



W.P.(MD) No.23443 of 2026

BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED : 13.08.2026

CORAM

THE HON'BLE MR.JUSTICE C.SARAVANAN

W.P.(MD) No.23443 of 2026

Shanmuganathan

... Petitioner

Vs.

1.The Joint Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments,
Thanjavur.

2.The Assistant Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments,
Pudukottai.

3.The Inspector of Police,
K.Pudupatti Police Station,
Pudukottai District.

4.Vellaiyan Poosari

5.The Superintendent of Police,
Office of the Superintendent of Police,
Thiruvalluvar Nagar,
Pudukottai.

... Respondents

(R5 is *suo motu* impleaded by this order)

Prayer : Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India,
for issuance of a Writ of Mandamus directing the first and second



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respondents to permit the petitioner to conduct Sacred Lamp Worship on 17.08.2026* based on the representation submitted by the petitioner on 24.07.2026 immediately within stipulated time.

[* amended *suo motu* by this order]

For Petitioner : Mr.T.A.Ebenezer
For R1 & R2 : Mr.R.Parthiban
Special Government Pleader
For R3 & R5 : Mr.P.Vetrivel
Government Advocate (Crl. Side)
For R4 : Mr.G.Madhavan

ORDER

The petitioner is before this Court seeking a direction to the first and second respondents to permit the petitioner to conduct Sacred Lamp Worship [குத்துவிளக்கு பூஜை] on 17.08.2026 (wrongly stated as 07.08.2026 in the prayer, which is *suo motu* amended by this Court) in the temple, namely, Sri Shenbaga Sastha Ayyanar Koil, situated in Survey No.73, Nambooranipatti Village, Thirumayam Taluk, Pudukottai District.

2. The case of the petitioner is that the subject temple attracts devotees from a common lineage from 84 different villages who offer their prayers in the said temple. It is submitted that the fourth respondent,



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who is the Poojari under whose control the temple is being managed, has excluded about 81 villages from the Sacred Lamp Worship [குத்துவிளக்கு பூஜை] held on 24.07.2026 pursuant to the Peace Committee Meeting held under the stewardship of the H.R. & C.E. Department on 23.07.2026.

3. It is further submitted that in the Peace Committee Meeting, it has also been clearly agreed by the representatives who were present at the Peace Committee Meeting held on 23.07.2026 before the office of the H.R. & C.E. Department that one Baskar can also submit a representation for similar Pooja and that the same should be considered.

4. The learned counsel for the fourth respondent, on the other hand, submits that the attempt of the petitioner to bypass the fourth respondent should not be permitted, as he is the hereditary trustee. That apart, it is submitted that the festival was held peacefully on 24.07.2026 pursuant to the Peace Committee Meeting held on 23.07.2026. It is further submitted that last year, there was large-scale violence during the temple festival and that an FIR was also registered in Crime No.76 of 2025 on the file of the K.Puduppatti Police Station, Pudukottai District, the third respondent herein, for the offences punishable under Sections 189(2), 285, 292 and



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126(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023 and that about 10 persons have been arrayed as accused.

5. It is submitted that the temple festival can be held only once a year and that the customary practice cannot be deviated merely because the petitioner wants to bypass the fourth respondent. It is further submitted by the learned counsel for the fourth respondent that the petitioner did not participate in the Peace Committee Meeting held on 23.07.2026 and that the said Baskar would also seek to conduct separate Sacred Lamp Worship [குத்துவிளக்கு பூஜை] independently, relying upon the Peace Committee Meeting held on 23.07.2026. That apart, it is submitted that this Court had earlier passed an order in W.P.(MD) No. 22413 of 2024 on 23.09.2024, wherein it was categorically stated that any worship shall be conducted only through the fourth respondent. Paragraph 5 of the said order dated 23.09.2024 in W.P.(MD) No.22413 of 2024 reads as under:

“5. In view of the same and taking into consideration the facts and circumstances of the case and the limited relief sought for in this Writ Petition, the petitioners may submit a representation before the fourth respondent. If any such representation is received, the fourth respondent shall consider the



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same on its own merits and pass appropriate orders in accordance with law, after affording reasonable opportunity of hearing to the petitioners and other interested persons/stake holders, as expeditiously as possible. It is made clear that this Court has not expressed any views with regard to the merits of the representation and it is open to the concerned respondent to consider the representation on its own merits and in accordance with law.”

6. The learned Special Government Pleader appearing for the first and second respondents confirms that indeed, there was large-scale violence during the preceding temple festival in the year 2025, resulting in the registration of an FIR in Crime No.76 of 2025. He further submits that appropriate orders may be passed and that the H.R. & C.E. Department will abide by such order as may be passed by this Court.

7. Having considered the submissions made by the learned counsel for the petitioner and the learned counsel for the respondents and considering the fact that the subject temple attracts devotees from different villages, cutting across different communities, as also devotees from the same community who claim that they trace their ancestry to a common lineage and also considering the fact that the right to worship is enshrined under the Constitution of India and that such right cannot be



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curtailed unilaterally, I am inclined to dispose of this Writ Petition with the following directions:

- i. The first and second respondents, in the presence of the Superintendent of Police, Pudukottai District, who is *suo motu* impleaded as the fifth respondent and other revenue officials, shall convene a Joint Peace Committee Meeting between the representatives of the different villages who claim to worship in the said temple.
- ii. The meeting shall be held at the office of the first and second respondents in the presence of the other officials.
- iii. As a one-time measure, the said Sacred Lamp Worship [குத்துவிளக்கு பூஜை] may be held for the second time during the financial year 2026-2027.
- iv. After eliciting the convenience of the different villages through their representatives, the H.R. & C.E. Department may also explore the possibility of conducting the same.
- v. An application for convening the temple festival for the second time shall be submitted simultaneously to the second respondent as well as the fourth respondent.
- vi. The fifth respondent and the third respondent shall ensure that the festival/event is conducted in a peaceful manner and that no



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untoward incident takes place, thereby causing any inconvenience to the devotees.

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8. With the above observations and directions, this Writ Petition stands disposed of. There shall be no order as to costs.

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JEN

NCC : Yes / No

Index : Yes / No

Issue Order copy on 14.08.2026

To

- 1.The Joint Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments,
Thanjavur.
- 2.The Assistant Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments,
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C.SARAVANAN, J.

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