

*W.P.(MD)Nos.16485 & 14699 of 2015 &
W.P.No.3075 of 2017*

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS

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Date of Reserving the Order	Date of Pronouncing the Order
06.03.2026	18.03.2026

CORAM :

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE N.SATHISH KUMAR

AND

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE D.BHARATHA CHAKRAVARTHY

**W.P.(MD)Nos.16485 of 2015 & 14699 of 2015
& W.P.No.3075 of 2017**

Vaiko, General Secretary,
Marumalarchi Dravida Munetra Kalagam (MDMK),
No.12, Rukmani Lakshmipathi Salai, Egmore,
Chennai – 600 008.

... Petitioner
in W.P.(MD) No.16485 of 2015

M.Patturajan

... Petitioner
in W.P.(MD) No.14699 of 2015

Sharath.P.Nair

... Petitioner
in W.P.No.3075 of 2017

Vs.

The Chief Secretary,
Government of Tamil Nadu,
Secretariat, Fort St. George,
Chennai – 600 009 and 743 others

... Respondents
in W.P.(MD) No.16485 of 2015



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1.The Commissioner,
Madurai City Municipal Corporation,
Anna Maligai, Madurai and 3 others

... Respondents
in W.P.(MD) No.14699 of 2015

1.The Chief Secretary,
Government of Tamil Nadu,
Secretariat, Fort St. George,
Chennai – 600 009 and 21 others

... Respondents
in W.P.No.3075 of 2017

In W.P.(MD)No.16485 of 2015:

For Petitioner :Mr.R.Murali
for Mr.R.Senthil Selvan

For Respondents :Mr.P.Wilson, Senior Counsel
Assisted by Dr.T.Seenivasan
Special Government Pleader
for RR 1 -16, 18 -655,
665 – 673, 737 and 738

Mr.S.M.Ananthamurugan for R17
Mr.R.Karthikeyan for R38
Mr.M.Govindan
for RR 380 – 382, 384 – 394, 506 -518,
481 – 488, 541 – 551, 594 – 605,
323 – 341, 625 – 643, 513, 608,
260 – 272, 395, 398, 342 – 359,
400, 489 – 492 and 396
Mr.Perumbulavil Radhakrishnan
for R741
Mr.G.Gomathi Sankar for R742
Mr.V.Chandrasekaran, SPC
for RR656-662
Mr.K.H.M.Afzal for R744



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Mr.N.R.R.Arun Natarajan
Spl.Government Pleader (HR & CE)
for RR674 - 712

In W.P.(MD)No.14699 of 2015:

For Petitioner : Ms.B.Asha

For Respondents : Mr.P.Wilson, Senior Counsel,
assisted by Dr.T.Seenivasan
Special Government Pleader for RR1 - 4

In W.P.No.3075 of 2017:

For Petitioner : Mr.J.M.Hassanulbazari

For Respondents : Mr.P.Wilson, Senior Counsel
Assisted by Dr.T.Seenivasan
Special Government Pleader
for RR1 - 22

Amici Curiae:

- 1.Mr.T.Mohan, Senior Counsel
- 2.Mr.M.Santhanaraman
- 3.Mr.Chevanan Mohan
- 4.Mr.Rahul Balaji

COMMON ORDER

[*The Order of the Court was made by D.Bharatha Chakravarthy, J.*]

This issue concerns the removal of the invasive species *Prosopis juliflora*, known as 'rPikf;fUntyk;' in Tamil. *Prosopis juliflora*, or *mesquite*, originated in the South American countries. During the early days of the colonisation, due to its rapid growth, drought resistance, and the need for



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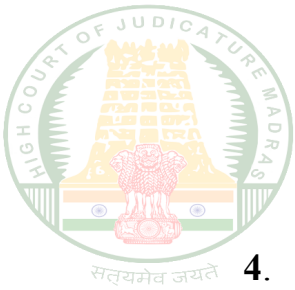
firewood, *Prosopis juliflora* was introduced to other continents, including India, Africa, and Australia. Wherever it spread, it became highly invasive.

2. In India, it is stated that even the Forest Department and other departments had spread its seeds through aerial seeding, using helicopters and aircraft, etc. Though initially it served the purpose of providing firewood to people including for industrial fuel, brick kilns, the charcoal industry etc., it has proven to be a disaster for our environment and ecology. First, the landscapes, whether fertile lands, grasslands, or the mossy and spongy earth of forests, are completely destroyed, and the land beneath these trees is transformed into barren ground, entirely devoid of any *flora* or *fauna*. Second, it completely displaces the native flora. In most Indian landscapes, the variety of Indian trees and plants has given way to this fittest survivor, and it now enjoys a monopoly. Third, it results in the depletion of the groundwater table and significantly reduced moisture levels in areas infested, thereby directly impacting biodiversity, leading to man-animal conflict, adding to climate change and posing other indirect risks to the environment. It is an invasive species to be eradicated in India. More specifically, within the State of Tamil Nadu, which has declared its policy on this invasive species vide G.O.(Ms)No.123 dated 13.07.2022 (*Tamil Nadu Policy on Invasive Plants and Ecological Restoration - TNPIPER*).



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3. While the Government has taken the praiseworthy policy decision, what has practically happened over the years is nothing but sporadic removal in select places and landscapes. Sporadic removal is a complete waste of time, as the invasive species we are dealing with spreads multiple times faster than it is being removed. Secondly, each Department is undertaking the work at its own pace and methodology, without any coordinated or concerted effort. For example, the Forest Department must spend a substantial amount of money to remove this from a 10-hectare plot. The Forest Department shall maintain the plot following the removal of the invasive species. However, when elephants walk along the corridor in the plains, they consume the straw-yellow pod (Legume) that is edible. It is to be noted that each long, flattened, straw-yellow pod is often slightly curved, containing 10 to 30 seeds embedded in a sweet, whitish pulp. In a single elephant dropping, more than 200 to 300 seeds are found, thereby facilitating the spread and growth of *Prosopis juliflora* even in deep forests and difficult hilly terrain. Not only through elephants, the seeds reach even the deepest forests by various means, thereby rendering the exercise undertaken by the Forest Department futile. Not to mention the plains, where the invasive species will catch up fast and start re-growing.



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4. Worldwide, several solutions have been considered, and it is acknowledged that the only effective way to deal with this invasive species is mechanical uprooting, followed by maintaining the land by planting native species. The State of Tamil Nadu and all the Departments agree that this is the method by which the invasive species has to be eradicated.

5. However, the mammoth nature and the importance of the issue are not understood at the execution level. The stakeholders are not recognising that biodiversity is the only solution to the extremely serious problem of Climate Change and the Greenhouse effect. When biodiversity is lost, the fertile landscape of Tamil Nadu will only turn into a desert, and this lurking danger is not being realised by the executing departments; therefore, this Court has taken up the task and has been issuing several orders.

6. Despite the repeated Orders passed, no proper action was taken, and the matter was kept as a last chance for the Departments to submit a plan for removal. All that the Departments have done is engage a new Senior Counsel. Two status reports have now been filed, as if the matter were being initiated only now. Two very glaring points are contained in the status reports filed before us. First, this is an invasive species that could generate revenue for the Government



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by merely identifying the plots and auctioning them for removal; the successful bidders will not only remove the trees at their own expense but will pay the Government for the wood they get. Strangely, the Government, including the Revenue and the Rural Development Departments, is insisting that they will spend money on removing the invasive species.

7. Second, when we earlier directed that at least one village per firka per month should be declared *Prosopis juliflora*-free, a hollow report was filed by removing *Prosopis juliflora* only from lands vested with the Panchayat; in respect of some Panchayats. It is common knowledge that only select and minor quantity of land vests with the panchayat and even those lands, it was not completely removed.

8. This Court has been repeatedly stressing about the need of proceeding as if it is a combing operation and the need for simultaneous advertisements at the local level by the direction of the District Collectors, the Department of Rural Development through the Block Development Officers, by involving the Panchayat level officers . In every area auction can be simultaneously done. It must be acknowledged that in certain sensitive areas of the forest, it may take longer. However, since the status reports are now filed through the learned



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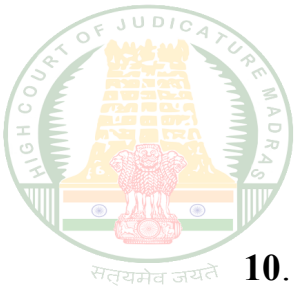
Senior Counsel as if the committees are formed and that that they will survey etc., we are constrained to recapitulate the path travelled so far in this regard.

9. On 09.01.2014, in the case of **C.Anand Raj Vs. Chief Secretary and Others** (W.P.(MD)No.18748 of 2013), the Hon'ble Division Bench of this Court (R.Sudhakar and V.M.Velumani, JJ), in the Writ Petition that prayed for the removal of *Seemai Karuvelam* from the *Vaigai* river and all the water bodies in Tamil Nadu, after noting the directions issued by the Directorate of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, passed the following order. It is essential to extract paragraphs 4 and 5, which read as follows:

"4. Considering the gravity of the matter, the above said proceedings have been issued to all the District Collectors concerned by the Directorate of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj for the welfare of the people. Therefore, for the betterment of the farmers as well as the people of the country and in view of the fact that the Keeruvellam trees are prone to deplete the ground water, this court is of the view that the directions issued by the Directorate of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj has to be complied with, in letter and spirit, by all the Executive Authority of panchayats concerned.

5. In the interest of public at large, it is desirable that the authorities concerned are directed to take necessary steps to remove the Karuvelam trees all over the Tamil Nadu standing in the river bodies including Vaigai River and Kattanoor Public Works Department Kanmoi and other places as expeditiously as possible, on war footing Post after 4 weeks for reporting compliance."

