



W.P.No.22326 of 2026 etc.

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED: 15.06.2026

CORAM :

THE HONOURABLE MR. SUSHRUT ARVIND DHARMADHIKARI,
CHIEF JUSTICE

AND

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE G.ARUL MURUGAN

WP Nos.22326, 22336 and 22332 of 2026 and
WMP Nos.24214, 24216, 24215, 24217, 24204 and 24201 of 2026

W.P.No.22326 of 2026:

Sarankumar S.
No.1, Ganapathy Nagar, Phase 2,
Renugambal Koil, Backside Tajpura,
Tajpura, Vellore,
Tamil Nadu - 635 521.

Petitioner(s)

Vs

1. The State of Tamil Nadu,
Rep. by its Secretary to Government,
Highways and Minor Ports Department,
Secretariat, Fort St. George,
Chennai - 600 009.
2. The Chief Engineer,
Highways Department,
Construction and Maintenance,
Chennai.
3. The Superintending Engineer,
Highways Department,
Construction and Maintenance,
Tiruvannamalai Circle, Tiruvannamalai.



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4. The Divisional Engineer,
Highways Department,
Construction and Maintenance,
Ranipet Division, Ranipet.
5. Maruthamalai Constructions,
36, Next to Government Library
Trunk Road, Walaja, Vellore,
Tamil Nadu – 632 513.

Respondent(s)

WP No.22336 of 2026

HariLakshmipathy
1/10, Banjanai Kovil Street, Kalleri
Ladvaram, Vellore District,
Vellore – 632503.

Petitioner(s)

Vs

1. The State of Tamil Nadu,
Rep. by its Secretary to Government,
Highways and Minor Ports Department,
Secretariat, Fort St. George,
Chennai - 600 009.
2. The Chief Engineer,
Highways Department,
Construction and Maintenance,
Chennai.
3. The Superintending Engineer,
Highways Department,
Construction and Maintenance,
Tiruvannamalai Circle, Tiruvannamalai.



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4. The Divisional Engineer,
Highways Department,
Construction and Maintenance,
Ranipet Division, Ranipet.

5. S.Nagarajan,
5, Jayamani Street, Navalapur
Ranipet – 632 513.

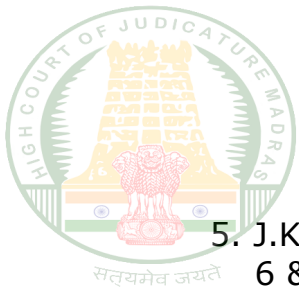
Respondent(s)

WP No. 22332 of 2026
Lingesan Mani
No.1/3, P.T.Yogalingam Street,
Arcot, Vellore,
Tamil Nadu - 632503.

Petitioner(s)

Vs

1. The State of Tamil Nadu,
Rep. by its Secretary to Government,
Highways and Minor Ports Department,
Secretariat, Fort St. George,
Chennai - 600 009.
2. The Chief Engineer,
Water Resources Department
Chennai Region, Chennai – 600 005.
3. The Superintending Engineer,
Water Resources Department
Upper Palar Basin Circle
Vellore – 632 006.
4. The Executive Engineer,
Water Resources Department,
Special Project Division
Vellore.



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5. J.K.Constructions,
6 & 7, Teacher Rajamanickam 3rd Street
Chennai-Bengaluru Highway
Shenbakkam, Vellore – 632 008.

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PRAYER in WP No. 22326 of 2026: Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India seeking issuance of a writ of certiorarified mandamus calling for the records relating to Tender Notice No. 74/2025-26/HDO, dated 20.01.2026, issued by the third respondent, and the consequential Award of Contract dated 16.02.2026 issued by the third respondent in favour of the fifth respondent respectively for the work related to Widening from Two Lane with Paved Shoulder to Four Lane and Strengthening at Km 0/0-1/0 and 1/3-4/4 of BHEL Feeder Road (SH-241), including widening of limited use subway, widening of minor bridge, reconstruction and widening of culverts, construction of centre median, retaining wall, bus lay bay and junction improvements - TVM-181 and QUASH the same as being illegal and violative of Rule 20 of the Tamil Nadu Transparency in Tenders Rules, and consequently direct respondents 1 to 4 to issue fresh tender notifications in accordance with law.

