

**P.R.No:1112**

**Date:14.11.2021**

Hon'ble Union Home Minister and Chairman of the Southern Zonal Council,  
Hon'ble Chief Ministers,

Senior officers of the Union Government and the State Governments

I extend my warm greetings to you on this important occasion and I am really happy that such Southern Zonal Council Meeting is held to sort out the inter-State issues. I thank the Hon'ble Union Home Minister for his sagacity in spearheading this interaction which would certainly yield fruitful results.

Despite my zeal to attend this conference, the continuous downpour in our State and the devastation caused by the depression due to vagaries of weather I could not participate physically in this meeting. Unprecedented havoc caused by the onslaught of the depression requires my presence to monitor the relief works and redress the grievances of the affected people. Therefore, I request you to kindly take leave of my absence. I have deputed a senior Minister from our State on my behalf.

The State of Tamil Nadu is known for its uncompromising commitments and pioneering milestones that it has reached in the field of social justice for establishing an egalitarian society. It is always guided by the principles of gender equality, economic equity, equal opportunity for all, schemes for the underprivileged sections of the society and radical for empowering the marginalized sections. The State is known for its determined approach towards providing quality education with nutrition and health care apart from ensuring effective Universal Public Distribution System in the entire country. The achievement of the State on economic and social fronts are truly noteworthy. It is the result of focused and combined efforts towards creating a pluralistic and inclusive society with progressive thinking. I would like to highlight a few

notable aspects about our State. Tamil Nadu is the second largest economy in the country and has the maximum number of factories. It's a well-known hub for automobile manufacturing, textiles, leather, electronics and information technology among other fields. Tamil Nadu has also the maximum number of higher educational institutions and technical institutes and has excellent skilled human resources.

Tamil Nadu always trusts in cooperative federalism with strong patriotic fervor with equal emphasis on the rights of the State and their autonomy. It is second to none in contributing towards National integration and upholding the principles of unity. Tamil Nadu strongly believes that the beauty of India lies in its multi-culturalism and its inclusiveness that has been nurtured from time immemorial. Tamil Nadu strives to maintain cordial relationship with the neighboring States and is the home for people from all parts of the country.

When this Government took over the reins of administration on May 7th, 2021, Covid pandemic posed a big challenge with the daily infection of around 27,000 cases; soon it rose to a colossal figure of 36,000 and reached its zenith. However, by coordinating all the sectors of administration and by streamlining the functioning of health sector, we could subdue the impact and spread of the pandemic. Our unrelenting and planned efforts brought down the daily infection to less than thousand cases today. We carefully and gradually relaxed the lockdown measures and ensured the quick revival of the economy.

In response to the appeal made by me to the Corporate Sector, Non-Governmental Organizations and philanthropic institutions, a copious contribution of Rs.537.91 crore to the Chief Minister's Public Relief Fund has been received. Further, contributions in the form of oxygen concentrators, lifesaving equipment, sanitizers, masks, etc., were also received in large quantity. The funds so received have been used in a transparent manner to

provide relief to the Covid management and relief. Immediately on assumption of office, this Government disbursed Rs.4,000/- as relief assistance in two installments, totaling Rs.8,393 crore to all 2.1 crore rice ration card holders in the State to mitigate their sufferings due to setback in economy.

The State has so far covered vaccination of 6.07 crore people and the vaccination camps are still going on. At this juncture, we wish to appreciate the decision of the Union Government to centrally procure and supply vaccines free of cost to all categories. We also thank the Union Government for helping us in establishing 70 PSAs under PM Cares Fund, which were operationalized in a record period of hundred days.

Now, I would like to mention about certain other initiatives and dimensions of the State. Tamil Nadu has been continuously making efforts to promote ease of doing business in the State and to reduce the compliance burden for businesses and enterprises. The Tamil Nadu Business Facilitation Act, 2020 has been enacted to ensure time-bound delivery of services through the Single Window Portal with defined timelines for 160 clearances. In order to digitize services to improve their time bound delivery, the Single Window Portal (SWP) 2.0 was launched on 20th July 2021 which offers 100 digitized services spread across 24 departments. An additional 100 services are planned to be offered through Single Window Portal by 2022.

Tamil Nadu is known for its ancient culture and rich heritage. The people of Tamil Nadu take pride in their language known for its antiquity and profound literature. The Hon'ble Prime Minister never misses to quote verses from Tamil literature in his speeches in order to embellish an argument. It is also the first classical language of India to be accorded official recognition as a classical language. Being one of the world's oldest and rich language that is already a National Language in Sri Lanka and Singapore, and a minority language in

Malaysia and South Africa, we urge the Union Government to declare our Classical Language as one of the official languages of the country. We also request the Union Government to declare Thirukkural as National Book, that signifies its secular couplets with capsules of wisdom.

Tamil Nadu is a water deficit State and in short of a perennial river flowing through its territory. The farmers toil with the scanty groundwater and uncertain monsoon. Having a large farming population depending on traditional agriculture for ensuring food security, protecting our rights on inter-state rivers is too crucial for our State. We are always ready to cooperate with our neighboring States and resolve the issues in a constructive and amicable manner resulting in mutual benefit.

Now I would like to dwell upon the points enunciated in the agenda.