(Emphasis supplied)



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10. Again, on 06.08.2015, in the very same matter, when a Contempt Petition was filed, the Chief Engineer, Public Works Department, of each of the Districts was directed to file separate reports on the action taken. Thereafter, on 10.08.2015, the same Hon'ble Division Bench considered the letter of the Chief Engineer and passed the following order:

"The letter of the Chief Engineer should be considered by the respective departments for effective implementation of the proposal of removal (Seemai Karuvel). The Chief Secretary will be added as one of the respondent for effective co-ordination and implementation. The Principal Secretary to Government, Environment and Forest Department, the Secretary to Government, Public Works Department to formulate a scheme for removal of prosopis (seemai Karuvel trees including the root portions to eradicate the menace which is causing great environment problem. Such scheme to be implemented on or before 14/09/2015. The Principal Secretary to Finance to ensure that sufficient funds are provided for implementing the programme without any delay."

(Emphasis supplied)

11. On 11.09.2015, in the matter of *Vaiko Vs. Chief Secretary and Ors.* (W.P.(MD)No.16485 of 2015), where the removal of *Seemai Karuvelam* trees entirely from the State of Tamil Nadu was again sought, directions were given, and action taken reports were directed to be filed. On 06.10.2015, in the very same matter, the Hon'ble Division Bench had cautioned that the *Prosopis juliflora* trees should be removed properly, even by removing the root portion, and Paragraph No.3 of the said order is extracted hereunder:



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"3.Action Taken Reports in respect of other Districts should be filed on or before 15.10.2015 and advance copies of the same to be served on the petitioner by the learned Special Government Pleader. In addition to that, we find that in most of the Districts, the District Collectors have issued directions to the authorities that Seemai Karuvelm Trees (*prosopis juliflora*) should be removed from the root portion as well. We would only request all the District Collectors to ensure that removal of Seemai Karuvelm Trees (*prosopis juliflora*) is done, by removing the root portion as well, so that regrowth of trees, consequent to rain, does not occur. Otherwise, it will cause unnecessary financial burden on the State."

(Emphasis supplied)

12. On 15.10.2015, the Hon'ble Division Bench was informed that the Principal Secretary to the Government, Environment and Forest Department, had proposed to hold a meeting with all the stakeholders on 16.10.2015. On 28.10.2015, along with the above Writ Petition, yet another Writ Petition was filed in ***P.Bose Vs. Chief Secretary and Ors.*** (W.P.(MD)No.16645 of 2015) to remove the *Prosopis juliflora* in the panchayat, *odai poramboke* and *ooranis*. The Hon'ble Division Bench considered the same together.

13. On 05.12.2016, another Division Bench of this Court (A.Selvam and P.Kalaiyarasan, JJ.) took up the issue in ***M.Patturajan Vs. The Commissioner and Ors.*** (W.P.(MD)No.14699 of 2015), which was filed for a Mandamus to curb the growth of the invasive species. The Division Bench first directed the



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presence of all the parties concerned. On 07.12.2016, in the very same matter of *M.Patturajan's case* (cited *supra*), the Hon'ble Division Bench directed the respondents concerned to remove the invasive species and report on the removal before 14.12.2016. On 20.12.2016, it was reported that the *Prosopis juliflora* trees were removed from the plains in and around Madurai, and further time was extended in respect of other areas. On the same day, an order was also passed in the matter of *Vaiko's case* (cited *supra*) to remove the *Prosopis juliflora* within the radius of the respective headquarters-town limit within a period of twenty days, and Paragraph No.2 of the said order is extracted hereunder:

"2.It is seen from the petition that thirteen District Collectors of southern part of Tamil Nadu have been impleaded as respondents 4 to 16. Since respondents 4 to 16 have been impleaded, this Court is of the view to pass the following interim order: The respondents 4 to 16 are strictly directed to remove Seemai Karuvelam trees which are in existence within the radius of respective headquarters-town limit [roads, canals, water bodies, lay-outs, private properties, etc.] with the assistance of local bodies within a period of twenty days. The respondents 4 to 16 are strictly to submit a report with regard to compliance of the order."

(Emphasis supplied)

14. On 10.01.2017, the same Hon'ble Division Bench issued further directions to the Principal District Judges of 13 Districts to inspect the limits of the District headquarters and submit a report on the removal of *Prosopis juliflora* trees. They were also empowered to issue strict directions to all the



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Tahsildars, Revenue Inspectors and Village Administrative Officers in their Districts to remove or deracinate these trees on or before 31.01.2017, and the relevant directions are extracted hereunder:

"(i)The Principal/District Judges of thirteen Districts are directed to inspect personally the entire limits of District Headquarters of their respective Districts during weekends with the assistance of Town Surveyor(s), Revenue Inspector(s) and Village Administrative Officer(s) in respect of the alleged removal/deracination of Seemaikaruvel trees and submit report(s) on or before 31.01.2017.

(ii)The District Collectors/respondents 4 to 16 are directed to depute Town Surveyor(s), Revenue Inspector(s) and Village Administrative Officer(s) with relevant revenue records for assisting Principal/District Judges of thirteen Districts.

(iii)The District Collectors/respondents 4 to 16 are directed to give strict directions to all Tahsildar(s), Revenue Inspector(s) and Village Administrative Officer(s) in their Districts to remove/deracinate Seemaikaruvel trees and submit reports on or before 31.01.2017.

(iv)Failing compliance of any of these directions, will be viewed seriously and appropriate action will be taken."

(Emphasis supplied)

15. On 31.01.2017, the same Hon'ble Division Bench issued directions to the Commissioners of various Corporations, Municipalities, etc., to further direct the owners of the private lands to remove the trees within the stipulated period. If the owners of the private lands refused to remove them, the authorities were directed to remove the trees at the cost of the Government and recover the cost



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from the private owners. The relevant directions issued are extracted hereunder for ready reference.

"(vii)The respondents 4 to 16, Commissioners of Corporation and Municipalities, Tahsildars, Block Development Officers, Revenue Inspectors and Village Administrative Officers of thirteen Districts are strictly directed to give proper intimation to owners of private lands to remove/deracinate Seemaikaruvel trees within a stipulated period. Failing compliance, remove the same at the cost of the Government and entitle to recover double the cost/expenses from private land owners and remit the same in accordance with law.

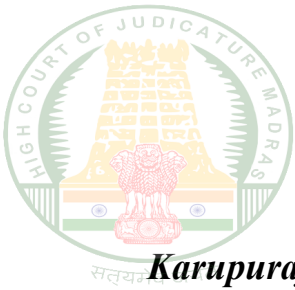
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(ix)The respondents 4 to 16, Commissioners of Corporation and Municipalities, Tahsildars, Block Development Officers, Revenue Inspectors and Village Administrative Officers of thirteen Districts are directed to give proper assistance to all Principal/District Judges, District Munsifs/Judicial Magistrates and Advocates appointed as Commissioners.

(x)The District Collectors, Principal/District Judges, District Munsifs/Judicial Magistrates and Advocate Commissioners are directed to file their reports with regard to removal of Seemaikaruvel tress on or before 10.02.2017."

(Emphasis supplied)

16. On 10.02.2017, the Hon'ble Division Bench considered the reports submitted by the Principal District Judges and Advocate Commissioners. The Hon'ble Division Bench noted that the work was in progress and directed the Writ Petitioner to implead all the Tahsildars and Block Development Officers, etc. On the same day, the Division Bench also considered the case of



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Karupuraja Vs. Chief Secretary and Ors. (W.P.(MD) No.20767 of 2013), which prayed for steps to be taken to eradicate the species and to form a committee of independent experts from different fields to suggest effective measures. The respective respondents were also directed to remove the seemai karuvelam trees within a period of 15 days and to file the reports. The said direction was also given in the matter of **M.Patturajan** (cited *supra*). The same set of directions was again given on 27.02.2017 in **Vaiko's case** (cited *supra*), and the relevant directions are extracted hereunder:

"(i)The respondents 4 to 16 and 18 to 741 are directed to take effective steps to remove Seemaikaruvel trees throughout Tamil Nadu Within a period of 15 days.

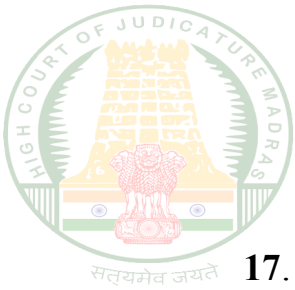
(ii)The Petitioner is directed to take effective steps to remove Seemaikaruvel trees from his Taluk within the stipulated period and submit Nil report.

(iii)The Principal/District Judges, District Munsifs/Magistrates in Taluks level and Advocates-Commissioners are directed to perform their inspection as indicated in earlier orders.

.....
.....

5. Considering the evils of existence of Seemaikaruvel trees throughout State of Tamilnadu, the State of Tamil Nadu is directed to pass an Act with prohibitory and penal clauses within a period of two months and also directed to release perennial funds to all Districts for the purpose of removing seemaikaruvel trees."

(Emphasis supplied)



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17. On 20.03.2017, the Hon'ble Division Bench observed that only 25% of the work had been carried out, found the efforts of the District administration lacking and desultory, and passed further directions for removal. On the same day, when the report was filed stating that the *Seemai karuvelam* trees had been removed in and around *Madurai*, a detailed report was directed to be filed. On 21.04.2017, the Division Bench took up the *suo motu* contempt against the respondents, who were not complying with the orders in different ways, and proceeded in accordance with due process.

