

**PRESS RELEASE**

Members of Parliament belonging to AIADMK lead by Dr. M. Thambi Durai, Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha and Thiru Udumalai K. Radhakrishnan, Chairman, Tamil Nadu Arasu Cable T.V. Corporation met Shri Arun Jaitley, Hon'ble Union Minister for Finance, Corporate Affairs and Information and Broadcasting on 9.12.2014 and handed over the D.O. Letter addressed to him by Thiru O. Panneerselvam, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. The text of the letter is reproduced below:

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“You may recall that one of the first actions that our beloved leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma took on assumption of office as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in May, 2011, was the revival of the defunct Tamil Nadu Arasu Cable TV Corporation (TACTV), a Government of Tamil Nadu Public Sector Undertaking formed to provide cable television services to the poor and middle class customers in the State.

TACTV is providing Cable TV services in 31 of the 32 Districts of Tamil Nadu since 2.9.2011. In Chennai services were commenced subsequently. As a service provider targeting the middle class and poor customers, TACTV provides a package of 100 channels to subscribers at a cost of Rs.70/- per month, the lowest rate anywhere in the country. Public response has been overwhelming with a rapid ramp up of the subscriber base which has reached nearly 24,000 Local Cable Operators with 65 lakh individual subscribers. This has made TACTV the single largest Multi System Operator in India. The rejuvenation of TACTV has freed the people of Tamil Nadu from the clutches of the erstwhile Multi System Operators who were consistently fleecing customers by charging Rs.150 – 250 per month for a bouquet of just 30 – 70 Channels.

The Government of India had issued a Conditional Addressable System (CAS) license covering Chennai City to TACTV on 2.4.2008. Based on this license TACTV is now transmitting signals in the Chennai Metro Area as well. Subsequently, the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995 was amended and the 'Conditional Access System' area was modified to 'Digital Addressable System' (DAS) area. Accordingly, TACTV has taken all necessary steps to commence operations in the Digital Mode in Chennai City. TACTV promptly applied to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for the Digital Addressable System license on 5.7.2012 for operating in the Chennai Metro Area and on 23.11.2012 for operating in the rest of Tamil Nadu. In preparation for commencing digital operations, orders were placed for the supply of Set Top Boxes, Conditional Access System and Subscriber Management System and erection of Head End at a cost of about Rs.50 crore.

Even as TACTV's applications for licenses were kept pending, it is learnt that in the previous UPA Government, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting issued licenses to nine other Multi System Operators in Tamil Nadu, including those who applied after TACTV. In order to take up this issue strongly, on the directions of our Beloved Leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, delegations of Members of Parliament from Tamil Nadu repeatedly met the then Union Ministers for Information and Broadcasting and even the former Prime Minister to request the speedy issue of licenses since the digitization had to be completed within a time frame.

The Madurai Bench of the Hon'ble High Court of Madras had also passed orders in a Writ Petition pending before it, as early as 6.12.2012, that the process of issue of license to Tamil Nadu Arasu Cable TV Corporation may go on and the license may also be issued. Our Beloved Leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma had also written to the then Prime Minister of India to direct the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to issue license to TACTV.

Despite all these efforts, the Digital Addressable System license is yet to be issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. It is learnt that Ministry of Information and Broadcasting had constituted an Inter Ministerial Committee(IMC) on 3.1.2013 to look into the recommendations of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on the licensing issue and the Committee has still not submitted its final report.

As per the provisions of the Cable TV Network (Regulations) Act, 1995 and Rules thereof a person or an association of individuals or a company registered under the Companies Act, is entitled to obtain a DAS license. TACTV is fully qualified under the Act to be issued such a license. We strongly suspect that the non-issuance of the DAS license to TACTV by the previous UPA Government was only to facilitate particular private business interests, as other licenses were issued at the same time.

The issue of a DAS License to Tamil Nadu Arasu Cable TV Corporation was one of the issues our Beloved Leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma had highlighted in the Memorandum presented to the Hon'ble Prime Minister on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 2014. Our Beloved Leader had also written a detailed letter to the former Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Information and Broadcasting on 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2014, on this issue. This is an issue on which we were keenly expecting an early decision from your Government in view of the clear legal position and the strong merits of the case. The updated status on the Cabinet Secretariat's website on pending issues of State Governments with Government of India still indicates that the matter is under consideration of the IMC. You would agree that nearly two years is an inordinate amount of time for an Inter-Ministerial Committee of officials to take to formulate a view on an issue of this nature.

Therefore, I request you to kindly have this matter reviewed at the earliest and arrange to issue the 'Digital Addressable System' license to the Tamil Nadu Arasu Cable TV Corporation Ltd without any further loss of time. This would enable the Government of Tamil Nadu to adhere to its commitment to provide inexpensive and quality Cable TV services to the people of Tamil Nadu, particularly the poor and the middle class."

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