



IN THE HIGH COURT OF KARNATAKA AT BENGALURU
DATED THIS THE 27TH DAY OF APRIL, 2026
BEFORE
THE HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SACHIN SHANKAR MAGADUM
WRIT PETITION NO. 8305 OF 2026 (GM-R/C)

BETWEEN:

1. SRI. M. C. SURESHA
S/O LATE POOJARI CHIKKAPUTTAIAH,
AGED ABOUT 50 YEARS,
2. SRI.M.C.SUDINDRA,
S/O LATE POOJARI CHIKKAPUTTAIAH,
AGED ABOUT 46 YEARS,
3. SRI.M.C.DEVARAJU,
S/O LATE POOJARI CHIKKAPUTTAIAH,
AGED ABOUT 43 YEARS,

ALL ARE RESIDENTS OF
MULUKATTE GRAMA, KASABA HOBLI,
NAGAMANGALA TALUK,
MANDYA DISTRICT - 571 432.

Digitally signed by
NAGARAJA B M

Location: HIGH
COURT OF
KARNATAKA

...PETITIONERS

(BY SRI. GOPALAKRISHNAMURTHY.C, ADVOCATE)

AND:

1. THE TAHASILDHAR
NAGAMANGALA TALUK OFFICE
NAGAMANGALA TALUK
MANDYA DISTRICT - 571 432.
2. SRI.M.P.MAHESHA,
S/O LATE PUJARI DODDA PUTTAIAH,
AGED ABOUT 57 YEARS,



3. SRI. M.D.KRISHAMURTHY,
S/O LATE PUJARI DODDA PUTTAIAH,
AGED ABOUT 53 YEARS,
4. SRI. M.D.RAMESHA,
S/O LATE PUJARI DODDAPUTTAIAH,
AGED ABOUT 49 YEARS,
5. SRI.JAYAPRAKASHA.M,
S/O M.MARIYAPPA,
AGED MAJOR,
6. SRI.JAYAPRAMODA.M,
AGED MAJOR,

RESPONDENT NO.2 TO 6 ARE
R/AT MULUKATTE VILLAGE,
KASABA HOBLI,
NAGAMANGALA TALUK,
MANDYA DISTRICT - 571 432.

...RESPONDENTS

(BY SMT. AMARVATHY H R, AGA FOR R1;
SRI. SUNIL S RAO, ADVOCATE FOR
SRI. T SESHAGIRI RAO, ADVOCATE FOR R2, R4, R5 & R6;
VIDE C/O DATED 27/04/2026 NOTICE TO R3 IS D/W)

THIS WP IS FILED UNDER ARTICLE 226 OF THE
CONSTITUTION OF INDIA PRAYING TO CALL FOR RECORDS
AND QUASH THE OFFICIAL MEMORANDUM PASSED/ISSUED BY
THE RESPONDENT NO.1 DATED-27-11-2025 IN NO.D.V.S.C.R-
83/2021-22 AS PER VIDE ANNEXURE-D AND THE
ENDORSEMENT PASSED/ISSUED BY THE RESPONDENT NO.1
DATED-09-02-2026 IN NO.D.V.S.C.R-83/2021-22 AS PER VIDE
ANNEXURE-E AND ETC.,



THIS PETITION, COMING ON FOR PRELIMINARY HEARING FRESH MATTERS LIST, THIS DAY, ORDER WAS MADE THEREIN AS UNDER:

CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SACHIN SHANKAR MAGADUM

ORAL ORDER

Captioned petition is filed assailing the official memorandum passed by respondent No. 1 dated 27.11.2025 as per Annexure-"D" and the endorsement issued by respondent No. 1 as per Annexure-"E". Consequently, mandamus is sought directing respondent No. 1 to continue the petitioners to conduct worship activities of goddess of Mulukatammate temple as per the Order dated 12.04.2021 passed by this Court in RFA.No.1625/2020 vide Annexure-"B".

2. This Court vide order dated 13.03.2026 has passed the following order:

"Learned AGA is directed to accept notice to respondent No.1.

Learned counsel appearing for the petitioners, drawing the attention of this Court to the impugned order passed by respondent No.1 as



per Annexure-D and the consequential endorsement issued at Annexure-E, would submit that the said orders are prima facie contrary to the interim order passed by the Hon'ble Division Bench of this Court in RFA No.1625/2020. It is contended that the Hon'ble Division Bench, while entertaining the appeal and pending its consideration, has specifically reserved liberty in favour of the petitioners to perform pooja. In spite of the liberty so reserved by the Division Bench, respondent No.1 has proceeded to pass the impugned order and endorsement, which has the effect of denying the petitioners the said right.