18. On 28.04.2017, another Division Bench, consisting of the Hon'ble Chief Justice (Indira Banerjee, CJ. and M.Sundar J.), in ***V.Meganathan Vs. Chief Secretary and Ors.*** (W.P.10614 of 2017), observed that since the matter was being referred to a Larger Bench, the respondents were directed to continue the removal of seemai karuvelam trees until the Larger Bench decided the matter. On 11.05.2017, the Hon'ble Full Bench of this Court (Indira Banerjee, CJ. and M.M.Sundresh and M.Sundar JJ. (as their Lordships then were)) took up the issue and held that the seemai karuvelam trees had to be removed in a scientific manner, even while taking alternative steps to ensure ecological balance. The Full Bench directed the formation of a committee to make a scientific study of the ill effects of the seemai karuvelam trees, as well as their utility, and to make



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recommendations with regard to their removal. Paragraph No.7 of the order of the Full Bench is extracted hereunder for ready reference.

"7. The Committee shall monitor and approve the removal, if necessary, of the Seemai Karuvelam trees in a phased manner. The Committee shall make a scientific study on the ill-effects of the Seemai Karuvelam trees as well as the utility thereof and make recommendations with regard to removal thereof, if necessary, in a phased manner without causing ecological imbalance and also suggest alternatives such as alternative plantations, etc., to preserve the ecological balance. "

(Emphasis supplied)

19. On 28.07.2017, in *V.Meganathan's case* (cited supra), the Hon'ble Full Bench considered the interim recommendations of the committee, which appeared to suggest that the tree had both positive and negative effects, and issued the following directions in Paragraphs 9 to 12, which are extracted hereunder for ready reference.

"9. A careful reading of the interim report, in particular the recommendations in Chapter-9, indicates that removal of Seemai Karuvelam in a phased manner in some areas and in particular from water bodies is necessary.

10. As per the first recommendation, a plan may be worked out and implemented for removal of Seemai Karuvelam trees across the water bodies of the State in a phased manner in order to facilitate flow of water and augment the storage capacity of water bodies.

11. The respondents shall with the help of the Committee and other Experts, identify the areas where removal process should be mechanical and the areas where removal should be manual. A programme of appropriate land use management system shall also be designed and



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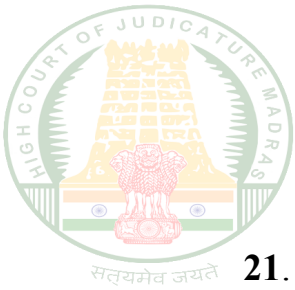
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evolved to control the spread. The areas shall have to be of the species wherever required. identified.

12. A programme should also be identified and evolved for planting alternate species on the land cleared of Seemai Karuvelam. The process of removal, where necessary, should be commenced at the earliest and in particular across the water bodies of the State to facilitate flow of water and to augment storage capacity of water bodies. The Committee shall undertake the actual impact of Seemai Karuvelam on ground water as well as over all ecosystem with special reference to the State. In the places in which Seemai Karuvelam trees have already been removed, the respondents are directed to start the process of afforestation as suggested by the Committee by planting species mentioned in the Annexure to the interim report. A further report of the action taken shall be submitted to this Court within a period of eight weeks from date."

(Emphasis supplied)

20. On 13.10.2017, the Full Bench also clarified that the other plants should not be interfered with. On 17.02.2020, in the case of **V. Meganathan** (cited *supra*), the Hon'ble Full Bench, consisting of the Hon'ble Chief Justice (Amreshwar Pratap Sahi CJ, M.M.Sundresh, and M.Sundar, JJ. (As their Lordships then were)), considered the additional report of the committee and noted that new objections and new materials had been filed. All these materials were referred to the committee for review. The additional report and the earlier report were also directed to be placed before the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), Nagpur, for expert opinion, and the Government of Tamil Nadu was directed to coordinate the process.



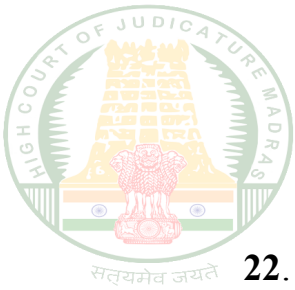
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21. Thereafter, on 02.02.2022, after receipt of the final expert report stating that the species is invasive and harmful to the environment and that it has to be eradicated, the Hon'ble Full Bench (Munishwar Nath Bhandari, CJ, N.Sathish Kumar and P.D.Audikesavalu, JJ.) directed the State Government to formulate a scheme for the removal of *Prosopis juliflora* from the State of Tamil Nadu, to be executed under the supervision of the District Collectors. Paragraph Nos. 4 and 5 of the order of the Hon'ble Full Bench are extracted hereunder for ready reference.

"4. ... Therefore, we direct the State Government to come out with a scheme for removal of all the Prosopis Juliflora plants from the State of Tamil Nadu, which shall be executed under the supervision of the District Collectors. For carrying out the direction, the State Government would be at liberty to take a decision to use the funds otherwise provided under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. It is for the reason that even to carry out the scheme to remove the plants manpower would be required and payment thereupon can be through the funds allotted towards the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. The Government of India would be expected to allow use of fund towards the manpower for that purpose.

5. The direction aforesaid has been given looking to the public interest involved therein. Even otherwise, the Government should make its own way to allot funds to remove the Prosopis Juliflora plants from the State of Tamil Nadu. While framing the scheme, care should be taken by the State Government and it should not be mere cutting of trees, but it should be uprooting, because cutting the tree is not going to solve the problem as the plant will grow again very fast."

(Emphasis supplied)



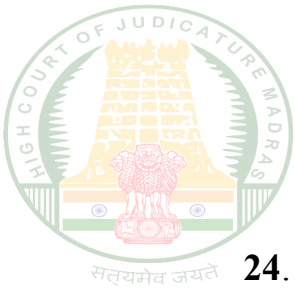
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22. On 16.02.2022, once again, the Full Bench (Munishwar Nath Bhandari, CJ, N.Sathish Kumar, D.Bharatha Chakravarthy, JJ.) recorded the Tamil Nadu Policy on Invasive Plants and Ecological Restoration (TN PIPER), wherein the Government, after a long and protracted consideration of several reports, etc., took an unequivocal and categorical decision that *Prosopis juliflora* is an obnoxious invasive species which has to be eradicated. After recording the above policy statement, the matter was adjourned for reporting further actions to be taken.

23. On 16.03.2022, the very same Hon'ble Full Bench directed that inputs could be obtained from the States of *Rajasthan* and *Odisha*, etc., where contractors have been engaged to remove the plants, with the allocation of 80 hectares of land. Directions were also given that within two to three years, the land should be maintained so that the invasive species should not grow again and that the native species should be planted. The relevant portion of the directions is extracted hereunder:

"1. They could presently take inputs from two States, namely Rajasthan and Odisha, where the contractors have been engaged to remove the plants with the allocation of 80 hectares of land. It is with the direction to see that within two or three years, the plants may not grow again and at the same time, to bring the other plants so that they may grow within the period given above."

(Emphasis supplied)



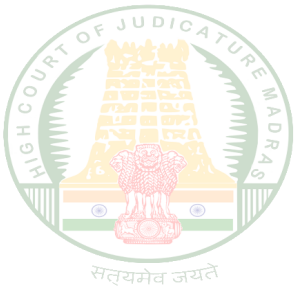
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24. By the same order, on the same day, the PWD was also directed to proceed by engaging contractors, and the said portion of the order is extracted hereunder:

"6. it is clarified that there would be no hindrance for PWD to carry out the work of removal of the said plants and undertake the work by themselves or by engaging a contractor for that purpose. The clarification aforesaid has been made so that the work may not be affected due to the pendency of the Writ Petition."

25. On 04.04.2022, the very same Hon'ble Full Bench directed the eradication and also directed the State to minimize the period for giving shape to the policy decision. The relevant Paragraph No.3 is extracted hereunder for ready reference.

"3. We have carefully considered the submissions of the learned counsel for the parties and find that the State of Tamil Nadu is in the process of finalizing the policy decision on the issue i.e invasive plants and ecological restoration. Therefore, some more time is required to be given to finalize the policy and immediately thereupon, it may be implemented. It goes without saying that the plants in question are affecting the fertility of the land and apart from that, it does not permit other plants to grow. The decision has already taken by the State of Tamil Nadu to eradicate and remove the plant. The action to remove the plant is being undertaken in the midst of finalization of the policy decision and it is not as if during the pendency of the writ petitions, no work has been taken by the Department concerned. However, a statement of fact has been given to the Court to minimise the period for giving a shape to the



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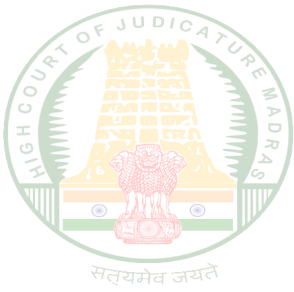
policy decision, as the plant, as stated earlier, is affecting the fertility of the land." *(Emphasis supplied)*

26. On 08.06.2022, the Hon'ble Full Bench (Munishwar Nath Bhandari, CJ, N.Sathish Kumar, N.Mala, JJ.) after recording the assurance that at the next hearing date the policy would be framed and a mechanism for uprooting the plant would also be indicated, adjourned the matter. On 07.07.2022, the very same Hon'ble Full Bench also directed the use of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) funds, within the framework of the rules clarified by the said Bench, and Paragraph No.7 is extracted hereunder for ready reference.

"7. Accordingly, we direct the State Government to use the funds of MGNREGA for the purpose and within the framework of the rules clarified by us. If the Director, MGNREGA has any objection to it, he may remain present in Court on the next date to clarify it further."

27. On 14.07.2022, the same Hon'ble Full Bench while appreciating the efforts of the Government passed the following directions and it is essential to extract Paragraph Nos.4 and 5:

"4. We are, however, of the view that regular monitoring of the action taken by the respondent authorities is required to be made by the court. Therefore, the respondents are directed to furnish the periodical



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development in reference to the action to be taken as per the policy framed by the respondents, so that without further delay the species named above may be removed not only from the forests, but also from the other areas in the State.

