

PRESS RELEASE

The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Thiru Edappadi K.Palaniswami, met the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi at 5.40 PM today (27.2.2017) at the Prime Minister's Residence, Race Course Road, New Delhi. The sad demise of the late Hon'ble Chief Minister Puratchi Thalaivi Amma was a big blow from which Tamil Nadu is still recovering. The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu thanked the Hon'ble Prime Minister for his consistent support to the State of Tamil Nadu. The Hon'ble Chief Minister also thanked the Hon'ble Prime Minister on behalf of the people of Tamil Nadu for early clearance of the Jallikattu Bill which paved the way for conduct of Jallikattu.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister recalled that the revered leader, the late Hon'ble Chief Minister Puratchi Thalaivi Amma always championed the interests of Tamil Nadu and had presented Memoranda to the Hon'ble Prime Minister on crucial issues relating to the State which required urgent intervention at the level of the Hon'ble Prime Minister. The Hon'ble Chief Minister then presented a separate Memorandum containing 23 crucial issues relating to Tamil Nadu which require urgent attention of the Government of India and are important to safeguard the legitimate interests of the State and to propel the State on to a faster growth trajectory.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister then briefed the Hon'ble Prime Minister on the prevailing Drought situation in Tamil Nadu. He highlighted that the Government of Tamil Nadu had already presented a Memorandum seeking Rs.39,565 crore funding for drought relief and rehabilitation measures. The Central Team had also visited Tamil Nadu from January 21st to 24th, 2017 for an on the spot assessment. The Hon'ble Chief Minister requested that funds may be released to Tamil Nadu at the earliest as Tamil Nadu had already incurred Rs.2,944 crore out of its own funds including the State Disaster Response Fund of Rs.713 crore. The Hon'ble Chief Minister urged the Prime Minister to release at least Rs.2,500 crore as an immediate on account release from the National Disaster Response Fund. The Hon'ble Chief Minister also drew attention to the fact that although Tamil Nadu had sought Rs.22,573 crore for relief and restoration measures after the devastating Cyclone Vardah, the Government of India was yet to provide any assistance.

In the context of the Drought situation, the Hon'ble Chief Minister also requested the Hon'ble Prime Minister to direct the Insurance Companies to ensure that the insurance claims on crop losses are paid out within three weeks of submitting the yield estimates, based on crop cutting experiments. The Hon'ble Chief Minister also requested for a substantial step up in the allocation of funds under the National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) and for speedy release of funds under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister emphasized that Tamil Nadu has a fair and transparent admission policy for medical colleges. The imposition of National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) would cause grave injustice to students from rural areas and hence approval for Tamil Nadu's Bills seeking exemption from NEET may be accorded so that the Presidential Assent could be obtained at the earliest. Similarly, opposition to the proposed National Pre Veterinary Eligibility Test for admission to Veterinary Colleges was also expressed. Speedy establishment of AIIMS in Tamil Nadu at Thanjavur was requested.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister indicated that a most pressing issue is the immediate constitution of the Cauvery Management Board in accordance with the Final Order of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal. The Hon'ble Chief Minister urged the Hon'ble Prime Minister to ensure that the Cauvery Management Board and Cauvery Water Regulation Committee are constituted immediately in accordance with the Final Order of the Tribunal. The Memorandum also highlighted the concerns about the Mekedatu Scheme of Karnataka, the construction of dams by Kerala across Pambar and Bhavani rivers which are part of the Cauvery basin, the restoration of water level to FRL of 152 ft in the Mullai Periyar Dam, inter-linking of rivers, and approval and funding for the Athikadavu – Avinashi Scheme.

Protection of the traditional fishing rights of Indian fishermen in the Palk Bay and ensuring their safety and security, retrieval of Katchatheevu Island, and early sanction of the Comprehensive Special Package for Diversification of Fisheries were also raised. The Memorandum also requested the rescinding of the Deep Sea Fishing Guidelines, 2014 and inclusion of fishermen in the List of Scheduled Tribes.

