

Minutes of the meeting dated 22.10.2020 of the High-Powered Committee 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 decongestion of jails in view of spreading of Covid-19 disease, over telephonic conversation.

The thirty first meeting of HPC is convened through telephonic conversation by the following dignitaries-

- a. **Hon'ble Kumari Justice Sanju Panda, Judge, Orissa High Court and Executive Chairperson, Odisha State Legal Services Authority.**
- b. **Shri Sanjeev Chopra, IAS, Principal Secretary, Home Department, Govt. of Odisha.**
- c. **Shri Santosh Kumar Upadhyay, IPS, Director General of Prisons, Odisha.**

I. The Member Secretary placed the following information for the period from **17.10.2020 to 22.10.2020** as received from all 30 DLSAs consequent upon the holding of Under Trial Review Committees in all districts for the aforementioned period, in view of the guidelines issued by the High-Powered Committee -

a) No. of UTPs released on interim bail	: 283
b) No. of Convicts released on Parole/Furlough/ Special Remission	: 0/19/0
c) No. of prisoners found infected by COVID- 19	: 88
d) No. of prisoners recovered from COVID-19	: 122
e) No. of prisoners succumbed to COVID-19	: NIL
f) No. of prisoners kept in quarantine wards	: 1725

II. **Report on prisoners infected by COVID-19 and steps taken thereafter**

Sl. No.	District	Name of Jail	No. of Prisoners affected by COVID& date on which identified	Treatment	Measures taken for safety
1.	Deogarh	Special Sub-Jail, Deogarh	42nos. On dated 17.10.2020	After being found COVID positive, the said inmates have been kept in the isolation ward within the Special Sub-Jail, Deogarh so as to restrain them from coming in contact with other inmates and 2 numbers of inmates has been shifted to COVID Hospital for better treatment.	i. Sanitization of the jail premises. ii. To depute a medical officer for health checkup of the said inmates.
2.	Cuttack	Circle Jail, Cuttack	32 nos. On dated 20.10.2020	The Senior Superintendent, Circle Jail, Cuttack has intimated that CDMO, Cuttack may be requested to depute a team of Doctors to the jail for health checkup and treatment of the said inmates inside the jail who are tested positive as shifting to outside Hospital is not possible at present.	i. Complete sanitization of the jail premises and the quarantine ward/isolation ward of the circle jail. ii. Effective step for contact tracing of the inmate found positive. iii. Swab testing of the jail inmates and the warders. iv. Shifting of sick persons to COVID hospital in case of any possible situation is seen.
3.	Balasore	Sub-Jail, Nilgiri	1 no. On dated 21.10.2020	The UTP has been admitted to D.H.H., Balasore for treatment after being found COVID-19 positive.	i. The Superintendent, Sub-Jail, Nilgiri has been instructed to sanitize the entire jail premises and to take pre-emptive steps for spreading the deadly

					<p>virus.</p> <p>ii. Immediate treatment to the inmates if anybody complaining of cold or fever.</p> <p>iii. Antigen test to be carried out of other inmates after contact tracing.</p> <p>iv. The CDMO, Balasore has been requested to provide all the possible medical facility to the infected UTP admitted at D.H.H., Balasore and to provide ventilator to him if required.</p>
4.	Bargarh	Sub-Jail, Padampur	1 no. On dated 15.10.2020 (Communicated to OSLSA on 21.10.2020)	The said UTP was immediately admitted at COVID Care Centre at Bargarh by the Police Escort after being ascertained COVID positive.	The entire premise of Sub-Jail, Padampur has been sanitized and preventive steps have been taken.
5.	Koraput	Sub-Jail, Kotpad	12 nos. On dated 20.10.2020	The Superintendent, Sub-Jail, Kotpad reported that the 11 nos. of prisoners are being treated inside the jail premises in Covid Ward and one UTP is undergoing treatment at COVID Hospital of SLN Medical College, Koraput.	<p>i. Sanitization of the jails.</p> <p>ii. Medical examination of all other inmates in consultation with the CDMO, as per the Govt. guidelines.</p>

- DLSA, Deogarh vide L. No. 905 dated 20.10.2020 submitted a report regarding 5 nos. of staff found to be COVID positive and the staff has been advised to stay in home isolation as per Govt. guidelines.