5. To achieve the aforesaid object, the respondent authorities can solicit funds from organizations, which have to spend two per cent of the net average profits on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), the activities under which include ensuring environmental sustainability. It is apart from the fact that this court, on 7.7.2022, had already issued directions to use the funds allocated under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme for this purpose within the framework of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 and the guidelines framed by the Government."

(Emphasis supplied)

28. On 17.08.2022, the Hon'ble Full Bench further issued the following directions in Paragraph Nos.5, 6 and 8 and the same is extracted hereunder:

"5. It is not out of place to mention that the growth of prosopis juliflora, lantana camera, etc., had become a challenge not only for the State of Tamil Nadu, but even for other States and, therefore, now action has been taken all through to remove the plants, prosopis juliflora and lantana camera, etc.

6. The details given by the respondents exhibiting their efforts to remove the aforesaid species are after indicating the engagement of machineries and by using the manual and chemical process to destroy the plants, prosopis juliflora, lantana camera, etc. The statement does not specify as to how many JCBs or other machines have been engaged to remove the plants, thus, they are directed to specify the number of machines engaged for the aforesaid purpose.



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8. We find that if the issue in regard to the removal of prosopis juliflora, lantana camera, etc. is pending before a Division Bench specially constituted, then it would be advisable that action is monitored by that Division Bench and for that reason, we accept the request of learned Additional Advocate General. For further monitoring of the issue, the Registry is directed to place the all these cases before the Division Bench specially constituted for it and addressing the issue in W.P. (MD) No.3633 of 2014, etc. (batch)."
(Emphasis supplied)

29. Thus, it can be seen that the matter was directed to be placed before this Bench, and from the year 2022, the matter has been pending before this Bench. On 26.09.2022, this Bench, in W.P.(MD)No.16485 of 2015, passed an order with reference to the Forest Department and the Water Resources Department, and directed the District Collectors to remove the trees at the Panchayat level. The relevant portions of the directions are extracted hereunder for ready reference.

"In such a view of the matter we direct the District Collectors of each District to issue necessary instructions to all the Panchayats to remove the Seemai Karuvelam Trees in all the panchayats. Besides instruction also to be issued to the private land owners to remove the Seemai Karuvelam Trees in their patta lands at their own. The Forest Department is also directed to issue necessary permission to the private land owners to remove all the Seemai Karuvelam Trees in their private lands. Further, every District Collector has to file a Report before this Court as to the progress of the work relating to the removal of Seemai Karuvelam Trees. The Collectors can also give necessary instructions to all the Panchayats to go for a



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public auction for removal of the Seemai Karuvelam trees. So that private parties can participate in the auction for removal of Seemai Karuvelam Trees. Necessary instructions also to be given to all the Panchayats to replant the native plants after removal of Seemai Karuvelam Trees. All the District Collectors shall file a month wise report before this Court in this regard without fail."

(Emphasis supplied)

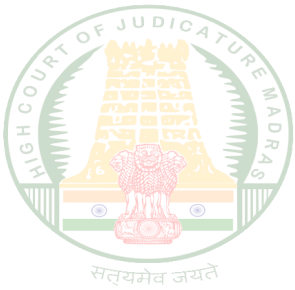
30. On 02.11.2022, a report of the Commissioner of the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department was placed, proposing the formation of committees for removal and eradication. The following order was passed, thereby directing the Government to proceed with a public auction simultaneously. The relevant portions of the order are extracted hereunder:

".....We are of the view that the guidelines issued by the Commissioner has to be followed scrupulously. As per the above guidelines, the Collectors of respective Districts should constitute a committee as suggested in the guidelines referred above within a period of 15 days and file a further report in this regard, post the matter on 24.11.2022.

3. The Status Report filed by the Engineer-in-Chief, Water Resources Department discloses the fact that they have identified around 1,93,030.43 hectare infested with Seemai Karuvelam Trees. However, only around 3715.43 ha. have been removed from 01.04.2022 to 31.10.2022.

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5. In such a view of the matter we direct the Government to go for public auction for the entire area identified in the water bodies, so that the water bodies can be restored and preserved for future generation. For



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initiating steps and for filing Report post the matter on
24.11.2022."
(Emphasis supplied)

31. On 24.11.2022, it was reported that due to the monsoon, the water level was overflowing, and there was difficulty in operating the machinery. Even on 27.01.2023, the matter was posted for implementation of the orders of this Court. On 16.06.2023, we noted that the status report was filed in a casual manner, without any inclination to implement the orders, and the following order was passed.

"2.On a perusal of the above status report, we are totally not satisfied in the manner in which the issue is dealt with, without any seriousness. Despite earlier orders of this Bench, dated 02.11.2022 and order of the Full Bench, dated 17.8.2022, no further action has been taken and the status report is without any details and the very status report indicates that it is prepared in a casual manner and without showing any seriousness in this issue. Spreading of Juli Flora (Karuvellam tree) is in fact a serious issue, which will affect the entire eco-system. Having understood the seriousness of this issue and having taken a policy decision in this regard, still the orders of this Bench having not been implemented in its letter and spirit. Such non-implementation of the orders of this Court will force this Court to pass orders for the appearance of the Secretary concerned before this Court."

(Emphasis supplied)

32. On 30.11.2023, this Bench suggested that the respondents proceed either District-wise or Panchayat-wise, so that at least every month, a particular



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area can be declared invasive-free. The relevant portion of the order is excerpted as under:

"3. Whether the respondents are going to proceed District-wise or Panchayat-wise so that at least every month a particular area can be declared as invasive-free. The learned Special Government Pleader submitted that at least four weeks time will be needed for the same. By granting adequate time to the learned Special Government Pleader, the matter is adjourned to 08.01.2024, by which time, the State has to come up with a detailed and comprehensive plan including the assessment, allocation and plan about the financial aspects also up to the level of execution."

33. On 01.12.2023, **W.P.No.31591 of 2023** was filed by one **Muralidharan Vs. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Others**. The following directions were issued with specific reference to Thadagam valley:

"2. We are of the view that prosopis juliflora is found spread almost in the entire area of Thadagam Valley. The District Collector, Coimbatore, is therefore, directed to inspect the valley and file a report as to the extent of spread of prosopis juliflora in the area and come out with an action plan to uproot and remove prosopis juliflora from the entire Thadagam valley."

34. On 29.02.2024, the Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) was also *suo motu* impleaded as a respondent, and thereafter time was prayed for. Again, on 25.03.2025, the following detailed order was passed by this Bench, and the relevant portions are excerpted hereunder:



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"3. Aside from the utilization of the MNGREGA scheme, which is currently pending before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, there was no impediment whatsoever to implementing the directions of this Court. Regarding the Forest Department, removal is occurring, albeit at a slower pace, which is understandable due to the challenging terrain; this is being monitored separately by this Bench. However, apart from the forest areas, concerning the plains, water bodies, government poramboke lands, and private lands, the task can be completed quickly by arranging separate auctions through the relevant Blocks, Panchayats, Districts, etc.

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6. However, to date, none of the court orders have been complied with in spirit. Periodic status reports indicate that only 3 hectares or 5 hectares of land have been cleared of *Prosopis Juliflora*. We are distressed to note that the government is spending money to remove *Prosopis Juliflora*, when it could instead earn revenue by auctioning the trees. The sale proceeds could then be utilized for ongoing maintenance to prevent further regeneration. Accordingly, all concerned District Collectors and BDOs must take prompt action to auction the trees. If necessary, contractors can be instructed to use specialized equipment to uproot the trees along with their roots. The removed wood can be weighed per ton, allowing the government to earn revenue from them.

7. If no positive action is forthcoming, the only option to the Court will be to initiate a suo motu contempt proceeding for noncompliance with the orders of this Court in the manner known to law, by summoning every authority that has not complied with the orders. At the same time, the Court would issue advertisements for removal of trees throughout tamilnadu by appointing Advocate Commissioners, and constituting task forces to carry out the mandate of the Orders.

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9. Therefore, the government shall come up with a plan for simultaneous advertisements and declaring at least two villages in every firka every month as Prosopis Juliflora free. The removal has to be like combing operation declaring specific areas free of the invasive. The excess wood on account of removal can be stored and supplied to the users by the Government and if the entire trees are removed a large quantity will be available as to overcome the needs for few years by which time the native species can be grown on these lands. If the Government does not take steps as above, the Court will proceed with the other option specified in this order.

.....

.....

11. With reference to private lands, this Court has already given directions for the removal of Prosopis Juliflora to the individual private owners; therefore, these private landowners have no objection whatsoever and must immediately remove the Prosopis Juliflora.”

35. On 29.08.2025, we reiterated the earlier directions, and the following is an extract of our order.

"3. We reiterate our earlier directions that, for every month, atleast few Villages should be declared free of Seemai Karuvelam which will turn out from Panchayats to Firkas, Firkas to Taluks and Taluks to Districts. Apart from carrying out their work throughout Tamil Nadu, we also insist the Senior counsel to take up the issue to the Government to atleast declare one District as a pilot ahead of other Districts to be free of Seemai Karuvelam."

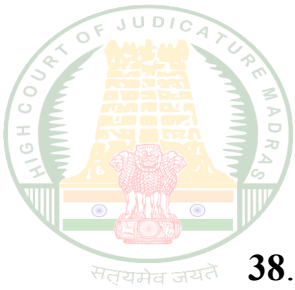
36. It must be noted that the said G.O.(Ms)No.123 dated 13.07.2022 is also to be considered as in discharge of duties under Section 36B of the



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Biological Diversity Act, 2002. To carry out the exercises initially, the Full Bench of this Court and thereafter this Bench had directed the use of MGNREGA works/funds. However, the same is the subject matter before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. In any event, funds will not be a problem, as the presence of a large quantity of wood and the contractors' or bidders' payment for the wood will generate sufficient funds to sustain the project.