Having regard to the material placed on record and the interim order passed by the Hon'ble Division Bench in the aforesaid appeal, this Court finds that the impugned order at Annexure-D and the consequential endorsement at Annexure-E are prima facie not in consonance with the liberty reserved by the Division Bench. Therefore, this Court deems it appropriate to stay the operation of the said orders.

Accordingly, the impugned order dated 27.11.2025 passed by respondent No.1 as per Annexure-D and the endorsement dated 09.02.2026 issued at Annexure-E shall remain stayed until further orders.



Pending consideration of the captioned writ petition, respondent No.1 is further directed to permit the petitioners to perform the religious right of worshipping Goddess Mulukattamma in terms of the liberty reserved by the Hon'ble Division Bench in RFA No.1625/2020

Learned AGA shall secure an explanation from respondent No.1 - Tahsildar for having issued impugned order and endorsement contrary to the interim arrangement made by the Hon'ble Division Bench of this Court by the next date of hearing.

Emergent notice to respondent Nos.2 to 6.

Re-list the matter for preliminary hearing on 09.04.2026".

The *lis* in the present writ petition centers around the asserted right of the petitioners to perform pooja and allied religious rituals at the Mulukattamma Devi Temple. The petitioners claim such right on the strength of their status and long-standing association with the temple, which, according to them, has been unjustly curtailed, thereby giving rise to the present proceedings.

3. It is not in dispute that the petitioners had earlier instituted a suit in O.S. No.1/2005, wherein their



claim came to be adjudicated by the competent civil court. Aggrieved by the judgment and decree rendered therein, the petitioners have carried the matter in appeal before this Court in R.F.A. No.1625/2020, which is presently pending consideration.

4. Records would further indicate that the Hon'ble Division Bench of this Court, while admitting the aforesaid Regular First Appeal, has passed an interim order, whereby the administration and management of the temple in question has been entrusted to the jurisdictional Tahsildar, as an interim measure, pending adjudication of the rights of the parties.

5. Before advertng to the correctness, legality, and sustainability of the impugned order assailed in the present writ petition, this Court deems it appropriate and necessary to extract the interim order passed by the Hon'ble Division Bench in R.F.A. No.1625/2020, which has



a direct bearing on the controversy involved in the present case. The said order reads as under:

"In these appeals, the dispute which requires to be adjudicated relates to administration, management and performance of pooja at Mulukattamma Devi Temple situated at Mulukatte village, Nagamangala Taluk, Mandya District.

By our order dated 24.03.2021, we had directed the Deputy Commissioner, Mandya District to convene a Peace Committee meeting and on account of meeting being inconclusive, we had permitted the Deputy Commissioner to continue the meeting and submit a report in a sealed cover enclosing proceedings of the meeting as well as recommendations. The same has been forwarded by the Deputy Commissioner in a sealed cover and same has been opened by this court today and after having perused the proceedings of the meeting as well as report of the Deputy Commissioner dated 26.03.2021, we are of the considered view that till the dispute is adjudicated and resolved, the temple and its property are to be managed, controlled and administered and for the said purpose, the Tahsildar, Nagamangala should take charge of the administration of the said Mulukattamma Devi temple forthwith.

In the light of finding recorded by the trial court that three families belonging to Scheduled Caste were



conducting the rituals and pooja at the temple, same arrangement shall be continued namely, three branches of these families on rotation basis of one week each shall conduct rituals at the temple and no interference shall be caused by any of the groups. Tahsildar who would be administering the management and administration of the temple shall ensure that there is no let up in the performance of pooja and rituals of the temple and if there is any apprehension that any law and order problem would arise, he would be at liberty to seek requisition of the jurisdictional police for maintaining law, order and peace. The Superintendent of Police, Mandya District shall also ensure that on such requisition made by the Tahsildar, Nagamangala, that requisite police force shall be posted at the temple premises for ensuring peace and tranquility.

As already noticed by us, dispute relating to this temple relates back to the year 1880 and we do hope that good sense and wisdom would prevail upon all the rival parties for ensuring that performance of pooja and rituals will not be the cause for disharmony amongst these groups. In the event of any further direction/order is required to be passed, jurisdictional Tahsildar would be at liberty to move this court by filing appropriate application.

A copy of this order be forwarded to the Tahsildar, Nagamangala forthwith.



Report as well as proceedings forwarded by the Deputy Commissioner is ordered to be re-sealed and same shall be kept in the custody of Registrar (Judicial).

