



W.P.No.27356 of 2019

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

DATED : 30.01.2026

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CORAM :

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE N. SATHISH KUMAR

AND

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE D.BHARATHA CHAKRAVARTHY

W.P.No.27356 of 2019,
W.M.P.Nos.23023 & 24519 of 2025

W.P.No.27356 of 2019

Mr. S.Muralidharan
S/o.Mr.P.Sivalingam, 2A, 3rd Main Road,
Kottur Gardens, Chennai-600 085

Petitioner(s)

Vs

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and
Chief Wildlife Warden, Department of Forests,
Govt. of Tamil Nadu,
No.1 Jeenis Road, Panagal Buildings,
Saidapet, Chennai-600 015 and 76 Others

Respondent(s)

WMP NO. 23023 of 2025

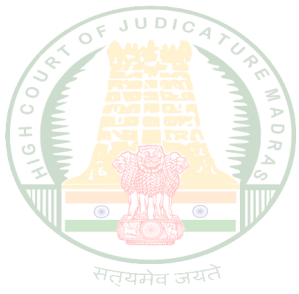
Mr. S.Muralidharan
S/o.Mr.P.Sivalingam, 2A, 3rd Main Road, Kottur
Gardens, Chennai-600 085

Petitioner(s)

Vs

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and
Chief Wildlife Warden, Department of Forests, Govt. of
Tamil Nadu, No.1 Jeenis Road, Panagal Buildings,
Saidapet, Chennai-600 015 and 65 Others

Respondent(s)



W.P.No.27356 of 2019

WMP NO. 24519 of 2025

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Mr. S.Muralidharan
S/o.Mr.P.Sivalingam, 2A, 3rd Main Road, Kottur
Gardens, Chennai-600 085

Petitioner(s)

Vs

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and
Chief Wildlife Warden, Department of Forests, Govt. of
Tamil Nadu, No.1 Jeenis Road, Panagal Buildings,
Saidapet, Chennai-600 015 and 65 Others

Respondent(s)

W.P.No.27356 of 2019 :

For Petitioner(s): Mr.Muralidharan (P-IN-P)

For Respondent(s): Dr.T.Seenivasan, Special Government Pleader (Forest), for R1,
3 to 5

Mr.B.N.Suchindran, Standing Counsel for R4

Mr.V.Chandrasekaran, Senior Panel Counsel, for R6

Mr.S.P.Chockalingam, for R7

Mr.L. Jaivenkatesh, Standing Counsel for R8

Mr. Richardson Wilson, for R 9 to 11, 16 to 45

RR - 12 to 15 - No Appearance

Mr.N.Muralikumaran, Senior Counsel,

for M/s.MCGAN Law Firm, for R 46 to 49

Mr.L.Palanimuthu, for RR - 50 to 64

Mr.M.Purushothaman, for R 65 and 66

Mr.K.M.D.Muhilan

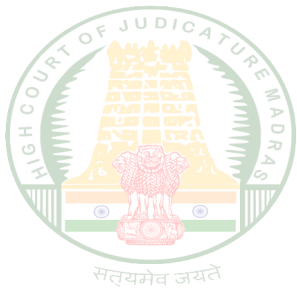
Additional Public Prosecutor for the Special Investigation Team (SIT)

Mr.R.Shanmugasundaram, Senior Counsel

assisted by Mr.K.Karthikeyan, Government Advocate (HR&CE)

Amici Curiae

1. Mr.C.Mohan, Advocate
2. Mr.T.Mohan, Senior Advocate
3. Mr.M.Santhanaraman, Advocate
4. Mr.Rahul Balaji, Advocate



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ORDER

Today, further status report, letter of the Forest Department and the detailed annexure containing the picture of the area was placed on record.

2. After considering the arguments of the learned Senior Counsel, this Court suggested that since the present site is also 137 meters from the forest boundary which is also considered to be eco-sensitive zone as per the Kasthuri Rangan Committee report and even from the letter of the Forest Department dated 29.01.2026, it can be seen that there has been 119 incidents of elephant straying in the last year alone whether some other suitable site can be identified in respect of the same.

3. The learned senior counsel also submits that there is yet another site which is 431 meters from the forest boundary. It is for the authorities to consider the same or they can even consider any other suitable site beyond 500 meters of the forest boundary which according to us will not create any human animal conflict and will not be a burden on the pristine environment, especially, Bolampatti forest which is rich with wildlife. There is also long standing belief of nature and healing associated with Marudamalai itself. Let a further status report

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be filed.

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4. The learned senior counsel would submit that there is other area which is around 431 meters away from the forest boundary and submitted that temple can be permitted to use that place. We also request them to explore the possibility of identifying any such place which would not be harmful for the environment.

5. We are also of the view that till the proposal is submitted by the respondents and issue is finalised, the Highways Department shall be restrained from removing/cutting trees between Vadavalli and Marudhamalai. The learned Special Government Pleader is also requested to get instructions in this regard.

6. Call on 20.2.2026

[N.S.K.J.] [D.B.C.J.]
30.01.2026

dhk

To

- 1.The Principal Secretary,
Department of Forests And Environment,
St. George Fort, Chennai 600 009.
- 2.The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests,
(Head of Forest Force),
Forest Head Quarters,
Guindy-Velachery Main Road,
Velachery, Chennai – 600 032.
- 3.The District Collector,

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The Nilgiris, Ooty,
The Nilgiris District.

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4.The District Collector,
Coimbatore.

5.The District Forest Officer,
Kodaikanal, Dindigul District.

6.The Assistant Director of Rural Development,
Coimbatore.

7.The Commissioner,
Department of Geology and Mining,
Thiru.Vi.Ka.Industrial Estate, Alandur Road, Guindy, Chennai-600 002

8.Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change,
Indira Paryavaran Bhavan, Jorbagh Road, New Delhi-110 003

9.The Superintending Engineer (Coimbatore North),
Tamilnadu Generation and Distribution Limited (TANGEDCO),
Tatabad, Coimbatore.

10.The Principal Secretary/Chairman,
Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board,
No.76, Mount Salai, Guindy, Chennai- 600 032

11.The Managing Director
Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation
Wallajah Road, Chennai – 600 002.

12.The Director,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department,
No.119, Uthamar Gandhi Salai,
Nungambakkam High Road,
Chennai – 600 034.

13.The Special Government Pleader (Forests),
Madras High Court, High Court Campus,
Chennai 600 104.



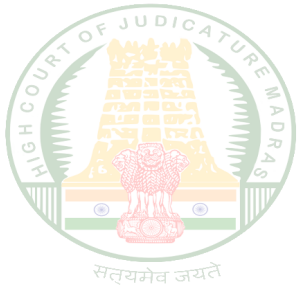
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14.The Salim Ali Centre for Orinthology and Natural History,
Anaikatty (Post),
Coimbatore – 641 108.

15.The Commissioner,
Coimbatore City Municipal Corporation,
Coimbatore.

N. SATHISH KUMAR. J.
AND
D. BHARATHA CHAKRAVARTHY. J.

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