37. Though it is to be noted that the directions issued thus by this Court, including the Hon'ble Full Benches, are with reference to the State's obligations under Article 48 (A) of the Constitution of India to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forest and wildlife of the Country. With reference to the directions that are issued to the owners of the private land, the same are issued under the provisions of the relevant legislations, more specifically the fundamental duty of the citizens under Article 51A (g) of the Constitution of India, whereunder, it is the duty of every citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment, including forest, lakes, rivers and wildlife and to have compassion for living creatures. Due orders have been issued, and notifications have already been issued under the applicable legislation, directing the citizens to remove the *Seemai Karuvelam* trees from their respective lands.



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38. Normally, the Court decides the issue and passes the Orders, and it is left for the executive to comply with the same. In this case, 11 years have gone by after this Court took up the issue, and there has been no substantial progress. There are now only two options available to this Bench. First, to initiate contempt proceedings against the respondents. If a contempt action is invoked, it would only result in punishing all respondents, and that, by itself, will not yield the desired result of removing the invasive species, which is a mammoth task, however, to be completed if there is a will. Therefore, we have no alternative but to take the alternative option. That is, to issue further directions and ensure the compliance of the Orders of this Court, including that of the Hon'ble Full Bench. As such, we heard the learned counsel for the petitioners, learned Special Senior Counsel, the Additional Advocate General, the Special Government Pleader and the other Standing Counsel and the learned *Amici Curiae* on various occasions, we deemed it fit to issue detailed and comprehensive directions. Accordingly, we circulated the draft judgment of this Court and invited comments and suggestions from all parties.

39. Mr.Vaiko, the Petitioner-in-Person filed detailed suggestions and argued the matter. Mr.P.Wilson, the learned Senior Counsel filed a Memo submitting the paragraph-wise suggestions of the Government. Other learned

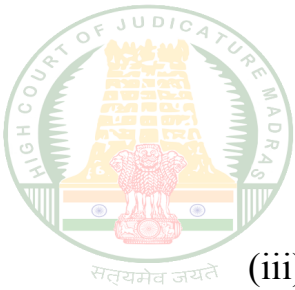


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counsel and the learned *Amici Curiae* also made suggestions. We have considered and incorporated the suggestions wherever appropriate and also modified and deleted certain clauses pursuant to the objections wherever deemed fit. In view of our findings above, and the further hearing of the parties, the following directions are issued:-

(i) As per TNPIPER, *Prosopis Julifora*, in all its forms—whether trees, plants, or roots—shall be mechanically uprooted, removed, and disposed of from its location. Wherever possible, native species shall be planted, cared for, and grown, and the project shall be titled "sezhumai karuvoolam."

(ii) The basic framework of the project will be: (a) to complete the project as much as possible without any financial burden on the Government; (b) any access granted to any place to any bidder, organisation, individual, or authority for these purposes will not, in any manner, create any rights whatsoever in the land or in trees or plants that are grown, which will continue to belong to the community and the state as per law, except for the trees or saplings on private land; (c) acknowledging the scale of the exercise and that it can only be successful through the involvement of everyone with the Government and its authorities, including active participation from the general public, student volunteers, voluntary organisations, corporates, and all concerned.

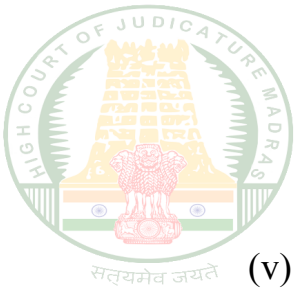


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(iii) The District Collectors shall be the central authority responsible for removing *Prosopis juliflora* and preventing its further growth by mechanically removing existing trees and plants on both private and public lands, and for planting native species on all public lands within their Districts.

(iv) In this regard, the District Collectors will be empowered to issue necessary directions to all officials of the line Departments, including,

- (a) the Forest Department;
- (b) the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department;
- (c) the Public Works Department;
- (d) the Water Resources Department;
- (e) the Municipal Administration and Local Administration Department;
- (f) the Central Government, the Railways or any other authority or public sector undertaking sponsored and controlled by the Central Government;
- (g) Public Sector Undertakings sponsored and controlled by the State Government, etc.;
- (h) National and State Highways and H.R. & C.E. Departments; and
- (f) To such other person or authority.



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(v) The District Collectors shall immediately gather information from all concerned about the infestation or presence of *Prosopis juliflora* trees and shall give directions to the appropriate officers, such as the Block Development Officer, municipal officers, or any other person the District Collector considers suitable, including his own subordinates, to issue an advertisement for removal, invite bids, and begin the removal work.

(vi) The Secretary to Government, Department of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Government of Tamil Nadu, shall create a webpage on their website or an exclusive webpage for the project, and maintain a dashboard with all details that the Collectors may provide from time to time. It shall periodically upload information on removal, the auction, the quantity removed, the number of saplings replanted, and the areas declared *Proposis Juliflora*-free, etc.

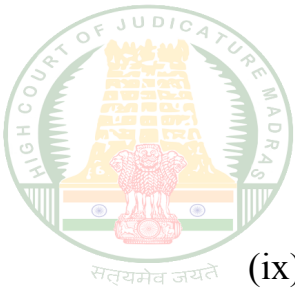
(vii) A mobile phone number shall be maintained by the Secretary to Government, Department of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, for the project and linked to all popular social media apps such as WhatsApp, Arattai, X, Instagram, Facebook, etc. Any person may post a picture of Seemai Karuvalem trees or plants with geotagging or by providing additional details of



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the location, and it shall be duly brought to the notice of the appropriate collector. The social media accounts may also be managed by officials, who will be free to additionally utilise or engage the services of student volunteers or interns for this purpose. After removal, pictures of planting native species and their growth shall also be uploaded periodically.

(viii) There shall be a committee for replanting saplings, consisting of the Conservator of Forests and the Director of Agriculture at the state level. For each district, committees can be formed with one official each from the Agriculture and Forest Departments, along with a minimum of two to five experienced agriculturists or green activists involved in sapling plantation programmes. The committees shall start recommending native species to be planted in each district or area. While planting native trees, all types of native trees that benefit the environment- supporting conservation, biodiversity restoration, and reducing the greenhouse effect- shall be planted. Additionally, when deciding on the varieties, consideration should be given to (i) the needs of birds, insects, and other species for flowers, fruits, etc.; (ii) the fodder needs of cattle and other animals; (iii) the needs of human beings, including medicinal and food values; and (iv) trees that can also help fill the fuel wood gap, even for charcoal or other industries.



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(ix) The committees shall immediately start making suggestions for the respective Districts, and efforts must be made to develop or obtain saplings through forest departments, private nurseries, volunteer organisations, etc.

(x) The removal of *Prosopis juliflora* across the State of Tamil Nadu shall immediately begin through the auctioning of identified plots, areas, or localities under the following conditions:

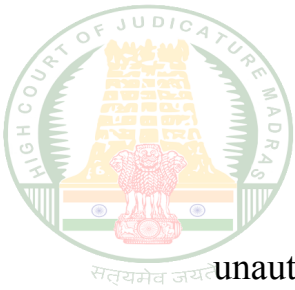
(a) The successful bidder must mechanically uproot the *Prosopis juliflora* trees or plants and ensure that there will be no secondary growth.

(b) After uprooting, the resulting wood must be cut into pieces, leaving the other residual spines and sticks.

(c) The resulting wood shall be cut and classified into two groups: (i) woods with a girth above 5 inches and (ii) roots and other woods with a girth less than 5 inches.

(d) The minimum upset price for woods with a girth of 5 inches and above shall be Rs.4,000/- per ton, and for roots and other woods less than 5 inches, it shall be Rs.1,000/- per ton.

(e) In any designated field or area, the successful bidder will only cut *Prosopis juliflora*. If there are other trees or plants that need to be preserved, they must be first marked with proper geo-tagging. Any bidder



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unauthorizedly cutting any other tree or species will be subject to action for violating this Court's Order.

(f) The bidders shall continue to credit the amount due to the Government into a special account that shall be opened by the Secretary to the Government, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. From this account, the District Collectors will be entitled to reimburse expenses incurred for advertisements, planting native saplings, and other expenditures that may be periodically approved by this Court.

(g) Apart from the officials responsible for the auction, the removal shall also be overseen by the local biodiversity committees. Additionally, any member of the public can inform all concerned parties by sending a message via mobile phone or any other media.

(h) Technological specifications, including the type of machinery used, can also be detailed if necessary. Unless the main stem is removed along with the root, the invasive species will regrow. Besides the regular JCB machines, contractors should also be informed about tree-pulling accessories and machinery that can be used for effective uprooting.

(i) It is made clear that the prices indicated above are only the minimum upset price, and in a given case, if the authorities believe that the highest bid offered can be improved, they have the discretion to decline the



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offer. It is clarified that the exercise is solely aimed at removing the invasive species rather than generating revenue. If the overall benefit of removal is translated into costs, it will always be advantageous to remove it more quickly.

(xi) Auctioning shall begin immediately after identification of plots, with survey numbers and boundaries indicated, and works shall commence immediately. In any case, identification of areas shall be carried out daily, and automatically, local officials shall start auctioning the areas. Identification and auctioning shall be completed across the district within four months, and removal shall be finished within another six months.

(xii) As far as possible, the activity shall be carried out like combing operations declaring the Villages to Firkas to Taluks and finally the districts being *Prosopis juliflora* free.

(xiii) Whenever it is just and necessary, the District Collector shall earmark non-sensitive Poramboke or barren lands, if needed, for stacking or storing wood at the bidders' risk until they transport or sell the wood, particularly in areas of high output. If any Government or private individual

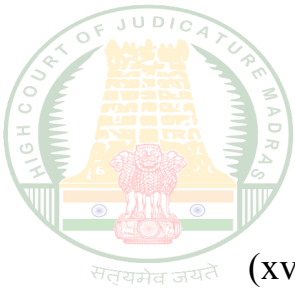


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wishes to purchase and store the resulting wood, it can be done. It is also understood that storage shall be permitted only with the approval of the appropriate authorities. The Government shall consider and develop on its own and also by public-private partnership mode or through Self-Help Groups Briquetting Units at every District level so that the benefits of the output on account of the removal be maximised.

