

**PRESS RELEASE**

Text of the D.O. letter dated 22.12.2015 of **Selvi J Jayalalithaa**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu addressed to **Shri Narendra Modi**, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.

"Jallikattu, a traditional sporting event, has been conducted as part of the Pongal festivities in rural Tamil Nadu for many centuries. Bulls that are reared exclusively for this event are tamed by able bodied youth. Jallikattu has considerable historical significance and is ingrained in the cultural tradition of Tamil Nadu. It is a sport which finds mention in the great epic "Silappathigaram" and was popular among warriors since the "Sangam era". The sport is inextricably linked to rural, agrarian customs and practices and helps with the conservation of native germplasm since bulls with excellent physical attributes are reared. It also has religious connotations with families donating bulls to temples in fulfilment of vows. The second day of the Pongal festivities is dedicated to showing gratitude to the bulls that serve and contribute to the prosperity of the farmers.

Section 22(ii) of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, empowers the Central Government to notify animals which shall not be exhibited or trained as performing animals. The Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, vide notification no. GSR 528 (E) dated 11.07.2011, superseded the earlier notification vide GSR 619 (E) dated 14.10.1998 and categorised bulls in the list of animals which shall not be exhibited or trained as performing animals along with wild animals such as Bears, Monkeys, Tigers, Panthers and Lions. This Notification was upheld by the Supreme Court in its order dated 7.5.2014. The Supreme Court consequently ruled that bulls cannot be used as performing animals for the Jallikattu events.

The Government of Tamil Nadu immediately preferred a Review Petition before the Supreme Court Bench which was filed on 19.5.2014 and which is still pending.

The Government of Tamil Nadu has been making consistent efforts and urging the Ministry of Environment and Forests to take up suitable legislation to enable the conduct of Jallikattu in Tamil Nadu. Several rounds of discussions were held with the officials of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government

of India. We were hopeful that the Government of India would take the necessary steps to enable the conduct of Jallikattu.

I had reiterated the Government of Tamil Nadu's requests to legally pave the way for conducting Jallikattu in my Memorandum presented to you on 7.8.2015. The inability to conduct Jallikattu has caused general disappointment and widespread resentment among the people of Tamil Nadu, particularly in the rural areas, as this is a sport which is part of their cherished tradition.

Media reports had indicated that the Minister of State (Independent Charge) Environment, Forests and Climate Change had stated that the Government of India would introduce a Bill in Parliament during this winter session to enable the conduct of Jallikattu. We were eagerly looking forward to the introduction of the Bill. However, media reports have now quoted the Union Minister of State for Road Transport, Highways and Shipping as stating that the deadlock in the Rajya Sabha was the reason for the non introduction of legislation to enable the conduct of Jallikattu during the Pongal festival in 2016.

In this context, as the Pongal festival is fast approaching, it is very important that the sentiments of the people of Tamil Nadu, who have a deep attachment to the conduct of the traditional event of Jallikattu, are honoured. Hence I strongly urge you to immediately direct the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change to introduce a Bill to comprehensively and suitably amend the relevant provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, and any other relevant laws to enable the conduct of Jallikattu. Such a Bill would need to be passed immediately to enable the conduct of Jallikattu during the ensuing Pongal season in January, 2016. May I request that the Parliament session be extended, or a special session called for this purpose? Alternatively, considering the urgency of the issue, the Government of India may consider promulgating an Ordinance enabling the conduct of Jallikattu during Pongal, 2016. On behalf of the people of Tamil Nadu, I urge you to have the Ordinance promulgated expeditiously."

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Issued by : Director, Information and Public Relations, Chennai – 9.  
Date : 23.12.2015