Nadu Medical Services Corporation (TNMSC) has expanded to include the procurement and supply of medical equipment for the use of Government Hospitals. The Tamil Nadu Medical Services Corporation (TNMSC) adopts the most transparent system of procurement and utmost care is taken to procure quality drugs at most competitive rates by following the procedures as laid down in the Tamil Nadu Transparency in Tender Act and Rules 2000. The manufacturing premises are compulsorily inspected for good manufacturing production (GMP) as per the 'Drugs and Cosmetic Act' and for their production capacity. Those who are short listed on technical evaluation and on the inspection of the manufacturing premises are called for price bid opening and negotiations are held only with bidders for finalizing the rates. The Corporation has established a Quality Control Section to ensure the quality of drugs procured. Samples from each batch of supply are drawn and tested in the empanelled analytical laboratories which are selected through the open tender system to ensure the quality of drugs and the drugs which pass quality tests are issued to the Government Hospitals. TNMSC will not compromise on quality. The quality control measures are constantly being upgraded to meet the new challenges in the field and to maintain the quality of drugs available in the Health Institutions. The TNMSC always maintains four months physical stock in its warehouses and two months stock in the pipeline for all drugs.

Stringent quality control measures and strengthening of drug control measures have to be ensured to enable control of Inter State drug consignment movements.

With reference to Peninsular Tourism trains, I wish to point out that tourism has been a major foreign exchange earner in our economy. It is imperative to underscore the hitherto unknown places of interest. The Southern Zone being blessed with abundant tourist attractions which include beaches, religious centres, historical monuments, hills, wild life, spas, art, culture and architecture require proper showcasing. Train connectivity to important locations, hospitality ambience and amenities on these trains call for amelioration.

With regard to Coastal erosion Tamil Nadu, situated along the South-East of Peninsular India, has a major portion of this coastline starting from Pulicat in the North, and extending up to Kanniyakumari in the South, along the East coast and on the West coast a length of about 40km of the coastline from Kanniyakumari to Erayumanthurai. Estuaries of ecological importance, major and minor ports, fishing harbours, monuments of international heritage, tourist locations, pilgrimage centres etc. dot the coastline of Tamil Nadu. A considerable length of the Tamil Nadu coast is exposed to erosion and accretion. The three-member expert committee sent by the Government of India to visit the Groynes fields along the coastal line of Puducherry suggested a Short term plan consisting of Groynes after getting Coastal Regulatory Zone (CRZ) clearance to strengthen the sea wall and a Long term plan consisting of green belt development and also to resume the sand by-passing system. The suggestion of the Tamil Nadu Government is to restore and maintain the sand by pass system effectively in Ariyankuppam Port. The coastal structures should be planned in such a way that the adjacent coast is taken care of and the protection measures

should be sustainable. One damage control work should not entail damage of any other part. Hence for sustainable maintenance of the coast it is vital to have a combination of hard and soft measures after a detailed correction assessment.

The country is witnessing tremendous development of infrastructure. While prioritising the maintenance of supply of building materials from approved quarries of Tamil Nadu, I wish to inform you that due to the high level of urbanization in Tamil Nadu, the requirement for building materials is on the increase. However, the Government has noticed that in the districts bordering this State, located in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala, wherever urbanization is on the increase, the construction materials are quarried in the State of Tamil Nadu and transported to those areas. This has caused hardship to the consumers in the State of Tamil Nadu. Therefore, the Government amended the Tamil Nadu Minor Mineral Concession Rules, 1959 whereby transportation of river sand across the borders to the neighbouring States was banned. However no such prevention is in place in respect of other building materials.

In the interest of promotion and maintenance of Social Justice, the Government of Tamil Nadu has been implementing the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, and the Scheduled Castes / Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, and the Scheduled Castes / Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules, 1995, very effectively. The Addl. Director General of Police, Social Justice and Human Rights, at Headquarters, supervises the functioning of the 36 Social Justice and Human Rights units situated in all the Districts and Commissionerates (30 + 6) with the assistance of 11 Zonal Deputy Superintendents of Police. Special Courts have been created for the speedy disposal of cases registered under the

Scheduled Castes / Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act and Protection of Civil Rights Act. The Social Justice & Human Rights Wing in Tamil Nadu is a pioneer in identifying atrocity prone villages and initiating measures to bring the communities together. I am proud to say that the Government of India has lauded the "method of selection of atrocity prone villages" as adopted by Tamil Nadu and has asked other States to emulate our scientific approach in the identification of atrocity prone villages. State Level and District Level Vigilance and Monitoring Committee Meetings have been conducted regularly. The last State Level Vigilance and Monitoring Committee Meeting has been conducted on 21.06.2012 under the Chairmanship of the Hon'ble Minister for Finance at the Secretariat in Chennai. In the District Level Vigilance Monitoring Committee Meetings, the performance of Special Public Prosecutors and Prosecution cases etc., have been reviewed by the respective Collectors, Superintendents of Police and other Members of the Committee. The Asian Network for Innovation Training Trust (ANITRA) with the assistance of this wing organized 6 training programmes to create awareness with regard to the implementation of PCR and SCs/STs (POA) ACT. The Mass Awareness Campaign proposed to cover the total number of 37,854 villages / habitations in the State. Under the Select Village Scheme, one village in each district, where untouchability is not practiced and people live in harmony is selected for assistance. A sum of Rs. 2.00 lakhs was given to the selected villages to improve their basic infrastructure. Now I have enhanced the said amount to Rs. 10.00 lakhs per village.