(xiv) Any dispute of any nature whatsoever shall not stall or delay the removal of *Prosopis juliflora* trees.

(xv) The private landowners shall uproot and remove the *Prosopis juliflora* from their respective lands within 30 days from the date of this order. Failing which, the Block Development Officers or such other officers as may be deputed by the District Collector shall inspect and uproot the trees from all private lands and leave them at the disposal of the concerned private owners. The cost of uprooting the *Prosopis juliflora* will be recovered at the rate of Rs.5,000/- per acre if the vegetation is dense and mature, and at Rs.2,000/- per acre if it is less. All private landowners willing to plant native saplings will be provided with alternative saplings of their choice free of cost.



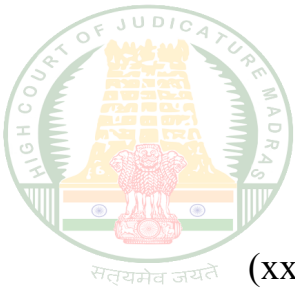
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(xvi) In exceptional areas like Vedanthangal, where *Prosopis juliflora* serves as nesting sites for birds, removal shall be carried out in a phased manner with simultaneous alternative arrangements, such as planting of other species.

(xvii) The other Departments that possess lands infested with *Prosopis juliflora*, such as the National Highways Department, State Highways Department, Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department, Railways, or other relevant state and central public sector undertakings, shall independently take simultaneous steps for the removal and uprooting of *Prosopis juliflora*. They shall also ensure maintenance and replanting of native species. These Departments shall cooperate and follow the instructions issued by the District Collector in this regard.

(xviii) Within 30 days of removal, saplings of native species shall be planted in all the public lands where *Prosopis juliflora* is removed, and they shall be maintained.

(xix) The District Collector or any official appointed by him shall have full authority to create localised schemes/SoPs for the care, watering, and growth of the saplings, and to assign them to individuals, institutions, organisations, corporates, or local bodies, as appropriate.



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(xx) The Secretaries, District Legal Services Authority shall coordinate, monitor, and work with the District Collector, facilitate the due execution of the project, and file periodic reports for each District. It is made clear that the purpose is to ensure day-to-day activities, as the Collectors shall have various other priorities as well.

(xxi) Further Taluk, Block, and Village-level Task Committees involving elected representatives shall also be formed to coordinate, accelerate, monitor, and ensure the progress of the removal.

(xxii) Since the task of supervising, ensuring, and issuing localised guidelines while safeguarding other species and the environment is significant, and to ensure the eradication of *Proposis julifora* occurs seamlessly within a specified timeframe and the project is effectively executed, we appoint the Special Committee consisting of two Hon'ble Retired Judges of this Court: Hon'ble Justice A.Selvam to supervise the action in the Southern Districts under the jurisdiction of the Madurai Bench of the High Court, and Hon'ble Justice V.Bharathidasan to supervise the action in the Northern Districts under the jurisdiction of the Principal Bench. Arrangements for their travel shall be made by the Government of Tamil Nadu/District Administration. They shall also be

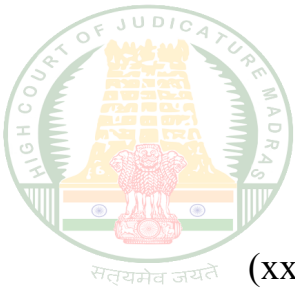


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paid an initial remuneration of Rs.3,00,000/-, with further remuneration to be fixed by this Court.

(xxiii) The Secretaries of the District Legal Services Authority shall assist the respective special committee within their jurisdiction. The Secretary of DLSA will coordinate with the District Collector and oversee the planning of actions in each District. They shall also report to the Hon'ble Special Committee members in charge of their respective districts where work is ongoing. The Special Committee shall supervise, inspect, and have the authority to issue guidelines specific to any local area. They shall also initially examine and resolve complaints regarding the removal of any trees other than *Prosopis juliflora*, field abandonment, or other issues; and may also suggest further directions for this Court to consider.

(xxiv) As part of Corporate Social Responsibility, Companies and private entities shall also participate, and any volunteering entity may offer to sponsor the removal, maintenance, and replanting of native saplings in any specific area, village, block, district, etc., and accordingly, their services shall be utilised by the District Collectors.



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(xxv) Until funds begin to be generated from auctioning, the activity shall be initiated using the District Mineral and Environment Conservation Fund.

(xxvi) The Secretary to the Government, Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Department, Government of Tamil Nadu, shall be administratively in charge of the overall operation and the distribution of funds. Any claim made by the District Collectors, if justified, shall be forthwith released without following the regular procedural rigours of routing through the finance department, approval, etc.

(xxvii) The Secretary to Government, Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Tamil Nadu, shall open a separate account for the project and share the account number with each District Collector, who will require the auction purchasers/bidders to deposit the bid amount/sale price.

(xxviii) Regarding the removal of *Prosopis juliflora* within the forests, this shall be carried out solely by the forest department through auctioning, with priority given to the District Forest Officers in the respective areas. Any third-party entry into the forest will be restricted and regulated by them. The Forest Department, the Public Works Department, and the Irrigation Department will

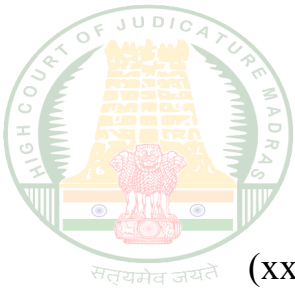


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continue to remove invasive species from the forests and water bodies; however, they must also follow any further directions issued by the District Collectors to expedite the process.

(xxix) Any individual, voluntary organisation, Student Volunteers, or educational institutions can come forward to take over the removal, re-planting, and growing of saplings in any particular plot or piece of land or locality, and the District Collector will be the authority to approve, sanction, and authorise the same in full or in part.

(xxx) During the execution of the project, including meetings, programme inaugurations, etc., no plastic, signboards, water bottles, or similar items shall be used. All campaigns, invitations, and related materials shall be in electronic formats or natural products such as leaves. All communications, name boards, invitations, and project-related documents will be in digital and e-office formats, and no paper, plastic, or other non-biodegradable materials shall be used in any project activities. The successful completion of removal, planting, rejuvenation, and regrowth of native species will be marked only by planting the native species itself, not by installing environmentally harmful signboards or materials.

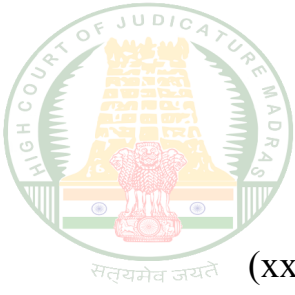


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(xxxi) In Educational Institutions, through NSS or other means, Tree Clubs/Nature Clubs shall be promoted to raise awareness among students about the importance of removing invasive species and protecting and growing native saplings. Alongside debates, awareness lectures, competitions, etc., efforts should be made to organise field visits when possible, giving children the opportunity to plant saplings, water them, and care for them. It is noteworthy that in Kerala State, during the second phase after removal, students removed the secondary growth of small saplings and were credited for each tiny sapling they brought to the schools. The Court will consider such schemes at a later stage.

(xxxii) The documentation of the native trees planted by this project and their growth, titled “sezhumai karuvoola arasithazh,” shall be maintained through the District Tree Committees. They can engage the services of volunteers, including students and green enthusiasts, for this purpose. The goal is to maintain the data with passion, not just for compliance's sake. At the end of the third year, if the native sapling has grown, the District-wise record shall be compiled and published as an electronic PDF on the website.

(xxxiii) All efforts should be made to complete the removal well before the next monsoon begins, so that the native species can be planted and grow during the monsoon.



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(xxxiv) Periodic instructions will be issued, and the matter will be posted

at regular intervals for progress reporting.

Call the matter on **17.04.2026**.

(N.S.K., J.) (D.B.C., J.)
18.03.2026

NCC : Yes / No
Jer

Note:- Registry is directed to communicate the copy of this order to all the District Collectors with a direction to the District Collectors to communicate the same to the Tahsildars and BDOs in their respective jurisdiction; and for the remaining official respondents, let the order copy be sent separately.

To

1 THE CHIEF SECRETARY,
GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU,
SECRETARIAT, FORT ST. GEORGE,
CHENNAI - 600 009.

2 THE SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT,
GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU,
ENVIRONMENT AND FOREST DEPARTMENT,
SECRETARIAT, FORT ST. GEORGE,
CHENNAI - 600 009.

3 THE SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT,
GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU,
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT,
SECRETARIAT, FORT ST. GEORGE,
CHENNAI - 600 009.



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4 THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
MADURAI DISTRICT, MADURAI.

5 THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
SIVAGANGAI DISTRICT, SIVAGANGAI.

6 THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
DINDIGUL DISTRICT, DINDIGUL.

7 THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
THENI DISTRICT, THENI.

8 THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
RAMANATHAPURAM DISTRICT,
RAMANATHAPURAM.

9 THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT,
KANYAKUMARI.

10 THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
TRICHY DISTRICT, TRICHY.

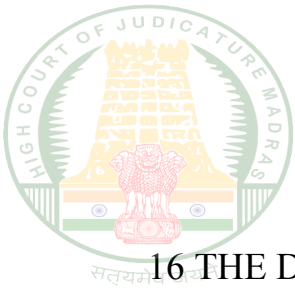
11 THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
PUDUKOTTAI DISTRICT, PUDUKOTTAI.