The Establishment Officer of Directorate of Prisons and Correctional Services, Odisha vide Memo No. 16523 dated 20.10.2020 intimated to the Member Secretary, OSLSA that the advisory on COVID- 19 issued by the Hon'ble National Human Rights Commission, New Delhi has been communicated to the Superintendent of all Jails of Odisha. On going through the advisory issued by the National Human Rights Commission, it is seen that many of the guidelines enumerated in the advisory are already being carried out by the Home Department and DG, Prisons, Govt. of Odisha in compliance to the time to time directions and recommendations as issued by the High Powered Committee for reducing over-crowding in the prisons and to monitor the health and safety of the prisoners during the COVID pandemic.

As per the Advisory No. 1 relating to role of prison administration, aspects regarding social distancing, appropriate isolation and safety measures amongst the inmates especially for elderly and sick inmates & maintaining of sanitization by providing sufficient soaps, sanitizers and face masks have already been dealt with by the High Powered Committee and directions have already been issued to the Home Department, Health Department, DG Prisons and other stake holders to ensure the same.

As per the Advisory No. 2, availability of thermal screeners and non-contact thermometers for early detection of symptomatic COVID- 19 prisoners at entry and exit locations have been ensured. The Home Department has already issued a SOP to meet the protocols for testing of incoming inmates in collaboration with local and state administration to ensure availability of escorts and medical arrangements for shifting of suspected inmates to Govt. hospitals or authorized places. Establishment of prompt efficient channels of reporting to ensure both inmates and prison staff can inform the medical facilities within the prison for symptoms and illness, creation of quarantine centers and isolation facilities within the prisons and awareness programmes regarding spread and precautions of COVID are in place as per directions issued by the High Powered Committee.

As per the Advisory No. 3, the general health conditions of prisoners, recovery rate and deaths of prisoners due to COVID and other related aspects are being continuously monitored by the High-Powered Committee on weekly basis.

However, apart from the protocols already in practice in the Prisons of Odisha, rest of the advisories relating to prison administration, infrastructural improvement and health of prisoners by the NHRC must be put in place by stakeholders. Accordingly, the Chairperson of the HPC directs the Home Department and DG Prisons to submit a report regarding the steps taken for compliance of NHRC advisory to be placed before the High-Powered Committee in its next meeting. Further, the Member Secretary, OSLSA is directed by the Hon'ble Chairperson, HPC to ensure that regular awareness camps regarding COVID spread and precaution is held in the jails by the DLSAs through Jail Legal Aid Clinics.

The AIG of Prisons, Odisha, vide Memo No. 16544 dated 21.10.2020 intimated the Member Secretary, OSLSA that the directions of the High Powered Committee in its meeting held on 09.10.2020 in connection to the directives of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in Suo Motu W.P.(C) No. 01/2020 has been communicated to the Superintendent of all jails, Odisha requesting them to make efforts and take appropriate steps in the matter of spread of COVID- 19 pandemic in the state and to ascertain proper treatment of critical and symptomatic prisoners without any delay on part of the authorities to prevent casualties as far as possible.

In light of the above mentioned reports, while the HPC took note of the steps taken by different departments for compliance of its directives, the HPC also observed that there was no casualty of prisoners during this week. Total 88 prisoners were infected, whereas, 122 prisoners have recovered from COVID- 19, which shows that number of recoveries is higher than number of newly infected cases in the said period.

However, in wake of spread of COVID-19 pandemic in the State, efforts should be continued for proper treatment of critical and symptomatic prisoners without any delay on part of authorities to prevent casualties. All the stakeholders in management of COVID pandemic in prisons must continue to coordinate and ensure to contain the spread of COVID- 19 infection in the jails in view of the previous directives of the HPC and the advisory issued by the NHRC, New Delhi.

By Order
Sd/-
Member Secretary
OSLSA