



W.P.(MD) No.19144 of 2026

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BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED : 08.07.2026

CORAM

THE HON'BLE MR.JUSTICE C.SARAVANAN

W.P.(MD)No.19144 of 2026

and

W.M.P.(MD)No.14125 of 2026

V.Poopandi

... Petitioner

Vs.

- 1.The Commissioner,
HR and CE Department,
119, Utthamar Gandhi Road,
Thousand Lights West,
Nungambakkam,
Chennai-600 034.
- 2.The Joint Commissioner,
HR and CE Department,
Ellis Nagar,
Madurai - 625 001.
- 3.The Chief Sthapathy,
HR and CE Commissioner Head Quarters,
Nungambakkam, Chennai-600 034.
- 4.The Assistant Commissioner,
HR and CE, Collectorate Complex,
Virudhunagar District.
- 5.The Executive Officer / Thakkar,
Arulmigu Vaidhyanatha Swamy Temple,
Madawarvilagam, Srivilliputtur,
Virudhunagar District.



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6.The Inspector of Police,
Watrap Police Station,
Virudhunagar District.

[R6 is *suo motu* impleaded vide order
dated 08.07.2026]

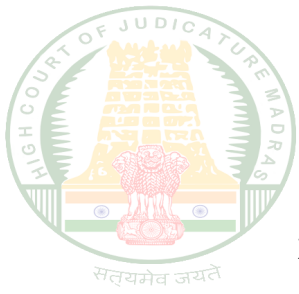
... Respondents

Prayer : Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, for issuance of a Writ of Mandamus, directing the respondents 1 to 5 to make a Stone Sculpture New idol of Moolavar Goddess Nallathangal Temple under the guidance of the third respondent to be installed in the Sanctorum of Arulmigu Nallathangal Temple, situated at Arjunapuram, Watrap Taluk, Virudhunagar District, based on the petitioner's representation dated 01.07.2026.

For Petitioner	: Mr.S.Mahalingam
For R1 to R4	: Mr.S.Venkatesh Government Standing Counsel
For R5	: Mr.R.Murali Standing Counsel
For R6	: Mr.P.Vetrivel Government Advocate (Criminal side)

ORDER

The petitioner has approached this Court at the eleventh hour, on the eve of the Kumbabishekam scheduled to be held in respect of Arulmigu Nallathangal Temple, situated at Arjunapuram, Watrap Taluk, Virudhunagar District.



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2. The grievance of the petitioner is that the official respondents have installed a new idol of the Deity Nallathangal, which, according to the petitioner, is contrary to the design approved by the Department. It is submitted that the approved design was prepared after miscreants damaged the original idol of the Deity on or about 26.01.2025, pursuant to which a complaint was lodged before the Watrap Police Station on 27.01.2025, resulting in the registration of Crime No.34 of 2025.

3. The learned counsel for the petitioner submitted that the original idol was damaged by certain miscreants and that the new idol, proposed to be consecrated during the Kumbabishekam scheduled for 09.07.2026, was donated by one K.Selvam on 13.02.2025.

4. It is further contended that the design approved by the Regional Level Expert Committee on 14.03.2025 and thereafter by the State Level Expert Committee on 22.04.2025 has been deviated from while sculpting the new idol proposed to be consecrated on 09.07.2026.

5. It is also the petitioner's case that the entire process leading to the Kumbabishekam lacked transparency, inasmuch as the general public was



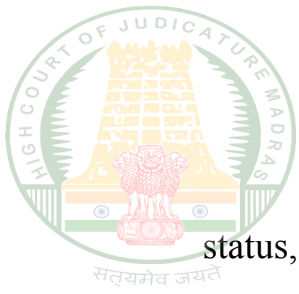
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not made aware of the proceedings preceding the ceremony. It is further alleged that the said K.Selvam, claiming himself to be the Village Head, has been practising acts of untouchability and discrimination and has taken advantage of his alleged relationship with the respondents 4 and 5 to project himself as the person responsible for the consecration of the idol.

6. It is further submitted that the advertisements and invitation relating to the Kumbabishekam have been published in the name of the said K.Selvam, giving the impression that the entire consecration ceremony is being conducted under his leadership.

7. Per contra, the learned Standing Counsel appearing for the fifth respondent Temple submitted that the allegations levelled by the petitioner, particularly, those relating to the alleged practice of untouchability, are wholly baseless and unsupported by any material.

8. The learned Standing Counsel further submitted that the temple is an ancient temple under the administration and control of the H.R. & C.E. Department and that there is no scope for conferring any special



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status, privilege or honour upon any individual either during the

WEB COPY Kumbabishekam scheduled for 09.07.2026 or thereafter.

9. The learned Standing Counsel also produced a photograph of the damaged idol. It is submitted that the approved design depicts a snake beneath the left hand of the deity and that the newly sculpted idol has been prepared using available technology as a faithful replica of the original idol. It is, therefore, contended that there is no deviation between the original depiction of the deity and the newly sculpted idol proposed to be consecrated on 09.07.2026.

