

W.P.(MD).No.6785 of 2026

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BEFORE THE MADURAI BENCH OF MADRAS HIGH COURT

DATED: 12-03-2026

CORAM

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE D.BHARATHA CHAKRAVARTHY

W.P.(MD).No.6785 of 2026

T.S.Saravanan

... Petitioner

Vs.

1. The District Collector,
Ramanathapuram,
Ramanathapuram District.
 2. The Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department,
Chennai
 3. The Joint Commissioner / Executive Officer,
Arulmigu Ramanathaswamy Temple,
Rameshwaram,
Ramanathapuram District
 4. The Assistant Commissioner,
Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department,
Paramakudi,
Ramanathapuram District
 5. The District Forest Officer,
District Forest Office,
Ramanathapuram District.
- ... Respondents



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PRAYER: Writ Petition filed under Article 226 of the Constitution of India, praying this Court to issue a Writ of MANDAMUS directing the respondents to provide basic amenities including pathway access, drinking water facility, sanitation facilities, electricity connection to Arulmigu Rettathazhai Muniyasamy Temple situated in Rameshwaram, Ramanathapuram District and conduct consecration for Arulmigu Rettathazhai Muniyasamy Temple based on the petitioners representation dated 18.01.2024 and 23.02.2026 and pass such further or other orders as this Honble Court may deem fit and proper in the circumstances of the case and thus render justice.

For Petitioner	: Mr.R.J.Karthick
For R1, R2 & R4	: Mr.J.K.Jayaselan Government Advocate
For R3	: Mr.S.Ramesh
For R5	: Mr.M.Lingadurai Special Government Pleader

ORDER

The relief sought for in the writ petition is to direct the respondents to provide basic amenities including pathway access, drinking water facility, sanitation facilities, electricity connection to Arulmigu Rettathazhai Muniyasamy Temple situated in Rameshwaram, Ramanathapuram District and conduct consecration for Arulmigu Rettathazhai Muniyasamy Temple based on the petitioner's representation dated 18.01.2024 and 23.02.2026.



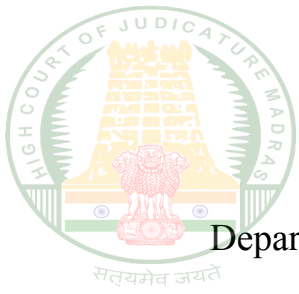
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2. Mr.J.K.Jayaselan, learned Government Advocate takes notice for R1, R2 and R4, Mr.S.Ramesh, learned counsel takes notice for R3 and Mr.M.Lingadurai, learned Special Government Pleader takes notice for R5.

3. Heard the learned counsel on either side and perused the materials available on record.

4. With reference to the maintenance and conduct of consecration for the temple viz., Arulmigu Rettathazhai Muniyasamy Temple, it is necessary to ascertain whether the temple falls under any category protected by the Archaeology Department. Therefore, the Joint Commissioner/Executive Officer of the said temple is directed to conduct an inspection in the presence of appropriate experts to assess its structural stability and archaeological significance.

5. In the event that the temple requires any urgent work for its structural stability or necessitates conservation measures without affecting its archaeological significance, the Inspection Committee shall submit a report to the 2nd respondent viz., the Commissioner, HR & CE



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Department, recommending only minimal work which will conserve the temple without losing its archaeological heritage value. On receipt of the same, the 2nd respondent shall conduct consecration ceremony if only absolutely necessary with minimum intrusion.

6. As far as the other limb of the prayer is concerned, it is observed that the temple caters to a different form of bhakti, where devotees, in search of inner peace and solitude wander and traverse the extremely eco-sensitive forest area to reach the temple and offer their prayers. This aspect must be kept in mind. The entire area in which the temple is situated is a reserve forest and also falls within a highly Eco-Sensitive Coastal Regulation Zone. It is in proximity to sanctuaries, wetlands, and other ecologically significant zones, and the entire coastline constitutes an important biosphere. Therefore, the conservation of this biosphere, in itself, amounts to the preservation and respect of the said temple viz., Arulmigu Rettathazhai Muniyasamy Temple. This consideration shall be duly borne in mind.

7. However, considering the fact that the devotees have to walk approximately two kilometers over the sand dunes to reach the temple, provision of drinking water within the temple and its premises is



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necessary. The Forest Department shall ensure the availability of clean and potable drinking water, undertaking only minimal intrusion into the environment. The method of providing such drinking water shall be left to the discretion of the Forest Department. Drinking water may also be periodically carried and placed by foresters or guards on duty for the benefit of the devotees.

8. With regard to sanitation, it must be ensured that adequate facilities are available at the starting point in the main road situated approximately two kilometers from the temple on the main road. In the event, permanent facilities cannot be provided, temporary toilets may be installed. Disposal of human excreta within the eco-sensitive areas or reserve forest is prohibited. Accordingly, devotees shall have access to proper sanitation facilities only at the starting point prior to venturing across the sand dunes to the temple for prayers and returning thereafter.

9. As far as electricity connection is concerned, it is not necessary for every temple to have electricity, particularly where worship can be conducted in the traditional manner, such as by lighting lamps or, during festivals, using traditional “Neipandams”. This approach is especially appropriate considering that the temple is situated in an extremely eco-sensitive area. The nocturnal environment must not be



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disturbed for the purpose of installing electricity. Construction of a road, for instance, would permanently alter the forest and the eco-sensitive area. Therefore, while the pristine nature of the temple must be preserved, the right of devotees to access the temple, offer prayers, and return safely must alone be ensured. The Forest Department shall facilitate access to limited number of persons and preserve both the temple and its surrounding environment during festival seasons.

10. The writ petition is disposed of with the above observation and directions. Needless to mention that the conservation measures, taking into account the opinions of appropriate experts, including those from the Indian Institute of Technology, as directed by the Division Bench, shall be duly considered. All concerned shall ensure that the traditions of the temple are not violated, and that any festival or worship is conducted strictly in accordance with the existing practices that have been followed for thousands of years, during which the temple and the highly eco-sensitive ecosystem have coexisted and complemented each other. No costs.

12.03.2026

Index: Yes
Speaking Order: Yes
Neutral Citation: No
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