

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O.Letter dated 9.1.2017 of **Thiru O. Panneerselvam**, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu addressed to **Shri Narendra Modi**, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India :-

“As you are aware, Jallikattu, a traditional sporting event of Tamil Nadu, is conducted as a part of the Pongal festivities in which bulls that are reared exclusively for this event are embraced by able bodied youth. Jallikattu is deeply ingrained as part of the cultural tradition of Tamil Nadu as a sport popular among warriors since the “Sangam era” and this 2000 year old traditional sport finds a mention in the ancient Tamil text “Silapathigaram”. It is inextricably linked to rural, agrarian customs and has religious significance, with families donating bulls to temples in fulfillment of vows. Jallikattu also addresses the cause of conservation of native germplasm since bulls with excellent physical attributes are reared. Further, bulls are not harmed or physically tortured during Jallikattu.

The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India by a judgment dated 7.5.2014, banned the conduct of Jallikattu in the State of Tamil Nadu and also held that bulls cannot be used as performing animals either for Jallikattu events or for bullock cart races in the States of Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra or elsewhere in the country. The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India also struck down as ultra-vires the State Act passed in 2009.

The ban on Jallikattu has caused widespread resentment and general disappointment among the people of Tamil Nadu, particularly in the rural areas, since Jallikattu is intertwined with the religious and social cultural ethos of Tamil society. In January, 2015, the Government of Tamil Nadu had requested your personal intervention to enable the conduct of Jallikattu events in Tamil Nadu by denotifying bulls from the list of performing animals in the Notification dated 11th July, 2011, issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India. I wish to remind that our Revered Leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, had in her

Memorandum presented to you on 7.8.2015, requested to lift the ban on Jallikattu. Further, our Revered Leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma had in her letter dated 22.12.2015, requested that the then ongoing session of Parliament be extended or a Special session called for introducing 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. Our Revered Leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma had also pointed out that in view of the approaching Pongal festival in January, 2016, the Government of India may consider promulgating an Ordinance, to enable the holding of Jallikattu.

Based on the request, the Government of India, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climatic Change had issued a Notification No.G.S.R.13 (E) on 7.1.2016. However, in view of the interim stay on the Notification ordered by the Hon'ble Supreme Court on 12.1.2016, Jallikattu could not be conducted during Pongal 2016 for the second year in succession.

The Review Petition which was filed by Government of Tamil Nadu on 19.5.2014 came up for hearing on 16.11.2016 in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. The Hon'ble Supreme Court was not inclined to review the judgement passed and dismissed the review petition filed by the State Government.

The State Government had also filed an Affidavit in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India on the challenge to the Notification issued by the Government of India, Ministry of Environment and Forests and Climate Change dated 7.1.2016, indicating the historical, cultural and religious significance for the conduct of Jallikattu. The State Government also submitted a scheme for conducting Jallikattu without causing pain to the bulls. The Hon'ble Supreme Court has reserved the Judgement in the case.

In the Memorandum presented to you on 14.6.2016 by our Revered Leader Puratchi Thalaivi Amma and in the Memorandum presented by me on 19.12.2016, it was urged to take the necessary measures which would eventually pave the way for conducting Jallikattu events in Tamil Nadu:-

- (i) The Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India should clearly denotify bulls 'as performing animals' from the Notification GSR 528(E) dated 11.7.2011 of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India.
- (ii) Suitably amend Section 11(3) of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 by introducing a new clause 'f' in sub-section (3) of Section 11 specifically exempting Jallikattu in addition to other exemptions already provided in the Act.

There has been no action yet from Government of India on the suggestions of the State Government. **Given that the Pongal festival which holds great importance to the people of Tamil Nadu is less than a week away and Jallikattu is an integral part of the Pongal festivities, considering the urgency of the issue, the Government of India should consider promulgating an Ordinance removing the legal impediments enabling the conduct of Jallikattu during Pongal, 2017.** Considering the groundswell of sentiment and support for the conduct of Jallikattu all over Tamil Nadu, this is an issue on which the Government of India must act with maximum despatch. May I kindly request you to direct the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change to take necessary action to promulgate the requisite Ordinance immediately?"

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