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BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED : 20.02.2026

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THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE G.R.SWAMINATHAN

AND

THE HONOURABLE MRS.JUSTICE R.KALAIMATHI

W.P(MD)No.4752 of 2026

V.Sangilimuthu ... Petitioner

Vs.

1.The ADGP Idol Wing,
Additional Director General of Police,
Idol Wing EOW,
1st Floor, Readymade Garment Complex,
SIDCO Old Corporate Building,
Thiru Vi Ka Industrial Estate,
Guindy,
Chennai.

2.The Deputy Inspector General of Police,
Idol Wing, C48, 1st and 2nd Floor,
2nd Avenu, TNHB Complex,
Anna Nagar, Chennai.

3.The Inspector General of Police,
Idol Wing Operation,
No.17, Board Club Road, RA Puram,
Chennai.

4.The Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department,
Chennai - 600 034.

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5.The Joint Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department,
Thiruppur.

6.The Joint Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department,
Karur,
Karur District.

7.The District Collector,
Karur,
Karur District.

8.The Superintendent of Police,
Karur,
Karur District.

9.The Executive Officer,
Meenakshi Sundhreshwrar and
Bala Dhandayuthapandi Temple,
Thokaimalai,
Kulithali Taluk,
Karur.

10. Krishnamoorthi ... Respondents

Prayer: Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India praying this Court to issue a Writ of Mandamus, directing the respondents 1 to 3 to investigate the Idol Theft Case of the 9th respondent's Temple and Complete the investigation within the period that may be stipulated by this Court.

For Petitioner : Mr.P.Manikandan

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For Respondents : Mr.K.Gnanasekaran
Government Advocate
for R.1, R.2, R.3 & R.8

Mr.J.Ashok
Additional Government Pleader
for R.4 to R.7

Mr.P.Athimoolapandian for R.9

JUDGMENT

(Judgment of the Court was made by G.R.Swaminathan J.)

Heard the learned counsel appearing for the writ petitioner, the learned Government Advocate appearing for the respondents 1, 2, 3 and 8, the learned Additional Government Pleader appearing for the respondents 4 to 7 and the learned counsel appearing for the ninth respondent. Considering the nature of relief to be granted, issuance of notice to the tenth respondent is dispensed with.

2.The petitioner is a resident of Thogaimalai in Kulithalai Taluk, Karur District. He claims to be a devotee of the ninth respondent temple. Kumbabishekam for the ninth respondent temple was performed on 27.11.2025. The HR&CE Department constituted a Board comprising non-hereditary trustees for managing the temple. Thiru.Veerappan was the chairman of the Board of Trustees.

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3.It is well settled that before removing or replacing an idol, permission from the Commissioner of HR&CE must be obtained. However, in the case on hand, even without getting such prior permission, Mulavar was replaced with a new idol. Neither the department nor the devotees were aware of this. The whereabouts of the earlier idol were not known.

4.On 20.01.2026, the Executive Officer of the temple lodged complaint before the Inspector of Police, Thogaimalai Police Station that the old idol was missing. Unfortunately, no FIR was registered. Since the issue had generated considerable controversy and upon being questioned by the HR&CE officials, the trustees and the priest informed them that the old idol had been kept inside the spring located within the temple premises. The idol was thereafter recovered. The local Police were informed that, since the idol had been recovered, no further action was taken. Thereupon, the Police closed the complaint on 22.01.2026.

5.On the very next day, a fresh complaint was lodged by the Executive Officer. We went through the contents of the complaint. It is only about the illegal replacement of the old idol by the trustees. We are not able to discern any provision which would penalise such illegal

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replacement. We cannot therefore fault the local Police for not registering any FIR.

6.We take judicial notice of the fact that before performing Kumbabishekam and installing the idol after Balalayam, it is a practice to keep gems and jewels underneath the idol. It is not known whether such jewels and gems were placed underneath the old idol. Probably, that is why prior permission from the authorities is required before replacing an idol.

7.We are informed that one Thiru.Chandresekaran has been appointed as the fit person for the temple, superseding the Board. We direct Thiru.Chandrasekaran, fit person to lodge a fresh complaint. Since removal of an item without proper consent would constitute theft and it is a congnizable offence, we direct the local Police to register an FIR on such complaint to be lodged by the fit person. Proper enquiry shall be conducted. Since the trustees are not before us, no observation made in this order shall be deemed to constitute a reflection on their guilt. We make it clear that these observations are only tentative and are made to nudge the Police into taking action as per law.

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8.This Writ Petition is disposed of accordingly. No costs.

[G.R.S., J.] [R.K.M, J.]
20.02.2026

NCC : Yes / No
Index : Yes / No
Internet : Yes/ No
MGA

To

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