The order that would be passed by the Tahsildar for conducting the pooja and rituals at the temple shall be complied and obeyed by all the concerned.

It is also placed on record that Jatra - 2021 has not been held on account of prevalent COVID-19 situation and rightly so".

A careful and meaningful reading of the aforesaid interim order passed by the Hon'ble Division Bench would unmistakably indicate that the Court, being conscious of the subsisting interse dispute amongst the archakas in regard to the performance of rituals and pooja at the Mulukattamma Devi Temple, has devised an equitable interim arrangement so as to preserve both continuity of worship and parity amongst the contesting claimants. The Division Bench, upon prima facie satisfaction that three families belonging to the Scheduled Caste community have been traditionally engaged in performing the temple rituals, has permitted all the said three families to



continue the performance of pooja and allied religious observances.

6. It is further directed that the three branches of the said families shall discharge such religious duties on a rotational basis, each branch being allotted a period of one week at a time, thereby ensuring an orderly and non-disruptive system of worship. The Division Bench has, in unequivocal terms, mandated that none of the rival factions or family members shall cause interference with the performance of rituals by the family whose turn it is to officiate, thereby seeking to obviate friction and maintain sanctity in the religious affairs of the temple.

7. In addition thereto, the overall administration and management of the temple has been entrusted to the jurisdictional Tahsildar, who has been cast with the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of the rotational arrangement and ensuring that there is no interruption or let-up in the daily pooja and rituals of the



temple. The Tahsildar has also been vested with the liberty to requisition the assistance of the jurisdictional police, if so required, for the limited purpose of maintaining law and order, and to secure an atmosphere of peace and tranquility in and around the temple premises, so that the interim arrangement ordained by the Division Bench is effectively and meaningfully implemented.

8. Before this Court proceeds to examine the legality, correctness, and tenability of the order impugned in the present proceedings, which has been passed by the jurisdictional Tahsildar in purported compliance of the interim arrangement directed by the Hon'ble Division Bench concerning the Mulukattamma Devi Temple, this Court deems it just and necessary to extract the operative portion of the said order, which reads as under:

“ನಾಗಮಂಗಲ ತಾಲ್ಲೂಕು, ಕಸಬಾ ಹೋಬಳಿ, ಮುಳುಕಟ್ಟೆ
ಗ್ರಾಮದ ಶ್ರೀಮುಳುಕಟ್ಟಮ್ಮ ದೇವಸ್ಥಾನದಲ್ಲಿ ಈ ಕಚೇರಿಯ ಅಧಿಕೃತ
ಜ್ಞಾಪನ ಪತ್ರ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ ಡಿ.ವಿ.ಎಸ್.ಸಿ.ಆರ್ 83/21-22
ದಿನಾಂಕ:12-08-2021 ರಂತೆ ನೇಮಕಗೊಂಡ 2 ನೇ ಪಾಲಿಯ



ಅರ್ಚಕರುಗಳಾದ ಎರಡನೇ ಪೂಜಾರಿ ಶ್ರೀ ಚಿಕ್ಕಪುಟ್ಟಯ್ಯ ಪೌತಿ ವಾರಸುದಾರರಾದ 1ನೇ ಎಂ.ಸಿ. ಸುದೀಂದ್ರ, 2ನೇ ಎಂ.ಸಿ. ದೇವರಾಜು ರವರನ್ನು ದಿನಾಂಕ:01-12-2025 ರಿಂದಲೇ ಜಾರಿಗೆ ಬರುವಂತೆ ಇವರನ್ನು ಶ್ರೀಮುಳುಕಟ್ಟಮ್ಮ ದೇವಾಲಯದ ಪೂಜಾ ವೃತ್ತಿಯಿಂದ ವಜಾಗೊಳಿಸಿ ಆದೇಶಿಸಿದೆ. ಸದರಿಯವರು ನಿರ್ವಹಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದ ಪೂಜಾ ಕಾರ್ಯದ ಅವಧಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದನೇ ಪೂಜಾರಿ ಶ್ರೀ ದೊಡ್ಡಪುಟ್ಟಯ್ಯ ಪೌತಿ ಕುಟುಂಬದವರು ವಾರದಲ್ಲಿ 3 ದಿನ, ಮೂರನೇ ಪೂಜಾರಿ ಶ್ರೀ ಎಂ ಮರಿಯಪ್ಪ ಕುಟುಂಬದವರು ವಾರದಲ್ಲಿ 3 ದಿನ, ತಾತ್ಕಾಲಿಕವಾಗಿ ಮುಂದಿನ ಆದೇಶದವರೆಗೂ ಪೂಜಾ ಕಾರ್ಯ ನಿರ್ವಹಿಸಲು ಆದೇಶಿಸಿದೆ."

