Private E-Sevai Center
CSC Center
STAR RAINBOW SERVICES
VADAPALANI
8144337349

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hellomadrasdaily@gmail.com
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R S Polyclinic

Tamil Nadu's welfare lens widens to fathers, with 15 days of paternity leave



CHENNAI – 28 Nov, 2026 In Tamil Nadu, a state where successive governments have designed much of their welfare architecture around women and children, the government on Thursday turned its attention to a relatively overlooked member of the household: the father.

Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay announced 15 days of paternity leave for married male employees of the state government, marking the first time Tamil Nadu has made a separate provision for fathers to take time off from government service following the birth of a child.

An order has been issued allowing employees to avail themselves of the leave beginning 15 days before the birth of their child or within six months of the date of birth, according to a statement issued by the government on Thursday.

The decision followed representations from government employees seeking a provision for fathers similar to the maternity leave available to their female colleagues, who are currently entitled to 365 days of leave.

Behind the announcement was a modest but consequential change in how the government conceives of fatherhood – not merely as an occasion to distribute sweets among colleagues, but as a responsibility that requires time away from the office.