

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O. letter dated 17.1.2018 of **Thiru Edappadi K. Palaniswami**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu addressed to **Shri Narendra Modi**, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, New Delhi.

"I wish to bring to your kind notice that about 850 fireworks manufacturing units are functioning in Tamil Nadu. These units are mostly located in Virudhunagar District and contribute 90% of the fireworks produced in the country. They provide employment to more than 8 lakh people mostly women, directly or indirectly. All the manufacturers observe very high standards of safety and have evolved as a well regulated Industry over a period of time.

However, recently the industry is facing a major setback, due to filing of Public Interest Litigations by a few NGOs and individuals before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India to ban manufacture, sale and use of fireworks in any form. The manufacturers of fireworks have suffered very severe financial losses and there has also been loss of employment due to imposition of ban on sale of fireworks in NCR region during the 2017 Diwali season.

Even though the ban was subsequently lifted by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, few more Public Interest Litigations have been filed before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India and the same have been admitted. This has created fear and uncertainty in the minds of the firework manufacturers leading to disruption of production as they are unsure about the outcome of the pending Public Interest Litigations.

As you will appreciate, use of fireworks during Diwali and many other religious and cultural festivals is deeply rooted in our tradition. Even in the developed countries like U.S.A., Singapore, Japan, Australia and the EU nations allow massive display of fireworks during celebration of religious, cultural and National events such as Christmas, New Year, Independence day, etc. The importance of display of fireworks during the National and cultural events in USA can be derived from the fact that the Supreme Court of USA has gone on record to pronounce, that as per the Second Amendment of the Constitution of USA, usage of fireworks during celebrations of cultural events is a right of all Americans, as it symbolises display of civic pride and patriotism.

Further, with the improvement in chemical technology, better quality fireworks which leads to lesser pollution are constantly being evolved.

As per rule 3(b) of the Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986, only when the level of any of the pollutants mentioned in the table in Schedule VII goes beyond the prescribed limit in the said table for two consecutive days shall the alarm bells ring and continuous monitoring and further investigation instituted. In the case of fire works, almost all reported scientific data has revealed reversing of the level of pollution to the level prior to the use of fireworks, within 24 hours.

I have been further informed that the manufacturers of fireworks in Tamil Nadu use nitrate salts for its production, which is much less polluting than chloride salts, which are used extensively in fireworks manufactured in other parts of the world. Further, none of the firework manufacturers in Tamil Nadu are using the chemicals prohibited under various Pollution Control Rules or by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India.

The manufacturers of fireworks in Tamil Nadu are using safe and environment friendly products and there are no recorded long term effect on the environment. Since the use of fireworks is attached to our socio cultural traditions, any ban on production, sale and use of the same will adversely affect the sentiments of the people of India. It will also affect the livelihood of 8 lakh people and push them further into poverty.

I, therefore, urge you to direct the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to carryout necessary amendment to Rule 3 (b) of the Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986 and exempt the fireworks manufacturing industry from various provisions of the Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986, thereby saving the livelihood of 8 lakh families dependent on fireworks industry."

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