

Minutes of Meeting of the High Powered Committee
held on 21.05.2020 at 01.00 P.M. at the Video Conferencing Room,
in the High Court Lucknow Bench, Lucknow

(Constituted for the compliance of the directions dated 23.03.2020 issued by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Suo Moto Writ Petition No.01/2020 IN RE : CONTAGION OF COVID-19 IN PRISONS.)

The High Powered Committee Meeting has been attended by the following:-

1. Justice Pankaj Kumar Jaiswal, Senior Judge, High Court Lucknow Bench, Lucknow/Executive Chairman, UP State Legal Services Authority.
2. Awanish Kumar Awasthi, I.A.S., Additional Chief Secretary (Home/Prison), Govt. of U.P.
3. Anand Kumar, I.P.S., D.G. (Prison), Uttar Pradesh

1. First of all, the High Powered Committee (hereinafter mention the Committee) has gone through the detailed report placed by the **State Level Monitoring Team** regarding the number of prisoners granted parole and interim bail till the evening of 19.05.2020 which is as follows:-

Prisoners released on Interim Bail	Prisoners released on Parole	Juveniles released on Interim Bail	Total
14854	2256	492	17602

The Committee has found that the steps and measures taken by the District Judges; Jail Administration, Women & Child Development Department and Administrative Authorities are convincing and the number of prisoners and juveniles granted parole or interim bail is quite impressive.

2. The Committee further discussed the matter of extension of period of interim bail to undertrial prisoners and juvenile in conflict with law.

After detailed discussion and considering the present situation regarding rapid spread of COVID-19, the Committee is of the considered view that if the undertrial prisoners and juveniles, who have been granted interim bail earlier, are readmitted to the jails after completion of interim bail period, the possibility of infection in jails may not be ruled out and it would frustrate the objective of decongestion of jails in the light of the directives issued by Hon'ble Supreme Court.

The Committee feels that it would be practically difficult to move separate applications by each undertrial prisoner and juvenile seeking

extension of interim bail before the concerned courts and Juvenile Justice Boards and disposal of large number of such applications would take a lot of judicial time.

The Committee recommends that High Court of Judicature at Allahabad may be requested to extend the period of interim bail to the undertrial prisoners and juvenile in conflict with law (falling under the criteria laid down in the previous meetings dated 27.03.2020, 03.04.2020 and 10.04.2020 of this Committee) through a judicial order, for a further period of 08 weeks from the date of their respective period of earlier interim bail expires. Hence, Member Secretary, UP State Legal Services Authority is directed to forward the copy of Minutes of this Meeting to the High Court of Judicature at Allahabad for the purpose of implementation of the recommendations of this Committee.

3. The Committee also considered the request made by the State Govt. vide letter No.859JL/22-3-2020-800(30)/2020 dated 16.05.2020 to extend the period of parole for further 08 weeks to the convicted prisoners, who have been earlier released as per the directions dated 27.03.2020 of the Committee.

The Committee is of the view that considering the circumstances prevailing due to pandemic COVID-19 and to decongest the jails, the State Government is directed to extend the period of parole for further 08 weeks to the aforesaid convicts from the date of their respective period of earlier parole expires.

Other points of agenda will be discussed in the next meeting.

Let all the concerned authorities/officers be informed accordingly.

(Anand Kumar)
Director General (Prison),
Uttar Pradesh

(Awanish Kumar Awasthi)
Addl. Chief Secretary (Home/Prison),
Govt. of U.P.

(Justice Pankaj Kumar Jaiswal)
Senior Judge, High Court Lucknow
&
Executive Chairman,
UP State Legal Services Authority.