12 THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
THANJAVUR DISTRICT, THANJAVUR.

13 THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
KARUR DISTRICT, KARUR.

14 THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
VIRUDHUNAGAR DISTRICT, VIRUDHUNAGAR.

15 THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
TUTICORIN DISTRICT, TUTICORIN.



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W.P.No.3075 of 2017*

16. THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT, TIRUNELVELI.

17. THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
ERODE DISTRICT, ERODE.

18. THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
THIRUPPUR DISTRICT, THIRUPPUR.

19. THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
COIMBATORE DISTRICT, COIMBATORE.

20. THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
NILGIRIS DISTRICT, OOTY.

21. THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
KRISHNAGIRI DISTRICT, KRISHNAGIRI.

22. THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
DHARMAPURI DISTRICT, DHARMAPURI.

23. THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
SALEM DISTRICT, SALEM.

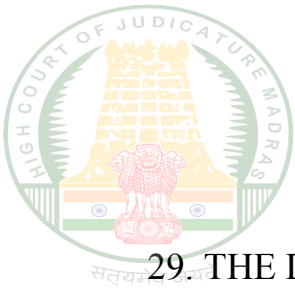
24. THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
NAMAKAL DISTRICT, NAMAKAL.

25. THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
PERAMBALUR DISTRICT, PERAMBALUR.

26. THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
ARIYALUR DISTRICT, ARIYALUR.

27. THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
THIRUVARUR DISTRICT, THIRUVARUR.

28. THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
NAGAPATTINAM DISTRICT, NAGAPATTINAM.



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29. THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
CUDDALORE DISTRICT, CUDDALORE.

30. THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
VILLUPURAM DISTRICT, VILLUPURAM.

31. THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
VELLORE DISTRICT, VELLORE.

32. THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
KANJIPURAM DISTRICT, KANJIPURAM.

33. THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
THIRUVALLUR DISTRICT, THIRUVALLUR.

34. THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
CHENNAI DISTRICT, CHENNAI.

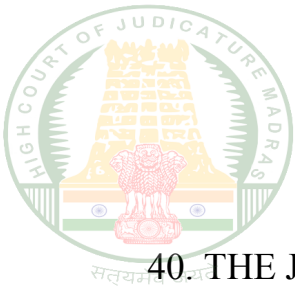
35. THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR,
THIRUVANNAMALAI DISTRICT,
THIRUVANNAMALAI.

36. THE CHAIRMAN,
NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA,
G-5 AND 6, SECTOR-10, DWARKA,
NEW DELHI-110 075.

37. THE CHAIRMAN,
PORT OF CHENNAI, NO.1, RAJAJI SALAI,
CHENNAI-600 001.

38. THE JOINT CHIEF ENGINEER (GENERAL),
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, CHEPAUK, CHENNAI-600 005.

39. THE JOINT CHIEF ENGINEER, (IRRIGATION),
PWD SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, (PROCUREMENT CELL),
IAMWARAM PROJECT, CHEPAUK, CHENNAI – 600 005.



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40. THE JOINT CHIEF ENGINEER,
(PLAN FORMULATION), PWD, W.R.O.,
CHEPAUK, CHENNAI -600 005.

41. THE JOINT CHIEF ENGINEER, (OPERATION & MAINTENANCE),
PWD, W.R.O., CHEPAUK, CHENNAI – 600 005.

42. THE JOINT CHIEF ENGINEER, (DESIGN, RESEARCH AND
CONSTRUCTION SUPPORT), CHEPAUK, CHENNAI – 005.

43. THE JOINT CHIEF ENGINEER, (STATE GROUND & SURFACE
WATER RESOURCES DATA CENTRE), TARAMANI, CHENNAI 600 113.

44. THE DEPUTY CHIEF ENGINEER
CHENNAI REGION, CHEPAUK, CHENNAI -600 005.

45. THE DEPUTY CHIEF ENGINEER,
TIRUCHI REGION, PUDUKKOTTAI ROAD,
P.B.NO.803, SUBRAMANIPURAM, TRICHY – 620 020.

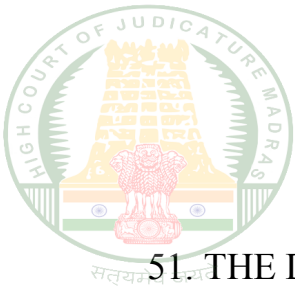
46. THE DEPUTY CHIEF ENGINEER,
POLLACHI REGION, TOWN HALL,
COIMBATORE 641 001.

47. THE DEPUTY CHIEF ENGINEER,
MADURAI REGION,
THALLAKULAM, MADURAI-625 002.

48. THE JOINT DIRECTOR,
INSTITUTE FOR WATER STUDIES,
TARAMANI, CHENNAI 600 113.

49. THE DIRECTOR, IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT,
TRAINING INSTITUTE, THUVAKUDI, TRICHY 620 015.

50. THE GENERAL MANAGER, SOUTHERN RAILWAYS,
GENERAL MANAGER OFFICE, GENERAL BRANCH,
1ST FLOOR NGO MAIN BUILDING, SOUTHERN RAILWAY,
PARK TOWN, CHENNAI 600 003.



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51. THE DIVISIONAL RAILWAY MANAGER,
CHENNAI DIVISION, DIVISIONAL RAILWAY MANAGER
OFFICE DRM COMPLEX, SOUTHERN RAILWAY, PARK TOWN,
CHENNAI -600 003.

52. THE DIVISIONAL RAILWAY MANAGER,
TRICHY DIVISION, DIVISIONAL RAILWAY MANAGER OFFICE,
DRM COMPLEX, SOUTHERN RAILWAY, TRICHIRAPPALLI - 620 001.

53. THE DIVISIONAL RAILWAY MANAGER,
MADURAI DIVISION, DIVISIONAL RAILWAY MANAGER OFFICE,
DRM COMPLEX, SOUTHERN RAILWAY, MADURAI -625 016.

54. THE DIVISIONAL RAILWAY MANAGER, SALEM DIVISION,
DIVISIONAL RAILWAY MANAGER OFFICE DRM COMPLEX,
SOUTHERN RAILWAY, SALEM -005.

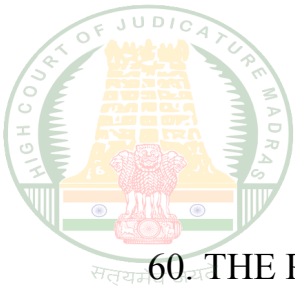
55. THE DIVISIONAL RAILWAY MANAGER,
TRIVANDRUM DIVISION, DRM(GENL) DRM COMPLEX,
SOUTHERN RAILWAY, THYCAUD, TRIVANDRUM 649 914.

56. THE GENERAL MANAGER,
INTEGRAL COACH FACTORY (ICF), CHENNAI -38.

57. THE GENERAL MANAGER,
ORDINANCE FACTORY TRICHIRAPALLI,
TRICHIRAPALLI -620 016, TN, INDIA

58. THE GENERAL MANAGER,
BHARAT HEAVY ELECTRICALS LIMITED,
TRICHY -620014.

59. THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT,
HIGHWAYS & MINOR PORTS DEPARTMENT, FORT ST.GEORGE,
SECRETARIAT, CHENNAI – 600 009.



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60. THE PROJECT DIRECTOR,
TAMIL NADU ROAD SECTOR PROJECT -II,
NO.171, KESAVAPERUMALPURAM,
GREENWAYS ROAD, RAJA ANNAMALAIPURAM
CHENNAI -600 028.

61. THE DIRECTOR GENERAL (I.C),
HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT INTEGRATED CHIEF ENGINEERS' OFFICE
HRS CAMPUS, 76 SARDAR PATEL ROAD, GUINDY, CHENNAI – 600 025.

62. THE CHIEF ENGINEER(H),
NATIONAL HIGHWAYS, INTEGRATED CHIEF ENGINEERS' OFFICE
HRS CAMPUS, 76 SARDAR PATEL ROAD, GUINDY CHENNAI – 600 025.

63. THE CHIEF ENGINEER(H), PROJECTS, INTEGRATED CHIEF
ENGINEERS' OFFICE HRS CAMPUS, 76 SARDAR PATEL ROAD, GUINDY
CHENNAI – 600 025.

64. THE CHIEF ENGINEER(H), NABARD &RURAL ROAD, INTEGRATED
CHIEF ENGINEERS OFFICE HRS CAMPUS,
76 SARDAR PATEL ROAD, GUINDY CHENNAI -600 025.

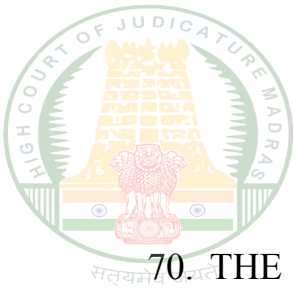
65. THE CHIEF ENGINEER(H) PLANNING, DESIGNS AND
INVESTIGATION, INTEGRATED CHIEF ENGINEERS OFFICE HRS
CAMPUS, 76 SARDAR PATEL ROAD, GUINDY CHENNAI – 600 025.

66. THE DIRECTOR, HIGHWAYS RESEARCH STATION, 76 SARDAR
PATEL ROAD, GUINDY, CHENNAI – 600 025.

67. THE CHIEF ENGINEER (H), METRO, INTEGRATED CHIEF
ENGINEERS' OFFICE HRS CAMPUS, 76 SARDAR PATEL ROAD, GUINDY
CHENNAI – 600 025.

68. THE JOINT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
CHENNAI, CHENNAI DISTRICT.

69. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
CHENNAI, CHENNAI DISTRICT



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70. THE JOINT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT, VELLORE,
THIRUVALLUR DISTRICT.

71. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
THIRUVALLUR, THIRUVALLUR DISTRICT.

72. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
KANCHEEPURAM, KANCHEEPURAM DISTRICT.

73. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
VELLORE, VELLORE DISTRICT.

74. THE JOINT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT, SALEM,
SALEM DISTRICT.

75. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
DHARMAPURI, DHARMAPURI DT AND KRISHNAGIR DISTRICT.

76. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT, SALEM,
SALEM DISTRICT.

77. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
NAMAKKAL, NAMAKKAL DISTRICT.

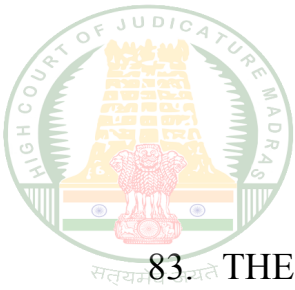
78. THE JOINT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
COIMBATORE, COIMBATORE DISTRICT.

79. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
COIMBATORE, COIMBATORE DISTRICT AND NILGIRIS DISTRICT.

80. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT, ERODE,
ERODE DISTRICT.

81. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
TIRUPPUR, TIRUPPUR DISTRICT.

82. THE JOINT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT, THANJAVUR,
THANJAVUR DISTRICT.



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W.P.No.3075 of 2017

83. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
THANJAVUR, THANJAVUR DISTRICT.

84. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
NAGAPATTINAM, NAGAPATTINAM DISTRICT (EXCEPT Sirkali
Mayiladuthurai and Tharangambadi Taluk).

85. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
THIRUVALLUR, THIRUVALLUR DISTRICT.

86. THE JOINT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
MAYILADUTHURAI.

87. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
KUMBAKONAM THIRUVIDAMARUTHUR, KUMBAKONAM TALUK,
THANJAVUR DISTRICT AND MAYILADUTHURAI, Sirkali and
Tharangambadi Taluks in Nagapattinam District

88. THE JOINT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
VILLUPURAM, CUDDALORE DISTRICT.

89. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
CUDDALORE, CUDDALORE DISTRICT.

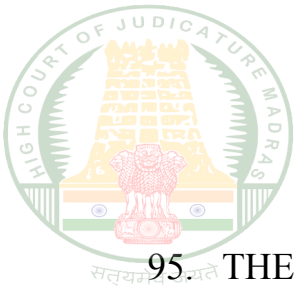
90. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
VILLUPURAM, VILLUPURAM DISTRICT.

91. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
TIRUVANNAMALAI, TIRUVANNAMALAI DISTRICT.

92. THE JOINT COMMISSIONER HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
TRICHIRAPPALLI, TRICHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT.

93. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
TRICHIRAPPALLI, TRICHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT.

94. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
ARIYALUR, PERAMBALUR DT AND ARIYALUR DISTRICT.



W.P.(MD)Nos.16485 & 14699 of 2015 &
W.P.No.3075 of 2017

95. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
PUDUKOTTAI, PUDUKKOTTAI DISTRICT.

96. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
KARUR, KARUR DISTRICT.

97. THE JOINT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT, MADURAI,
MADURAI DISTRICT.

98. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT
MADURAI, MADURAI DISTRICT.

99. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT
DINDIGUL, DINDIGUL DISTRICT AND IN DISTRICT.

100. THE JOINT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT
SIVAGANGAI, SIVAGANGAI DISTRICT.

101. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
VIRUDHUNAGAR, VIRUDHUNAGAR DISTRICT.

102. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
PARAMAKUDI, SIVAGANGAI DT AND RAMANATHAPURAM
DISTRICT.

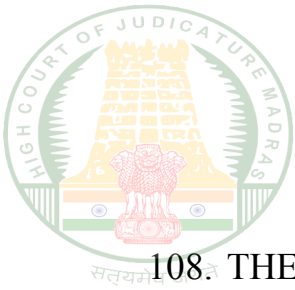
103. THE JOINT COMMISSIONER HR & CE DEPARTMENT ,
TIRUNELVELI, TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT.

104. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
TIRUNELVELI, TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT.

105. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT, HR &
CE DEPARTMENT, THOOTHUKUDI, THOOTHUKUDI DISTRICT.

106. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, HR & CE DEPARTMENT,
NAGERCOIL, KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT.

107. THE PRINCIPAL CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS, NO.1,
JEENIS SALAIPANAGAL BUILDING, SAIDAPET, CHENNAI 015.



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W.P.No.3075 of 2017*

108. THE CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS, CHENNAI CIRCLE 259, ANNA SALAI, DMS COMPOUND, III FLOOR, TEYNAMPET, CHENNAI - 006.

109. THE WILDLIFE WARDEN, 259 ANNA SALAI, DMS COMPOUND, IV FLOOR, TEYNAMPET, CHENNAI 006.

110. THE FOREST UTILISATION OFFICER, 259, ANNA SALAI, DMS COMPOUND, III FLOOR, TEYNAMPET, CHENNAI - 006.

111. THE ASSISTANT CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS, FOREST PROTECTION SQUAD, 259, ANNA SALAI, DMS COMPOUND, III FLOOR, TEYNAMPET, CHENNAI - 006.

112. THE CHAIRMAN, TAMIL NADUR FOREST PLANTATION, CORPORATION LIMITED 30, GANDHIMANDAPAM ROAD, KOTTURPURAM, CHENNAI, TAMIL NADU, SOUTH -085.

113. THE CHENNAI DIRECTOR ARIGNAR AANNA ZOOLOGICAL PARK, VANDALUR, CHENNAI 048.

114. THE GUINDY NATIONAL PARK RANGE GUINDY, CHENNAI - 025.

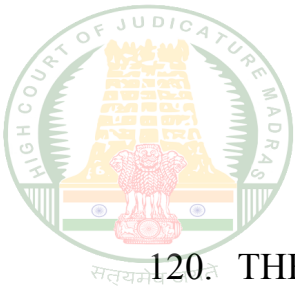
115. THE SPECIAL GOVERNMENT PLEADER (FOREST CASES) HIGH COURT, CHENNAI -014.

116. THE CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS (RESEARCH), STATE FOREST RESEARCH INSTITUTE VANDALUR, CHENNAI – 048.

117. THE CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS (RESEARCH), STATE FOREST RESEARCH INSTITUTE CAMPUS, KOLAPPAKKAM (VIA), VANDALUR, CHENNAI - 048.

118. THE CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS (RESEARCH), STATE FOREST INSTITUTE CAMPUS, KOLAPPAM VIA, VANDALUR, CHENNAI 048.

119. THE CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS, (FOREST EXTENSION), STATE FOREST INSTITUTE CAMPUS KOLAPPAM VIA, VANDALUR, CHENNAI 048.



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120. THE DEPUTY CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS, STATE FOREST INSTITUTE, KOLAPPAM VIA, VANDALUR, CHENNAI -048.

121. THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT, HIGHWAYS & MINOR PORTS DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU, CHENNAI -009.

122. THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN, V.O.CHIDAMBARANAR PORT TRUST, TUTICORIN -004.

123. THE CHAIRMAN, V.O.CHIDAMBARANAR PORT TRUST, TUTICORIN - 004.

124. THE REGIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SOUTH REGION, CHENNAI AIRPORT, CHENNAI.

125. THE AIRPORT DIRECTOR, TRICHY AIRPORT, TRICHY.

126. THE AIRPORT DIRECTOR MADURAI AIRPORT, MADURAI.

127. THE AIRPORT DIRECTOR, TUTICORIN AIRPORT, TUTICORIN.

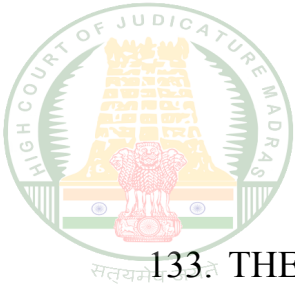
128. THE AIRPORT DIRECTOR, COIMBATORE, AIRPORT, COIMBATORE.

129. THE AIRPORT DIRECTOR, OMALUR AIRPORT, SALEM.

130. THE CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER/ OIC, NABARD BANK, NO.48, NUNGAMBAKKAM HIGH ROAD, AMBAL NAGAR, ANNA SALAI, NUNGAMBAKKAM, CHENNAI - 034.

131. THE SPECIAL DIRECTOR GENERAL (SR), CENTRAL PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, 1ST FLOOR G WING, RAJAJI, BHAVAN 3RD AVENUE, BESANT NAGAR, CHENNAI.

132. THE DEFENCE ESTATE OFFICER, MADRAS CIRCLE, NO.306, ANNA SALAI, TEYNAMPET, CHENNAI -18.



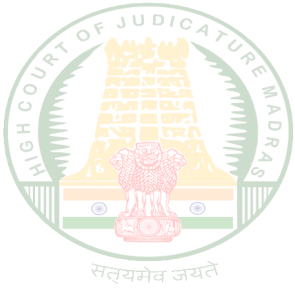
*W.P.(MD)Nos.16485 & 14699 of 2015 &
W.P.No.3075 of 2017*

133. THE NAVAL PORT OFFICE, PROT COMPLEX, RAJAJI SALAI, ST.
GEORGE FORT, CHENNAI – 009.

134. THE COMMISSIONER,
MADURAI CITY MUNICIPAL CORPORATION,
ANNA MALIGAI, MADURAI.

135. THE CHIEF ENGINEER,
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT,
THALLAKULAM, MADURAI.

136. THE OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL
CHIEF CONSERVATOR FOREST,
SOUTHERN REGION, MADURAI.



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*W.P.(MD)Nos.16485 & 14699 of 2015 &
W.P.No.3075 of 2017*

N.SATHISH KUMAR, J.
and
D.BHARATHA CHAKRAVARTHY, J.

Jer

Common order in
W.P.(MD)No.16485 of 2015,
W.P.(MD)No.14699 of 2015 &
W.P.No.3075 of 2017

18.03.2026