

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Text of the D.O Letter dated 14.01.2015 addressed by Thiru O.Panneerselvam, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India is reproduced below.**

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"You may be aware that Jallikattu, a traditional sporting event of Tamil Nadu, is conducted as a part of the Pongal festivities in which bulls that are reared exclusively for this event are tamed by able bodied youth. This event has considerable historical significance and is ingrained as part of the cultural tradition of Tamil Nadu as a sport which was popular among warriors since the "Sangam era". This tradition is followed till now. It is inextricably linked to rural, agrarian customs and has religious overtones, with families donating bulls to temples in fulfilment of vows. The second day of Pongal is dedicated to showing gratitude to the bulls that serve the farmer. This event also addresses the cause of conservation of native germplasm since bulls with excellent physical attributes are reared. This 2000 year old traditional sport which finds a mention in the ancient Tamil treatise "Silapathigaram" has been conducted unhindered with all the associated religious fervour.

It would also be appropriate to mention here that the domesticated bull was categorised as a 'performing animal' along with wild animals such as Bears, Monkeys, Tigers, Panthers, Lions by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India vide notification no. **GSR 528 (E) dated 11.07.2011** superseding the earlier notification vide **GSR 619 (E) dated 14.10.1998**.

It is pertinent to point out that this notification attracts the provisions of Section 22(ii) of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals act, 1960, which states that "... as a performing animal, any animal, which the Central Government may, by notification in the official gazette, specify as an animal which shall not be exhibited or trained as a performing animal" and thereby this notification prohibits the conduct of Jallikattu.

Considering the fact that Jallikattu is viewed as a cultural festival with religious overtones, the rural farmers of Tamil Nadu have been shocked by the abrupt ban on the sport which has been cherished and savoured for centuries. The ban has hurt the sentiments of millions of rural farmers for whom this sport is a religious, social and cultural event.

Considering the cultural, traditional and religious sentiments of the people of Tamil Nadu, the Government of Tamil Nadu as per the directions of my revered leader, Puratchi Thalaivi Amma has taken consistent efforts for the last several months to remove bulls from the list of performing animals as per the notification dated 11.7.2011. The Secretary, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries, Government of Tamil Nadu, has had several rounds of discussions with the officials of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, on the above mentioned issues. The most recent discussions were held on 7.1.2015 and 12.1.2015. We were hopeful that the Government of India would issue this notification forthwith. Media reports also state that the Union Minister for Environment and Forests has stated that the notification would be issued very shortly which would facilitate the conduct of Jallikattu and the Rekla Race. However, the Government of India has not yet issued this notification.

In this context, with the Pongal festival fast approaching, I request you to honour the sentiments of the people of Tamil Nadu by instructing the officials of the Ministry of Environment and Forests to take immediate action to denotify bulls from the list of performing animals so that Jallikattu could be conducted from 16.1.2015 as per the usual practice”.

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**Dated – 14.01.2015**