

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the D.O.Letter dated 10.1.2017 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, Pongal is the main harvest festival of Tamil Nadu celebrated with great zest and enthusiasm by all sections of people. It is a social festival that transcends all religions. A number of social, recreational and sporting events including Jallikattu are organized along with Pongal festivities. The festivities last for three or four days. For the State Government, the holidays start from 14th January, 2017 onwards and 16th January (Monday) is a holiday on account of 'Uzhavar Tirunal'.

Pongal always falls on the 1st of the Tamil Month 'Thai'. This year (2017), it is on January, 14th which falls on a Saturday. The Central Government calendar shows Pongal as a restricted holiday.

The Government of India as an administrative practice for a very long time, notifies a list of holidays wherein fourteen days fall under the category of 'compulsory holidays', and further three holidays from a list of 12 optional holidays are to be notified by the Central Government Employees Welfare Co-ordination Committee in different State Capitals. It is seen that Pongal finds place only in the list of 12 optional holidays. As a result, Pongal is not a compulsory holiday for Central Government offices in Tamil Nadu.

This apparent diminution in the importance accorded to Pongal for the past several years has created disquiet and an impression that an important people's festival of Tamil Nadu has been ignored by the Central Government.

Therefore to meet the legitimate aspirations of the people of Tamil Nadu, I request that Pongal be included in the list of Compulsory Holidays to be observed by all Central Government Administrative offices in Tamil Nadu. In addition, just as the Government of India's Circular relating to list of 12 optional holidays from which 3 are to be selected includes an 'Additional day for Dusshera', an 'Additional day for Pongal' may also be included in the list of optional holidays. This will ensure that Thiruvalluvar day could also be declared as a holiday by the Central Government Employees Welfare Co-ordination Committee of Tamil Nadu, to enable the employees of Central Government Offices working in Tamil Nadu to participate fully in the festivities connected with Pongal."

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