

W.P.No.4464 of 2021

THE HON'BLE CHIEF JUSTICE
and
SENTHILKUMAR RAMAMOORTHY, J.

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

This matter is indicative of the apathy towards maintaining waterbodies and the wanton desecration thereof all over the State.

2. Though orders of this Court in particular and general orders of the Supreme Court rule the field and there are specific laws that prohibit the conversion of any waterbody into residential or commercial plots, waterbodies appear to be disappearing by the day and the hour.

3. It is imperative that satellite images of all taluks be prepared as at March 15, 2021 so that there will be a reference point to indicate the waterbodies that exist. Though it has been repeated ad nauseam by this Court that waterbodies are the lungs that allow human habitation and they cannot be allowed to be encroached on or even touched to maintain whatever is left of the ecology, there is flagrant disregard of the law and orders, unfortunately, even by revenue

authorities who are tasked with the obligation to preserve and protect public land and waterbodies.

4. Every District Collector will remain personally liable for ensuring satellite images of all taluks in the relevant district being downloaded and the satellite images of all taluks spread across such district being put up on the website by every District Collectorate by March 17, 2021. To repeat, all the satellite images must be as on March 15, 2021 or earlier. The compilation of all the satellite images of the taluks in a district must be put up on a special website to be created by every District Collectorate by March 17, 2021. The master file in PDF form containing the satellite images of all taluks in the district should be reached to the Chief Secretary by March 24, 2021 for the records to be maintained at the State Secretariat as to the satellite images of every taluk in the State and of the entirety of the districts. A copy of the entire set of images covering the entire State, in PDF form, should be forwarded to the Registrar-General of this Court to be preserved as a reference mark in future matters.

5. As far as the present matter is concerned, it is submitted on behalf of the Erode Corporation that a Rs.112 crore project has been undertaken for beautification of the waterfront without in any manner interfering with the course or flow of water or any check dam or the like. Though the petitioner disputes such submission, since the matter is of public interest, no immediate injunction is issued. However, it is made clear that if any construction is found to have been made on any waterbody or creating any impediment to the flow of water, however much the costs, the same may be liable to be demolished.

The matter will appear on 30.03.2021.

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(S.B., CJ.)

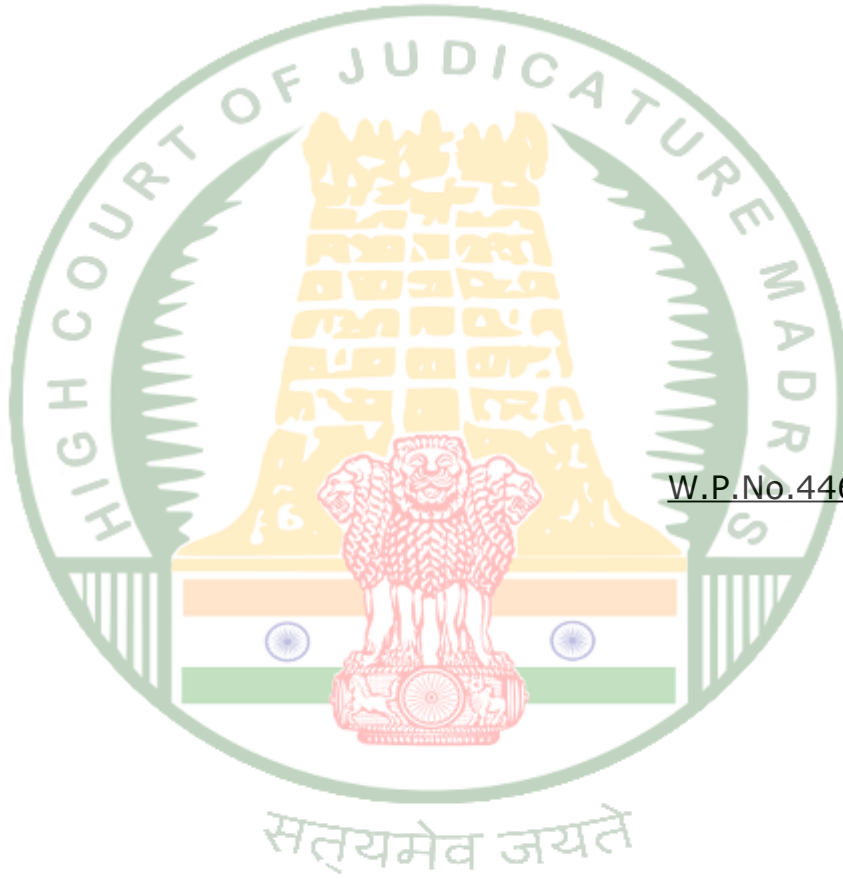
(S.K.R.,J.)

02.03.2021

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