Regarding use of UIDAI database for verifying the antecedents of marine fishermen in the high seas, instructions have been given to sensitize as well as to create awareness among the fishermen to carry documents, identity cards and QR based Aadhar cards and the field officers are randomly checking the presence of Biometric cards / Aadhar cards, boat registration certificates while venturing into the sea. During the patrolling the Indian Coast Guards / Marine Enforcement wing / Coastal Security officials are also verifying the presence of QR based Aadhar cards of the fishermen at sea.

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought several alterations and challenges to the delivery of health services. Almost 80 percent of deaths during the Covid-19 pandemic were among people with co-morbidities, especially with Non-Communicable Diseases (NCOs). The adverse impact of the pandemic was particularly felt in the area of NCDs as the pandemic resulted in the disruption of treatment, increased mortality and morbidity in patients with comorbidities like Hypertension and Diabetes. I have launched the flagship scheme “Makkalai

Thedi Maruthuvam” on 05.08.2021 to address the increasing burden due to Non-Communicable Diseases by focusing on community-based interventions to improve compliance and control of the disease.

Next, I would like to talk about transfer of Railway lands. Regarding review of policy on transfer of Railway lands for Metro Rail Projects on permanent basis and permission to cross Railway lines / lands, Railway land should be transferred to Metro Rail Project on permanent basis. The transfer must be with full surface rights without any restriction when 99 percent of the market value is charged, as is being done by other Central Government Departments / Agencies for underground tunneling work below their land. If the full surface rights are not given, then only nominal / token value should be charged for restricted rights. In underground tunneling, even for depth less than 15 meters, only the nominal fee as track rent should be charged. When the surface is not affected and no surface rights are given, it is totally unreasonable to charge any such amount.

On the energy front, I would like to state that Tamil Nadu has been a pioneer in promoting renewable energy sources which are eco-friendly and non-exhaustive. The State is blessed with hot weather, vast coastline and strong wind potential that are yet to be fully exploited to meet its energy requirement. The State has signed several MoUs to use this potential and maximize the returns.

Tamil Nadu stands first in exploiting the onshore wind energy. The installed capacity is 8,604 MW and it ranks among the top five States in India as far as the solar power is concerned. With an installed capacity of 4,692 MW, Tamil Nadu also has huge potential to further harness offshore wind energy. However, we are yet to get a green signal from the Union Government to go ahead with our projects. Many international organizations are keen to

establish partnerships with our government. Therefore, we request the Union Government to come out with a viable policy in this regard at its earliest convenience.

In order to minimize the difficulties faced by the system operators to manage the grid with sudden change in Renewable Energy generation, actual error percentage has to be calculated for wind and solar generation with respect to their scheduled generation. Hence, the available capacity of wind and solar generator used in calculating absolute error in the CERC (Deviation Settlement Mechanism and related matters) Regulations, 2015 (Forecast & Scheduling for RE) has to be replaced with the scheduled generation of wind and solar generation.

On the Rural Development front, regarding the implementation of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) Mission, Under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS) wages are credited to the beneficiaries' Bank Accounts directly from the Union Government through National Electronic Fund Management System (Ne-FMS) since 07.11.2016. Workers' bank accounts are seeded with their Aadhaar Number and Aadhaar Based Payment System is being followed for improving Transparency as well as Accountability.

Out of the total **92.67 Lakhs Active Workers**, **91.86 Lakhs workers' Aadhaar details are seeded** in their Bank Account and wages for **67.26 Lakhs workers are disbursed through Aadhaar Based Payment which is 72.59 percent**. However, the wages for the **remaining 27.41 percent** are disbursed through Ne-FMS and credited to the beneficiaries Bank Accounts directly.

Tamil Nadu is a forerunner among States in enacting law for providing social security cover for unorganized workers. It provides financial assistance to the families of the enrolled members in pursuing education and for events such as

marriage, maternity, etc. It also provides relief during contingencies such as natural death, accidental death, funeral expenses, accident disability, etc.

The Tamil Nadu Manual Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Work) Act, 1982 and the schemes enacted therein provide a security net to the Unorganized Workers. Nearly 69 manual and 54 construction categories of employments are being covered under this Act.

Tamil Nadu is a model State in the implementation of the Social Security Schemes. The Social Security Pension Schemes are extended to all the vulnerable sections of the society such as senior citizens, differently-abled persons, widows, agricultural labourers, poor farmers, deserted wives, unmarried women of the age of 50 years and above who are destitute and poor. Currently, the Government is granting Rs.1,000/- per month as pension uniformly under all pension schemes. The Government provides pension to the artistes who are unable to earn their livelihood by virtue of old age and weakness.

In conclusion, I wish to bring it to the benign notice of the esteemed participants from our neighboring States that we share many things in common. Our culture has lot of similarities. We have grown by our policy of inclusiveness. We have common cuisine, weather and shared values. Many of our brethren live in the neighboring States by completely merged with their culture and identities. Solidarity among us is crucial in utilizing the limited resources available with us in a judicious manner. Unnecessary litigations and needless conflicts will result in unwanted animosity that may hinder our progress. The universal language of love can dissolve all problems and make us march in the path of progress unitedly.

Nanri, Vanakkam.

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