

**Minutes of the meeting dated 14.05.2020 of the High Powered Committee (HPC) under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Kumari Justice Sanju Panda, Judge, Orissa High Court and Executive Chairperson, Odisha State Legal Services Authority with regard to release of prisoners for de-congestion of jails in view of spreading of COVID-19 disease over telephonic conversation.**

1. The meeting is convened through telephonic conversation on 14.05.2020 by the following dignitaries :

- (i) **Hon'ble Kumari Justice Sanju Panda, Judge, Orissa High Court and Executive Chairperson, Odisha State Legal Services Authority.**
- (ii) **Shri Sanjeev Chopra, IAS, Principal Secretary, Home Department, Government of Odisha.**
- (iii) **Shri Santosh Kumar Upadhyay, IPS, Director General of Prisons, Odisha.**

2. The DG Prisons, Odisha vide their **letter No. 7174 J/MISC-12/2020 dated 13.05.2020** have communicated the following information regarding release and status of the prisoners from **20.03.2020 to 12.05.2020** :

i.	<b>Total capacity of 86 functional jails in State</b>	<b>: 19, 016</b>
ii.	<b>Total number of prisoners as on 13.05.2020</b>	<b>: 16, 931</b>
iii.	<b>No. of prisoners released on parole/special furlough</b>	<b>: 389</b>
iv.	<b>Total number of prisoners awarded with special remission</b>	<b>: 194</b>
v.	<b>No. of prisoners released on bail/PR bond</b>	<b>: 6, 866</b>
vi.	<b>No. of prisoners shifted to other jails during lockdown</b>	<b>: 1, 162</b>
vii.	<b>Total prisoners who have surrendered after availing parole/special furlough as on 12.05.2020</b>	<b>: 309</b>
viii.	<b>Overall prisoners released from 20.03.2020 to 12.05.2020</b>	<b>: 7, 255</b>

The DG, Prisons have also submitted before the HPC that following steps have been taken for prevention of COVID- 19 in the jails so far:

- a) Awareness campaign to educate prisoners about social distancing and to avoid infections.
- b) Introduction of e-Mulakat system for interview to avoid physical contact of the prisoners with their relatives.
- c) Frequent sanitisation of all the wards at regular intervals with help of local ULBs/fire stations etc.
- d) Keeping newly admitted prisoners in isolation wards prior to their entry into general wards.
- e) Cleaning of the toilets frequently.
- f) White washing of the wards.
- g) Superintendent of the jails have been instructed to purchase infra-red thermometers to check the temperature of the prisoners (suspected as symptoms of COVID-19).
- h) Conducting health checkups, sanitisation and checking of travel history of all newly admitted prisoners.
- i) Medical treatment has been provided to all the prisoners as per the advice of the jail doctors and local physicians.
- j) Help of CDMOs and SDMOs are being taken in case of suspected prisoners.

3. The Member Secretary, OSLSA placed the following information before the High Powered Committee as received and collated from all 30 Under Trial Review Committees, regarding release and status of prisoners from **15.04.2020 till 13.05.2020:-**

(i)	<b>No. of UTPs identified for release on interim bail</b>	<b>: 900</b>
(ii)	<b>No. of UTPs released on interim bail</b>	<b>: 796</b>
(iii)	<b>No. of Convicts identified for released on parole/furlough</b>	<b>: 100</b>

(iv) No. of prisoners found to be affected by COVID-19 virus : NIL

(v) Whether quarantine ward is available in all the jails  
of the district or not :

Not available in Sub-jail, Athagarh and Sub-jail, Baramba; Sub-jail, Ranpur of Nayagarh & Sub-jail, Baliguda and Sub-jail, G.Udayagiri of Phulbani

(vi) No. of prisoners kept in Quarantine ward : 1961

In view of the above data placed by UTRC, the HPC directs DG, Prisons to ensure Quarantine Wards are functional in all the jails at the earliest, while taking all preventive measures to avoid spread of infection.

3. The Member Secretary, OSLSA placed the Special Secretary, Health & Family Welfare Department, Govt. of Odisha letter No. FW-LEGAL-LEGAL-0003-2020-10639/H&F.W. dated 05.05.2020 before the HPC. As per the direction of HPC, Special Secretary, Health & Family Welfare submitted a report that the Health & Family Welfare Department, Govt. of Odisha is following the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India from time to time in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is also submitted in the report that testing facilities have been established in RMRC, Bhubaneswar, AIIMS, Bhubaneswar, Institute of Life Science, Bhubaneswar, SCB MCH, Cuttack, MKCG MCH, Berhampur, VIMSAR, Burla, Sambalpur, IGH, Rourkela and Apollo Hospital, Bhubaneswar. Besides, the Govt. of Odisha is taking steps to establish the testing facilities in other four new Government Medical Colleges and Hospitals in the State of Odisha, keeping in view the increase of affected persons by COVID- 19.

In the letter, Special Secretary, Health & Family Welfare Department, Govt. of Odisha have also mentioned that COVID testing of the arrested persons may be done in the above mentioned hospitals for cases where suspected symptoms such as coughing, sneezing, fever, body ache, loss of



taste and if outside travel history is present. The State Govt. is also ensuring on priority basis to establish COVID- 19 hospitals keeping in view the present condition as well as considering the mandate of Section-57 of the Cr.P.C regarding production of accused persons before the concerned Magistrate within 24 hours of arrest.

**After considering all the steps taken for decongestion and prevention of spread of COVID-19 infection in prisons by the Government, and on review of data submitted by DG, Prisons which shows that there are 16,931 prisoners on 14.5.2020 as against the total capacity to accommodate 19, 016 prisoners, there appears no congestion or overcrowding in the jails in Odisha at present.**

However, the Committee resolved that Under Trial Review Committees shall hold its weekly meetings in all the 30 districts to review and monitor the situation of prisoners and submit its report to the High Power Committee regularly, for purpose of monitoring the health and safety of prisoners in the State during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

**By order**

**Sd/-**

**Member Secretary  
OSLSA**