With regard to the growing concern over Human Trafficking, the Government of Tamil Nadu has played a proactive role in combating trafficking and a holistic approach has been adopted towards the issue,

based on the principles of rescue, relief, rehabilitation and re-integration of the victims. The State Government has taken certain pioneering steps in combating the menace of trafficking. Based on the National Plan of Action to combat trafficking and sexual exploitation of women and children drafted in 1998, the State Government has constituted a State Level Co-ordination Committee in 2001, by nominating the Chief Secretary as the Chairperson, the Secretary of Social Welfare as Member Secretary and the Secretaries of Finance, Home, Law, the Director General of police and Director of Social Defence as members, besides two representatives from Non-Governmental Organizations. District Level Advisory Committees have been formed in all Districts with the District Collector as Chairperson and the Superintendent of Police as Vice Chairperson. Village Level Watch Dog Committees have been constituted in 2002 for elimination of trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of women and children. A High Level Supervisory Committee under the Chairpersonship of the Hon'ble Minister for Social Welfare has been formed. The State Government is implementing the Ujjawala Scheme (A Government of India scheme for prevention of trafficking) through Non-Governmental Organisations. Prevention, Rescue, Rehabilitation, Re-integration and Repatriation are the major components of the Scheme. The Scheme is in operation in 8 Districts of the State. Swadhar Homes are functioning in 11 Districts of the State through Non-Governmental Organisations under the supervision of the Department of Social Defence.

Efforts have been stepped up to streamline the investigation of cases of missing persons. 'CHILD LINE', an emergency Toll free No.1098 is operating throughout the State for the benefit of children. In order to strengthen security measures at the Government hospitals to prevent child lifting, security measures which include appointment of security guards, restriction

of visitors, ensuring identity cards for all the hospital staff and installation of CCTV in all maternity wards is being implemented phase-wise. A Committee to draw up the protocol on security measures has been constituted. The State Government has formed a State Commission for Protection of Children Rights (SCPCR), similar to the National Commission for Protection of Children Rights and the committee so formed will select a Chairperson for SCPCR. In all, 40 Anti Human Trafficking Units have been formed in Tamil Nadu to combat human trafficking covering all Districts/City Commissionerates. The ADGP, CB CID has been designated as the State Level Nodal Officer for Anti-Human Trafficking issues. A State-Level Co-ordination Committee to Combat Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children, headed by the Chief Secretary, has been formed. I have increased the victims assistance fund from Rs. 5000 to Rs. 10,000 for each victim who has been rescued from the clutches of traffickers to undertake economic activities for their livelihood and rehabilitation.

A Conference of senior Police and Forest officers of the three States of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala was convened by the Inspector General of Police, Intelligence (Internal Security), Chennai, at the office of the Commissioner of Police, Coimbatore City, on 14.09.2012, in connection with instituting precautionary measures to curtail the activities of CPI (Maoist) in the tri-junction area.

Power development is an important input for the State's Industrial, Commercial and Socio economic growth. Adequate provision has to be made for augmenting power supply to bridge the gap between demand and supply as well as to meet the increasing future demand. Keeping this in view, my Government is giving utmost importance to the power sector in Tamil Nadu.

At present, the demand-supply mismatch is between 3000 to 4000 MW which represents about a third of the State's power demand. It is estimated that the expected demand by the end of the 12th Plan period will be 18311 MW whereas the present availability is only around 8500 MW. To mitigate the power shortage in the State, I have requested the Hon'ble Prime Minister for the allocation of the entire power to be generated from the first unit of 1000MW capacity in the Koodankulam Nuclear Power Project in Tamil Nadu.

It is also pertinent to note that while all other regions namely North, East, West and North East are interconnected as a single grid (NEW grid), the Southern Region has not been interconnected with the National grid. This creates an imbalance between the Southern Region and the rest of the country, disabling the Southern Region from actively participating in and benefiting from the National Power Market. The geographical location of a particular State should not be a handicap to buying or selling electricity from or to any other State within the country. This problem should be sorted out by the Government of India at the earliest.

To bridge the gap between demand and supply and to make the State power surplus again, a detailed strategy has been drawn up. Action has been taken for a massive capacity addition program by instituting new projects and to expedite the ongoing power projects and the projects which have been sanctioned and are yet to be started.

However, clearance from the Ministry of Environment and Forest and Coal linkages are the main issues required to be expedited by the Government of India. The North Chennai Thermal Power Project, a major project, is ready for commissioning but revised environment clearance has not yet been given by the Ministry of Environment and Forest Department. This may be facilitated at the earliest.

The State Government has also taken necessary steps to promote Solar Energy. In order to achieve energy security as well as to reduce carbon emission, in the public interest, the State has released the Tamil Nadu Solar Energy Policy 2012, on 20.10.2012. It is proposed to generate 3000 MW of Solar Energy by 2015 and to encourage indigenous Solar manufacturing facilities in this State.

I have set out my detailed views on the subjects included in the agenda in the hope that these deliberations will lead to meaningful solutions to the issues raised and will also facilitate the formulation of new approaches promoting intra regional co-operation. In a federal polity like ours, each State may have a Government formed by a different party, in consonance with the tenets of our vibrant democracy.

In an already complex environment where fast changing socio-economic paradigms demand constant vigil and electric actions, it should be the collective endeavour of the country to chalk out long standing sustainable solutions.

I wish this Council meeting all success.

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