

Hon'ble Chief Minister's Speech at Internal Security Meeting on
20.12.2007 at New Delhi

Honourable Prime Minister,
Honourable Home Minister,
Honourable Chief Ministers,
and other Dignitaries;

At the outset, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Honourable Prime Minister for having convened this meeting to discuss issues relating to internal security of the country. Threats to internal security of the nation do not have state boundaries and therefore, it is necessary for all of us to work in coordination and collaboration with the Government of India.

As you know, Tamil Nadu continues to be a haven of peace, thanks to the tireless efforts of the State Police, and effective co-ordination with the central intelligence agencies.

To make the Police system more effective and responsive, Government of Tamil Nadu has appointed three State Police Commissions in the years 1969, 1989 and 2006. I am glad to inform that the State has been able to implement most of the recommendations of the first two State Police Commissions. The Third State Police Commission is expected to finalize its recommendations soon.

The State's Budget allotment to Police Department has been growing in tune with requirements. During the year 2007-2008, the estimated expenditure is Rs.2082 crores, which is about 4.66% of the State's Revenue expenditure. Tamil Nadu has a healthy police population ratio of 650 per lakh of population.

Tamil Nadu has a separate 'Q' wing in the Intelligence set up, to monitor the activities of extremist organizations. The effective functioning of the branch helped the State to keep activities of naxalites, Maoists, other fundamentalist groups under check. Constant vigil, effective intelligence and timely action has resulted in the arrest of 5 Maoists by the State Police even yesterday (19.12.2007). We are confident that our continued efforts in this regard will nip this problem in the bud in Tamil Nadu.

The special branch has to be strengthened further with adequate men and equipments. It is in this regard the State looks to financial assistance from the centre.

Since internal security is the joint responsibility of the State and Centre, I request the Government of India to consider recurring grants to the States to meet staff costs of the intelligence wing of the States.

I would also like to suggest that the Centre should come forward with innovative training programmes for skill upgradation of the police, using the services of the Central intelligence agencies, to train the Officers and men of the Special branches.

I would like to draw your attention to a special problem of refugee influx in the State. Totally, 19 thousand 500 families consisting of 73 thousand Sri Lankan Tamil refugees are now housed in 117 refugee settlements spread over 25 districts of Tamil Nadu. I have written in detail to the Hon'ble Union Home Minister last month to continue to reimburse the cash dole paid to the Sri Lankan refugees by the State Government, and also to continue with the supply of subsidized rice at 57 paise per kilo gram beyond 31.3.2007. A positive gesture by the Government of India in this regard will enable us to carry on with our refugee rehabilitation activities smoothly.

Next important issue relates to Indian fishermen being attacked by the Sri Lankan Navy. The number of incidents is on the rise. During this calendar year, so far, 8 fishermen were killed and 13 injured. I appeal to you that fishermen from Tamil Nadu must be allowed to operate within a clearly demarcated area with due protection of the Indian Navy without any interference by Sri Lankan authorities.

In this regard, I wish to inform that the State has a 1076 Kilometer long coast line. The State has deployed one full company of the Tamil Nadu Special Police in manning the 60 check posts set up across the long coast.

Securing the international border is the duty cast on the Central Government and therefore the Central Government should reimburse to the State of Tamil Nadu, its expenditure on the coastal security. I urge the Union Government to consider this long standing request of the State favourably.

Next, I would like to mention about the allocations made under the centrally sponsored Modernization of Police Force scheme. I would like to bring to your notice that, from Rs.153 crores in the year 2000-2001, the Central Government reduced Tamil Nadu's allocation to Rs.68 crores in 2007-08. I hope the Hon'ble Prime minister would take into consideration the special circumstances of Tamil Nadu and allot at least Rs.100 crores in the coming year.

The third important issue relates to Mega City Policing. The Police Commissionerate of Chennai covers a population of about 1 crore and the growing number of economic offences, traffic problems, white collared crimes, etc. add up to make this even more challenging. The Government of India should look at problems of mega city policing and provide at least Rs.50 crores for this purpose separately under the MPF and not club it under the overall State allocation.

Next, I would like to mention about the extremist activists in our border States and the steps we need to take to prevent them from making in-roads into our State. In this regard, I would like to stress that the package of assistance given to naxalite affected States should be extended to bordering states like Tamil Nadu also, to prevent extremism from spreading.

I would also like to suggest the creation of a centrally sponsored regional centre of excellence dedicated to imparting high-tech anti-terrorism training.

Similarly, it is high time, that a dedicated Commando Force also be raised and maintained with full funding by Government of India.

Finally, it is my suggestion that the meeting of the subsidiary multi-agency centre be held once in two months, instead of the present once in a quarter.

To conclude, I thank the Union Government for this opportunity and I assure that Tamil Nadu will continue to extend its full support to the Central Government in protecting the internal security of the Nation.

Thank You all.

* * *