

## **The Hindu**

### **Tourism Department puts on hold services of 211 employees**

The Puducherry Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) has decided to give a “temporary break” from work to as many as 211 employees who were appointed in an “indiscriminate” manner during the tenure of All India N R Congress.

Sources in PTDC said the employees have been asked to stay away from work till the board takes a final decision on their appointment. “The corporation has asked the employees to stay away from work for the next two weeks. The board will meet in the first week of September to decide on their appointments,” a senior official with PTDC told The Hindu .

Sources added that while the boat houses at Chunnambar, Oussudu, Karaikal and Mahe accounted for a bulk of these appointments — around 100 were employed in the boat houses. Similar appointments were made to the undertakings managed by the corporation in Puducherry and the three enclaves.

‘Financial crunch’

The appointment of the employees on consolidated pay of Rs. 200 per day two years ago had put additional burden on the corporation, which had been for the last several years facing serious financial crunch. The entity had incurred losses to the tune of Rs. 19.92 crore over the years, said an official.

“We are finding it difficult to pay the wages to even the regular employees. This month the salary was credited on August 8,” said the official.

The financial situation had prompted the corporation to issue a circular last year directing all its employees to adopt austerity measures to tide over the mounting losses. However, an employee appointed on consolidated pay at Chunnambar, feared that the move as part of the Congress government’s design to retrench workers recruited during the previous government. “We were appointed as the then government felt the urgent need to fill vacancies at the boat houses. The boat house at Chunnambar used to function with just four boat operators and many a time the leisure ride was stopped due to lack of staff,” he said.

Meanwhile, a delegation of employees under the aegis of Anna Thozhil Sangam met Chief Minister V. Narayanasamy and sought his intervention.

Papu Swamy, a representative of the Sangam, told The Hindu that the Chief Minister has promised to take up the issue with Tourism Minister Malladi Krishna Rao.