10. It is further submitted that the petitioner was also a signatory to the Palalayam ceremony held on 25.05.2026 and, therefore, cannot now feign ignorance of the proposed Kumbabishekam scheduled for 09.07.2026.

11. It is also submitted that the Yagasalai Pooja, which was scheduled to commence this morning, has been kept in abeyance only in view of the pendency of the present proceedings and is awaiting orders of this Court.

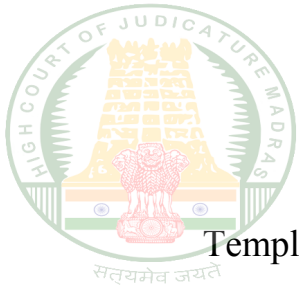


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12. By way of rejoinder, the learned counsel for the petitioner drew the attention of this Court to the order of the Division Bench of this Court in **The Director, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi and Others**, reported in **CDJ 2021 MHC 2594** (*Suo Motu* W.P.No.574 of 2015, dated 07.06.2021), wherein comprehensive guidelines were issued regarding the maintenance of temples and the conduct of Kumbabishekam. According to the learned counsel, the proposed Kumbabishekam scheduled for 09.07.2026 is contrary to the directions issued by the Division Bench in the aforesaid decision.

13. A reference was also made to the order dated **26.06.2025** passed by this Court in **W.P.(MD)No.17255 of 2025**, filed by P.Veerapandi and K.Selvam seeking a Writ of Mandamus forbearing the respondents therein from interfering with the spiritual affairs of the subject temple in relation to the conduct of daily Poojas and festivals in accordance with the customary practices of the Villagers. It is submitted that the said writ petition came to be dismissed.

14. The learned counsel further submitted that P.Veerapandi and K.Selvam had earlier sought to conduct the Kumbabishekam of the



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Temple on 12.07.2025 without obtaining the requisite permission from the

H.R. & C.E. Department, notwithstanding the fact that the temple had already been brought under the control of the fourth respondent namely, the Executive Officer, Arulmigu Nachiyar (Andal) Thirukovil, Srivilliputhur, Virudhunagar District, who had been appointed as Fit Person by proceedings dated 27.01.2025 and had assumed charge on 31.01.2025. It is also recorded in the said order that the appointment of the fourth respondent as Fit Person was pursuant to the order dated 02.04.2025 passed in W.P.(MD) No.9002 of 2025.

15. By way of sur-rejoinder, the learned Standing Counsel appearing for the fifth respondent submitted that the idol proposed to be consecrated on 09.07.2026 was not donated exclusively by K.Selvam or P.Veerapandi, but was contributed by the Villagers collectively, of whom K.Selvam and P.Veerapandi are also members.

16. Having considered the rival submissions and taking note of the fact that the petitioner has approached this Court at the eleventh hour, after the Palalayam ceremony was conducted on 25.05.2026 and on the eve of the Kumbabishekam scheduled for 09.07.2026, this Court is of the



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view that the petitioner's attempt to stall the Kumbabishekam cannot be countenanced. Accordingly, the Kumbabishekam shall proceed as scheduled by the respondents. However, it is made clear that the respondents shall ensure that no individual is accorded any special privilege, honour or preferential treatment either during the Kumbabishekam on 09.07.2026 or at any time thereafter.

17. The respondents shall further ensure that no discrimination or any form of active or passive untouchability is practised in the temple by the said K.Selvam, P.Veerapandi or any other person. It shall be the responsibility of the respondents 4 and 5 to ensure that the temple remains accessible to the general public without any discrimination or preferential treatment being extended to any individual.

18. The sixth respondent Police shall ensure that the Yagasalai Pooja and the Kumbabishekam scheduled to be held on 09.07.2026 for the consecration of the new idol are conducted peacefully and without giving rise to any law and order problem. For the said purpose, adequate police personnel shall be deployed in and around the Temple and, if necessary, appropriate orders may be obtained from the jurisdictional Executive Magistrate.



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19. It is made clear that, if there is any substance in the oral submission made by the learned counsel for the petitioner that the respondents 4 and 5 are related to or affiliated with the said K.Selvam, the H.R. & C.E. Department shall take appropriate steps to transfer them to some other place.

20. The Writ Petition stands disposed of accordingly. There shall be no order as to costs. Consequently, the connected Miscellaneous Petition is closed.

NCC : Yes / No

08.07.2026

Note:- Issue order copy on 08.07.2026.

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To

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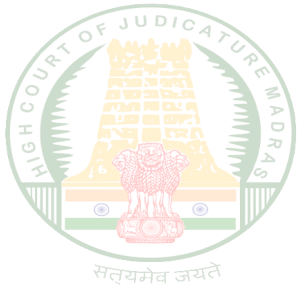
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C.SARAVANAN, J.

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