PRAYER in WP No. 22336 of 2026: Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India seeking issuance of a writ of certiorarified mandamus calling for the records relating to Tender Notice No. 74/2025-26/HDO dated 20.01.2026 issued by the third respondent and the consequential Awards of Contract bearing no. TRP.No.21/2025-26/Vol-II/DO, dated 26.02.2026 issued in favour of the fifth respondent respectively for the work related to Widening from Two



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Lane to Four Lane and Strengthening at Km 14/6-16/8, 19/8-21/6 and widening from Two Lane with Paved Shoulder to Four Lane and Strengthening at Km 16/8-19/8 of Arcot Tindivanam Road (SH-5), including widening of culverts, reconstruction of culverts, construction of centre median, providing junction improvements, bus lay bay and paver blocks - TVM-182 and quash the same as being illegal and violative of Rule 20 of the Tamil Nadu Transparency in Tenders Rules, and consequently direct respondents 1 to 4 to issue fresh tender notifications in accordance with law.

PRAYER in WP No. 22332 of 2026: Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India seeking issuance of a writ of certiorarified mandamus calling for the records relating to Short Term e-Tender Notice No.08 UPBC Vellore F-Tender 2025-2026 dated 13.02.2026 bearing Tender ID 2026_WRD_659544_1 issued by the third respondent for the work of Formation of a Small Dam across the Koilmalayar River near Melarasampattu Village in Anicut Taluk of Vellore District, and the consequential Letter of Acceptance letter No.Va.P/ Ko. Udanpadikai Koilmalayar/2026/dated 26.02.2026 issued by the third respondent in favor of the fifth respondent, and quash the same as being illegal, violative and contrary of Rule 20 of the Tamil Nadu Transparency in Tenders Rules, and consequently direct respondents 1 to 4 to issue a fresh tender notification in strict accordance with law.

For Petitioner(s) Mr. P.J.Rishikesh
in all WPs:



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For Respondent(s) Mr.T.Gowthaman
in all WPs: Additional Advocate General
Assisted by Mr. Mohammed Fayaz Ali
Government Pleader
for R1 to R4

COMMON ORDER

(Order of the Court was made by the Hon'ble Chief Justice)

By this common judgment, we dispose of three writ petitions filed in the nature of public interest litigation (PIL) challenging separate public procurement tender processes initiated by the State authorities.

- (i) In W.P.No.22326 of 2026, the petitioner challenges Tender Notice No.74/2025-26/HDO, dated 20.01.2026, issued by the Superintending Engineer, Highways Department, Tiruvannamalai for road widening and strengthening works (TVM-181);
- (ii) In W.P.No.22336 of 2026, the petitioner challenges the Tender Notice No.74/2025-26/HDO, dated 20.01.2026, in respect of package (TVM-182) for widening and strengthening of Arcot Tindivanam Road; and



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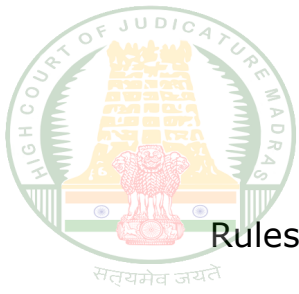
W.P.No.22326 of 2026 etc.

(iii) In W.P. No. 22332 of 2026, the petitioner challenges Short Term e-Tender Notice No.08 UPBC Vellore F-Tender 2025-2026, dated 13.02.2026, issued by the Superintending Engineer, Water Resources Department, Upper Palar Basin Circle, Vellore for construction of a small dam across the Koilmalayar River.

In all three writ petitions, the consequential award of contracts in favour of the respective fifth respondent is also challenged.

2. The core grievance raised by the petitioners across all three writ petitions is identical.

3. It is contended by learned counsel for the petitioners that the respondent authorities provided less than the mandatory minimum thirty-day period required for bid submissions for tenders valued above Rs.2 Crore, thereby violating Rule 20(1)(b) of the Tamil Nadu Transparency in Tenders Rules, 2000. It is further contended that no written authorization for reducing the timeline was obtained from a superior authority under Rule 20(2) of the



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Rules, thus vitiating the subsequent awards of contracts to the respective private respondents.