Sanction of an annual special grant of Rs.2,000 crore to compensate Tamil Nadu for the adverse treatment by the Fourteenth Finance Commission was sought. Special allocation of funds for strengthening judicial infrastructure, sharing of the proceeds with the

States of the recently introduced Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Cess and Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Deposit Scheme, early release of shortfalls in disbursement of share in Central Taxes as pointed out by the C & AG, pending 13th Finance Commission recommended grants, sanction of a scheme for Replanting and Rejuvenation of Coconut Gardens in Tamil Nadu, restoration of the original allocation under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, increased allocation for Tamil Nadu under the National Livestock Mission, sanction of funds under the Integrated Processing Development Scheme (IPDS) in the Textile Sector, early release of Government of India's share under the Marketing Incentive Component of the National Handloom Development Programme, under the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan(SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Siksha Abhiyan, for implementation of the Right to Education (RTE) Act and under the Post Matric Scholarships for Scheduled Castes were emphasized.

The expeditious approval of the revised bidding documents for the Cheyyur Ultra Mega Power Project, creation of a Dedicated Interstate Green Energy Corridor to evacuate surplus wind power from Tamil Nadu, abolishing frequency linked penalty for renewable energy rich States, allocation of the entire power from Koodankulam Units 3 and 4 to Tamil Nadu and concessional funding for the programme to cyclone and flood proof the power distribution network in Chennai area were the Power Sector related issues raised in the Memorandum.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister sought the Hon'ble Prime Minister's assistance for reviving the Electronic Manufacturing Hub at Sriperumbudur by resolving the issues relating to the Nokia plant. The realignment of the proposed Kochi-Bengaluru GAIL Pipeline, and objections to the proposed privatization of Salem Steel Plant were raised. A special relief package for the MSME Sector and modification of National Disaster Response Fund Guidelines to cover MSME units were also raised. Tamil Nadu is implementing the National Food Security Act with Universal coverage. As a result, an additional quantity of 85,000 metric tonnes of rice per month is required. The Memorandum sought supply of this additional quantity at a concessional rate of Rs.8.30 per kg and requested that Direct Benefit Transfer for Public Distribution System should not be implemented.

The Memorandum highlighted pending project and policy issues relating to the Chennai Metro Rail Project including support for securing JICA assistance for Chennai Metro Rail Project Phase-II, amendments to Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Government of India and Government of Tamil Nadu and changes in

the terms on which Railway lands have been taken on lease by Chennai Metro Rail Limited.

In the Municipal Administration and Water Supply sector, inclusion of four more Municipalities, namely Karur, Villupuram, Namakkal and Ooty under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), and Tamil Nadu's suggestions on the proposed revised guidelines under the NRDWP were highlighted. In the Urban Development sector, inclusion of the Chennai Peripheral Ring Road Project, including the Intelligent Transport System in JICA's rolling plan was sought. Early approval of the Project for implementation of State led model of Bharat Net in Tamil Nadu and the grant of Digital Addressable System (DAS) License to Tamil Nadu Arasu Cable TV Corporation Ltd were requested. The Hon'ble Chief Minister reiterated the request for investment from the National Infrastructure Investment Fund (NIIF) in the Tamil Nadu Infrastructure Fund and also requested that the entire allocation sought under the Tamil Nadu Investment Promotion Programme Phase II should be posed to JICA for assistance.

In addition, the Sri Lankan Tamils issue and grant of dual citizenship for Sri Lankan Tamil refugees living in Tamil Nadu was raised. Adoption of Tamil as an Official Language of the Union and use of Tamil in the High Court of Madras were also requested. Hon'ble Chief Minister requested the Hon'ble Prime Minister to kindly have the issues raised by Tamil Nadu in the Memorandum examined by the concerned Ministries and speedily resolved. The text of the Memorandum presented by Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to Hon'ble Prime Minister of India is enclosed.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister brought the issue of exploration of Hydrocarbons in Neduvasal village of Pudukkottai District to the notice of the Hon'ble Prime Minister. The Hon'ble Chief Minister requested the Hon'ble Prime Minister to kindly instruct the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas to take any further action in this regard only after adequate consultation with stakeholders and ensuring that the interests of the farmers are fully safeguarded. It will not be advisable for ONGC to proceed with any mining activity in Neduvasal Village of Pudukkottai District without clearance from the State Government.

The meeting lasted for 30 minutes. Hon'ble Prime Minister of India assured the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu of early action on the issues raised in the Memorandum.

The text of the Memorandum presented by Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu to Hon'ble Prime Minister of India is enclosed.

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