

PRESS RELEASE

Text of three D.O. letters dated 25.2.2018 from **Thiru Edappadi K. Palaniswami**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu addressed to **Shri Nitin Gadkari**, Hon'ble Minister of Road Transport, Highways and Shipping, Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Government of India, New Delhi.

1) "I invite your kind attention to the relentless efforts taken by Hon'ble Puratchi Thalaivi Amma for the formation of the Cauvery Management Board and Cauvery Water Regulation Committee, for the effective implementation of the Final Order of the Tribunal. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in its judgment delivered on 16.2.2018 on the Cauvery Water dispute, has specifically directed that the Government of India shall constitute a scheme to implement the order of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. The Order reads as under –

"Keeping that in view, we direct that a scheme shall be framed by the Central Government within a span of six weeks from today (16.2.2018), so that the authorities under the scheme can see to it that the present decision which has modified the award passed by the Tribunal is smoothly made functional and the rights of the States as determined by us are appositely carried out. When we say so, we also categorically convey that the need based monthly release has to be respected. It is hereby made clear that no extension shall be granted for framing of the scheme on any ground."

I bring it your kind notice that an All Party Meeting was held on 22.2.2018 at Chennai on this issue and in the meeting, it was unanimously resolved to urge the Government of India for the early constitution of the Cauvery Management Board and Cauvery Water Regulation Committee.

One week has already passed since the pronouncement of the order by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, and there is only five weeks' time left to constitute the Scheme as per the Order. I, therefore, request the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation to immediately constitute the Cauvery Management Board and Cauvery Water Regulation Committee, vested with all powers for effective implementation of the orders of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India."

2) "I thank you very much for the immense interest you had shown in the implementation of various projects in Tamil Nadu, during our discussions in Chennai on 23.11.2017 particularly, the implementation of the Peninsular River Development Component. Moreover, in the same meeting, I had presented a Memorandum and requested you to implement the interlinking of Peninsular rivers speedily and to nationalize all inter-State Rivers.

During the discussions, you were kind enough to inform me that 300 TMC ft. of water would be transferred from Godavari river and through this transfer river Cauvery would get 125 TMC ft. at Grand Anicut.

Since the Grand Anicut has a low storage capacity, I request that the link from Somasila to Cauvery should be at a higher contour level, so that water would reach Kattalai Barrage (located upstream of Grand Anicut) at a higher elevation.

The National Water Development Agency in its Technical Feasibility Note on Godavari (Akinapalli) – Cauvery (Grand Anicut) in December, 2017 has concluded that only about 1600 Mcum (57 TMC ft.) of water would reach the river Cauvery at Grand Anicut after meeting the en route requirements partially in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

You are aware that the State of Tamil Nadu has been left with very poor water resources. The only major river system in the State is the Cauvery, which is also deficit and the use of its waters is under dispute. The annual per capita availability of water in the State is 860 cubic meters only, as against the national average of 1869 cubic meters. Tamil Nadu has practically tapped all its surface water resources and has to look for sources beyond its frontiers to meet the needs of its growing population.

The National Water Policy 1987, now revised in 2012, emphasizes the need for inter-basin transfer of waters for meeting basic human need and achieving equity and social justice.

In these circumstances, I request you to ensure that at least a minimum of 125 TMC ft. of water is made available to Tamil Nadu to partially meet its irrigation, drinking water supply and other needs under the Godavari (Akinapalli) – Cauvery link system. The quantity to Tamil Nadu should be stepped up as and when the surplus water of Mahanadhi is transferred to Godavari.

I look forward to your positive response in this matter.”

3) “Kindly recall the fruitful discussions on 23.11.2017 in Chennai, wherein a memoranda was presented seeking your support for Highways and Shipping sectors. I thank you whole-heartedly for your decision to sanction numerous development projects for Tamil Nadu, costing about one lakh crore rupees.

I also take this opportunity to thank you for the sanction of additional funds to the tune of Rs.735.22 crore under NH (O) for upkeep of National Highway stretches entrusted to the State NH Wing and also for sanctioning funds for widening NH-45 into 8-lane for a distance of 2.30 Km, from Irumbuliyur to Vandalur.

Considering the high traffic potential and importance of Salem City, I would like to suggest that a Green Express Way Corridor between Salem and Chennai cities be formed, that will substantially reduce the distance and save fuel. Such a new Expressway will boost the socio-economic status of the State in a big way. Moreover, the new stretch will mostly involve dry lands, wherein the cost of land acquisition may not be very high, when compared to the benefits.

I would like to inform that at present, Salem is connected with Chennai in the following three routes:

- (i) Salem - Athur - Ulundurpet - Villupuram - Chennai (345 Km);
- (ii) Salem - Krishnagiri - Walajah - Chennai (360 Km);
- (iii) Salem - Harur - Tiruvannamalai - Cheyyar - Walajah - Oragadam - Tambaram (319 Km);

The road travel from Ulundurpet to Chennai with 197 km distance normally takes 4 - 5 hours. Similarly, the road travel from Walajah to Chennai with 140 Km distance takes about 3 - 4 hours. Abnormal delay in the above stretches are predominantly due to increasing traffic volume and these stretches carry PCUs of more than a lakh. The traffic density on both the roads is increasing day by day as it covers many towns and hence, direct traffic from Chennai to Salem and onward travel to Coimbatore and Kerala State is generally difficult.

Further, upgradation of "Chennai-Tiruvannamalai-Harur-Salem" may involve bypass proposals for Tiruvannamalai, Harur and other important habitations en-route and the upgradation may not reduce travel time much. A direct Express Corridor from Chennai to Salem via Tiruvannamalai will ease traffic and reduce the travel time. The length involved in the new alignment will be about 250 Km.

I request that this proposal may be examined and in-principle sanction may kindly be considered for inclusion of the proposed alignment from Chennai to Salem as a green corridor, under 'Bharatmala Pariyojana' Programme.

I also reiterate the request made in my D.O. letter dated 15.12.2017 (and detailed in Government letter dated 29.1.2018) for in-principle declaration of twenty two State Roads as new National Highways at the earliest."

Issued by: Director, Information and Public Relations, Chennai-9.
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