

Minutes of the SEVENTH Meeting of the High Powered Committee held on 15.06.2021 under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Justice R.Subbiah, High Court of Madras and Executive Chairman, Tamil Nadu State Legal Services Authority, Chennai.

Agenda: To assess the present status of spread of second wave of Covid-19 pandemic among the inmates of prisons in Tamil Nadu and review of the Action taken on the recommendations of the Committee dated 19.05.2021

The High Powered Committee constituted by the State Government in accordance with the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India dt.7.5.2021 met again on **15.06.2021** under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Justice R.Subbiah, High Court of Madras and Executive Chairman, Tamil Nadu State Legal Services Authority to assess the present status of second wave of Covid-19 pandemic in the Prisons of Tamil Nadu and review the action taken on the recommendations of the last meeting of High Powered Committee.

2) Shri S.K.Prabakar, IAS., Addl. Chief Secretary to Government, Home, Prohibition and Excise Department, Government of Tamil Nadu and Shri Sunil Kumar Singh, IPS., Director General of Police / Director General of Prisons and Correctional Services attended the meeting as Members of the Committee.

3) The Committee took note of the following action taken on the recommendations of the last High Powered Committee meeting held on

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19.5.2021 and also the steps taken by the Department of Prisons & Correctional Services to prevent and contain the spread of COVID-19 virus in Prisons and decided to record the same :-

- a. In pursuance of the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India dated 7.5.2021, the Director General of Police / Head of Police Force have been directed by the Government to issue suitable instructions to the Police Officials concerned appropriately to follow the **guidelines prescribed by the Apex Court in Arnesh Kumar Vs. State of Bihar** while making arrest of accused persons during pandemic.
- b. As on 11.06.2021, 45,712 prisoners were released on bail across the State due to COVID-19 (own bond) and 57,866 prisoners were released on regular bail. **Out of them, during second wave, from 1.3.2021 to 15.6.2021, 3899 and 21,249 remand prisoners have been released on bail (personal bond) and normal bail respectively.**
- c. **The overall occupancy is 14,321 (60.70%) as on 15.06.2021 against the total authorized accommodation of 23,592.**
- d. **The only overcrowded prison as on date is Central Prison, Madurai where 1453 number of prisoners are lodged against the authorised accommodation of 1252.** The overcrowding in Central Prison II, Puzhal and Central Prison, Cuddalore **have been reduced** and now it is within its authorised accommodation.
- e. 68.6% of the convict prisoners and 87.8% of the Staff including executive staff have been vaccinated as on 15.6.2021.

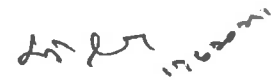
- f. The Tamil Nadu State Legal Services Authority has been requested by the Prison Department to collect the bail applications of under trial prisoners in Central Prison-II Puzhal, Central Prison Cuddalore and Central Prison Madurai for expediting sanction of bail by the Judicial Officers concerned.
- g. The other recommendations relaxing to Tamil Nadu Suspension of Sentence Rules, 1982, to release the eligible prisoners on leave for 90 days including those who were sanctioned ordinary leave and released earlier pursuant to the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India order dated 23.3.2020 and with regard to extension of the ordinary and emergency leave already granted to the prisoners by the authorities concerned for a total period of 90 days from the date of release by relaxing relevant rules **have been under the active consideration of the Government.**
- h. Regarding the request to facilitate regular testing of the prisoners, provide medical treatment and to conduct vaccination camp in Prisons, the H&FW and MA&WS Departments of the Government have been addressed by the Government in Home Department requesting them to facilitate the above.
- i. Regarding the request relating to re-starting of Covid Care Centre in Central Prison-I Puzhal, the Government have addressed the H&FW Department and the Commissioner of Greater Chennai Corporation to facilitate the same.

4. After assessing the above position, the High Powered Committee made the following recommendations :-

- a. **To recommend** to the Government to expedite restarting of the Covid Care Centre which was functioning at Central Prison I, Puzhal with team of Doctors, Nurses, Laboratory Technicians, X-ray, Scan, Diagnostic Center, ECG, Echo, Oxygen cylinders, Ambulance, etc under the care of Government Stanley Medical College & Hospital and Greater Chennai Corporation.
- b. **To direct** the Principal District Judges of Madurai, Dindigul, Theni, Ramanathapuram, Sivagangai, Virudhunagar, Chennai, Thiruvallur and Kancheepuram Districts to visit the Central Prison Madurai and Central Prison II, Puzhal to assess the possibilities of granting bail to eligible prisoners to decongest the Central Prison Madurai and Central Prison II, Puzhal.
- c. To conduct the next meeting on need basis, considering the significant reduction in Covid-19 infection cases in Tamil Nadu.

The meeting ended with vote of thanks to the Chair.


17.6.21
DGP/DGP & CS
Dept of Prisons &
Correctional Services,
Tamil Nadu.


17.6.2021
Additional Chief
Secretary,
(Home)
Govt. of
Tamil Nadu.


17.6.2021
Executive Chairman, TN
State Legal Services Authority /
Chairman,
High Powered Committee.