9. In the backdrop of the interim arrangement put in place by the Hon'ble Division Bench in R.F.A. No.1625/2020, this Court finds, on a careful scrutiny of the impugned proceedings, that the first respondent-Tahsildar has clearly transgressed the limited authority conferred upon him. The interim order of the Division Bench, as extracted supra, unequivocally recognizes the right of the three families to perform pooja and rituals at the Mulukattamma Devi Temple on a rotational basis, each branch being entitled to officiate for a period of one week. The said arrangement is not merely administrative in



nature but is a conscious judicial determination intended to preserve equilibrium pending adjudication of the appeal.

10. However, the impugned order would disclose that the Tahsildar, despite being fully cognizant of the said arrangement and the entitlement of the petitioners' family to officiate as the second rotational batch, has, in a rather inexplicable and arbitrary manner, proceeded to hold that the petitioners are not entitled to perform pooja and rituals. Such a determination, in the considered view of this Court, is not only dehors the record but also amounts to an adjudication of substantive rights, which was wholly impermissible for the Tahsildar acting under a limited mandate.

11. This Court is constrained to observe that the action of the Tahsildar is in blatant violation of the directions issued by the Hon'ble Division Bench and amounts to an overreach of judicial orders. The Tahsildar was merely entrusted with the duty of administering the



temple and ensuring smooth implementation of the rotational arrangement, and not to sit in judgment over the rights of the parties. If there were any allegations of disturbance or interference inter se between the families, the Tahsildar could have very well invoked the liberty reserved by the Division Bench to seek assistance from the jurisdictional police for maintaining law and order, or, in the alternative, approached the Hon'ble Division Bench for appropriate clarifications or further directions. Instead, the Tahsildar has assumed unto himself the role of an adjudicatory authority and has effectively nullified the interim protection granted to the petitioners.

12. Such an exercise of power is clearly without jurisdiction and is in the teeth of the binding interim arrangement made by the Hon'ble Division Bench. The impugned Official Memorandum and endorsement, therefore, cannot be sustained in the eye of law and are liable to be struck down as being ultra vires the authority vested in the Tahsildar.



13. This Court also deems it necessary to record its disapproval of the manner in which the proceedings were conducted on behalf of the private respondents. It is not in dispute that the matter was taken up at the instance of the respondents by moving a vacating application, and this Court, accommodating such request, proceeded to hear the learned counsel appearing for the respondents even beyond regular court hours. Despite such indulgence and opportunity, the learned counsel, instead of rendering fair assistance to the Court, persisted in advancing submissions which were demonstrably contrary to the record and in clear misinterpretation of the interim order passed by the Hon'ble Division Bench.

14. Repeated requests made by this Court to confine the submissions to the operative portion of the impugned order and to the directions issued by the Division Bench were unfortunately not heeded. Such conduct, in the considered opinion of this Court, falls short of the standards expected of an officer of the Court,



particularly when the matter pertains to implementation of judicial orders.

15. Be that as it may, this Court refrains from taking any further action against the counsel appearing for private Respondents in that regard and confines itself to examining the legality of the impugned orders.

16. For the foregoing reasons, this Court is of the considered view that the Tahsildar has exceeded his jurisdiction and has virtually attempted to overreach the interim arrangement made by the Hon'ble Division Bench. Consequently, the impugned orders at Annexures-D and E are unsustainable and are liable to be set aside.

17. In the result, this Court proceeds to pass the following:

ORDER

- (i) The writ petition is ***allowed***.



(ii) The Official Memorandum dated 27.11.2025 issued by respondent No.1-Tahsildar as per Annexure-"D" and the endorsement dated 09.02.2026 as per Annexure-"E" are hereby quashed.

(iii) The respondent No.1-Tahsildar is directed to strictly adhere to the interim arrangement made by the Hon'ble Division Bench in R.F.A. No.1625/2020 and shall ensure that the right to perform pooja and rituals by the three families is carried out on a rotational basis, without interference, pending consideration of the appeal.

(iv) The Tahsildar shall confine his role to administrative supervision and, in the event of any disturbance or law and order issues, shall seek assistance from the jurisdictional police or approach the Hon'ble Division Bench for appropriate directions, but shall not adjudicate upon the rights of the parties.

Sd/-
(SACHIN SHANKAR MAGADUM)
JUDGE