3. We have heard learned counsel on either side and perused the documents available on record.

4. In order to file a petition before the Court, a litigant must have suffered a direct, personal injury from the challenged action to establish the right to approach a court. However, Indian jurisprudence has significantly relaxed this rigid requirement through the mechanism of Public Interest Litigation (PIL). When marginalized or economically disadvantaged individuals lack the means to seek judicial remedies themselves, courts will entertain petitions brought on their behalf. Consequently, a PIL does not strictly require an individually aggrieved litigant, as its primary purpose is to enforce and safeguard broader social and economic rights across the nation.

5. In the case on hand, admittedly, the actual tenderers, as well as other eligible companies, firms, and contractors, raised no



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objections to the tender conditions. On the other hand, the petitioners, who did not even participate in the bidding process, have challenged the award of contracts. In other words, not a single actual prospective bidder has approached this court asserting that the compressed timelines prevented them from submitting a bid.

6. The projects under challenge, viz., widening vital State Highways to four lanes and forming a river dam, are critical elements of public utility infrastructure. Halting these works over a procedural time-gap, when contracts have already been awarded, would cause immense detriment to the public interest, far outweighing the technical procedural irregularities alleged by the petitioners. Labeling every timeline compression as a calculated attempt to extend State largesse, without substantial proof of bias or corruption, is legally unsustainable. It is not disputed by learned counsel for the petitioners that the respondent authorities are empowered to reduce the timeline stipulated in the tenders. In the absence of any structural malice or financial loss to the public exchequer, we find no reason to invoke our extraordinary



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jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution of India to quash the subject tenders.

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7. The Supreme Court in *Caretel Infotech Ltd. v. Hindustan Petroleum Corpn. Ltd*¹ held thus:

*"37. We consider it appropriate to make certain observations in the context of the nature of dispute which is before us. Normally parties would be governed by their contracts and the tender terms, and really no writ would be maintainable under Article 226 of the Constitution of India. In view of Government and public sector enterprises venturing into economic activities, this Court found it appropriate to build in certain checks and balances of fairness in procedure. **It is this approach which has given rise to scrutiny of tenders in writ proceedings under Article 226 of the Constitution of India. It, however, appears that the window has been opened too wide as almost every small or big tender is now sought to be challenged in writ proceedings almost as a matter of routine. This in turn, affects the efficacy of commercial activities of the public sectors, which may be in competition with the private sector. This could hardly have been the objective in mind. An unnecessary, close scrutiny of minute***

¹ (2019) 14 SCC 81



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details, contrary to the view of the tendering authority, makes awarding of contracts by government and public sectors a cumbersome exercise, with long drawn out litigation at the threshold. *The private sector is competing often in the same field. Promptness and efficiency levels in private contracts, thus, often tend to make the tenders of the public sector a non-competitive exercise. This works to a great disadvantage to the Government and the public sector."*

[emphasis supplied]

8. In our considered view, public interest is best served when a contract is executed in a timely manner, ensuring that the intended services are promptly made available to the public. In the case on hand, there is no allegation that any condition in the tender is arbitrary or uniquely tailored to favor a specific individual or entity. In administrative matters primarily driven by execution expediency, cost factors, and the high probability of price escalation due to delays, the scope of judicial review is extremely restricted. Ultimately, it is not the domain of the courts to launch inquiries into the wisdom or prudence of a particular administrative decision.

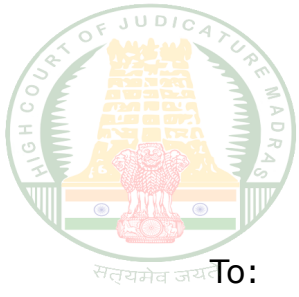


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For the reasons stated above, we hold that the decision-making process adopted by the respondent State authorities does not suffer from such pervasive perversity or arbitrariness as to demand judicial intervention under the guise of a public interest litigation. The writ petitions are, therefore, dismissed sans costs. All connected interim applications stand closed.

(SUSHRUT ARVIND DHARMADHIKARI,CJ) (G.ARUL MURUGAN,J)
15.06.2026

Index : Yes/No
Neutral Citation : Yes/No
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To:

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THE HON'BLE CHIEF JUSTICE
AND
G.ARUL MURUGAN,J.

(sasi)

WP Nos.22326, 22336 and 22332 of 2026

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