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THE HINDU

## 'Centre will help get NEET waiver for T.N.'

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
**CHENNAI**

Ending six months of suspense over the fate of MBBS/BDS admissions in Tamil Nadu, Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday said the Centre would "cooperate" with the State Government to grant a one-time exemption from NEET-based admissions through the ordinance route.

The exemption from NEET will be only for admission to government medical colleges and the government quota seats in private medical colleges.

Responding quickly, State Health Minister C. Vijaya Baskar said a draft ordinance to allow Tamil Nadu to

admit medical aspirants on the basis of their scores in Class XII for "this year" would be submitted to the Central Government for clearance on Monday.

### **Officials in Delhi**

Later on Sunday evening, Health Secretary J. Radhakrishnan and two other officials left for New Delhi to complete the paper work for drafting the ordinance. Ms. Sitharaman's announcement caught the ruling AIADMK off guard as none of the Union Ministers, including those handling the Health and HRD portfolios, had given any assurance on an exemption to senior State Ministers who held numerous meetings of late.

# TN may get 1-year NEET exemption via ordinance

Pushpa Narayan | TNN

**Chennai:** The Centre will consider Tamil Nadu's request for a one-year exemption from National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for admissions into government medical colleges if the state issued an ordinance regarding the same.

"A permanent exemption is not possible. The state should promulgate the ordinance explaining how rural students will be disadvantaged with NEET. The Centre will consider exemption for this year," Union minister of state for commerce and industries Nirmala Seetharaman said on Sunday.

Following Seetharaman's announcement, state health minister C Vijaya

Baskar said he met chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami to decide further course of action. "We will promulgate the ordinance as early as possible. Counseling for MBBS/BDS admission will follow soon. We have been struggling for the

## ADMISSION ROW

past eight months for the Centre to agree for an exemption," Baskar said.

Seetharaman's statement comes after Tamil Nadu CM K Palaniswami and Lok Sabha deputy speaker M Thambidurai met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other central ministers over NEET. TN has sought exemption from NEET as it leaves rural students at a disadvantage, and instead advo-

cated the use of class 12 marks to admit students in medical and dental seats of government quota this year.

State health secretary J Radhakrishnan will be in New Delhi on Monday to seek formal "prior content" from the union home ministry since higher education comes under the concurrent list. The ordinance will then have to be signed by the governor and is valid for up to six months.

Union minister Pon Radhakrishnan said, "Both Seetharaman and I have been campaigning for an exemption from NEET for TN for the past 20 days. We haven't skipped even one day because a lot of students had approached us," he said.

Full report: [www.toi.in](http://www.toi.in)



NEET JOB SHOWS  
EPS IS A DOER

Pg.No.08

Undergraduate medical seat aspirants in Tamil Nadu can finally exhale. Just when they had almost given up hope, the Centre on Sunday agreed to open an exemption window for the contentious National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for Tamil Nadu candidates alone this year. Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's statement that the Centre would consider the request if the state Ordinance mentioned how rural students would be at a disadvantage, appeared strange since the draft Ordinance has already been vetted by the Union government. Last year's Ordinance too had harped on the rural skew while making its case for exemption.

As if on cue, Tamil Nadu Health Minister Vijaya Basker began the process of promulgation by putting Health Secretary Dr J Radhakrishnan on an evening flight to Delhi with relevant papers for final clearance from the Union home, law, health and HRD ministries. The Ordinance will then go to the Governor for approval.

The Ordinance is the outcome of weeks of intense lobbying in Delhi with Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami leading from the front. During his last meeting with PM Modi too, he had hammered on NEET. Basker, Radhakrishnan and Lok Sabha Deputy Speaker M Thambidurai did the follow-up work. They wouldn't have spent so much time in Delhi had the response been negative. The CM now gets bragging rights for pulling it off at a time when he is grappling with key issues within his own party. He is slowly cultivating the image of a doer who knows when and where to press the right buttons. That is worrying a section of the BJP, which thinks he may end up being too stable for comfort.

The government on June 30 set up two committees to review the state board syllabus, which had not been revised for more than 10 years. The panels are already on the job. Here's hoping the next batch of students would be NEET-ready and spared of the agony their peers felt this year.