SC allows one-time lamp at Thiruparankundram 'Deepathoon' on 24 Nov

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News

On 20 November 2026 the Supreme Court stayed, until further orders and insofar as challenged, the findings of the Madras High Court Madurai Bench's Division Bench judgment (6.1.2026) that had permitted the Karthigai Deepam to be lit on a stone pillar called the 'Deepathoon' atop Thiruparankundram hill in Madurai. At the same time, a Bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and Vipul M. Pancholi allowed the lamp to be lit on the pillar once, on 24 November, the day of the Karthigai Deepam festival. Only authorised representatives of the temple administration (Devasthanam) and government officials may go there; the public is barred; there can be no procession, congregation, slogans or demonstration, no new construction, and no interference with the Dargah and mosque. The Madurai Collector, as nodal officer, will settle the team, time and route; adequate security, including the CISF if needed, must be ensured, and a compliance report filed within three days of the festival. The Court made clear that this is not a final endorsement of the claimed custom, is no basis for later years, will not affect the final judgment, and that questions under Articles 25 and 26 are left open. LiveLaw reported on 22 November that the HR&CE Commissioner has filed a review petition against the order. A single judge (Justice G.R. Swaminathan) had allowed the lighting on 1 December 2025; a Division Bench upheld it on 6 January 2026; the State filed a Special Leave Petition against it on 11 June 2026; on 3 August 2026 the Supreme Court issued notice but refused an interim stay. The State argued that there is no custom of lighting at the pillar and that, as per the Agamas, the lamp has been lit at the Deepa Mandapam near the

Uchi Pillaiyar shrine for over 150 years, according to its affidavit (SC Observer); the Dargah committee on the hill also put forward its submissions.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Order date	20 November 2026
Bench	Justices Aravind Kumar and Vipul M. Pancholi
Stay	Findings of the Madurai Bench Division Bench judgment (6.1.2026), until further orders
Permission	24 November (Karthigai Deepam) – one time only
Who may light	Devasthanam representatives and officials only; public barred
Security	Including CISF if needed; Collector as nodal officer; compliance report in 3 days
Temple	Arulmigu Subramaniaswamy Temple – under HR&CE
Status	Without prejudice to final verdict; case pending; HR&CE review petition (reported)

Background

- Thiruparankundram is the first of Murugan's six abodes (Arupadai Veedu). Nakkeerar's 'Thirumurugatrupadai' (Pathuppattu) guides devotees to the six abodes; the Ettuthogai anthology 'Paripadal' sings of Thiruparankundram and the Vaigai.
- The hill's rock-cut shrines date to the early Pandya period (8th century CE). The hill also has Jain relief panels of Parsvanatha and Mahavira with Vattezhuthu inscriptions, and the Sikandar Badusha Dargah stands on the summit.
- In Tamil Nadu, Hindu temples are administered by the HR&CE Department under the Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act, 1959. Its forerunner was the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act passed by the Justice Party government in the 1920s.
- On 1 December 2025 the Madurai Collector issued a prohibitory order under BNSS Section 163 (the old Section 144 CrPC); the single judge set it aside on 4 December 2025. Since 1 July 2024 the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) has replaced the CrPC; such urgent prohibitory orders are now issued under BNSS Section 163.

Tamil Nadu link: This is a Tamil Nadu story from Madurai district; the Karthigai Deepam festival falls on 24 November 2026. The case and the review petition are pending in the Supreme Court; this article takes no side.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

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permitted the Karthigai Deepam to be lit on a stone pillar called the 'Deepathoon' atop Thiruparankundram hill in Madurai.

What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Order date: 20 November 2026; Bench: Justices Aravind Kumar and Vipul M. Pancholi; Stay: Findings of the Madurai Bench Division Bench judgment (6.1.2026), until further orders; Permission: 24 November (Karthigai Deepam) – one time only.

What is the background to this news?

Thiruparankundram is the first of Murugan's six abodes (Arupadai Veedu). Nakkeerar's 'Thirumurugatrupadai' (Pathuppattu) guides devotees to the six abodes; the Ettuthogai anthology 'Paripadal' sings of Thiruparankundram and the Vaigai.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. Which Pathuppattu work by Nakkeerar guides devotees to Murugan's six abodes, beginning with Thiruparankundram?

A) Porunaratrupadai

B) Sirupanatrupadai

C) Malaipadukadam

D) Thirumurugatrupadai

Answer: D – Explanation: Thirumurugatrupadai – the first of the Pathuppattu, also called 'Pulavaratrupadai'. Malaipadukadam is also known as Koothar-atrupadai.

2. In which year was the Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act, under which HR&CE runs temples, enacted?

A) 1927

B) 1959

C) 1951

D) 1969

Answer: B – Explanation: 1959. Its forerunner was the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act brought by the Justice Party government in the 1920s.

3. Under which dynasty were the rock-cut shrines (8th century CE) of Thiruparankundram hill excavated?

A) Pandyas

B) Pallavas

C) Cholas

D) Nayaks

Answer: A – Explanation: The Pandyas – early Pandya rock-cut shrines of the 8th century CE. Mamallapuram's rock-cut caves are Pallava.

4. Urgent prohibitory orders formerly issued under Section 144 CrPC are now issued under which section of the BNSS?

A) Section 107

B) Section 151

C) Section 163

D) Section 170

Answer: C – Explanation: BNSS Section 163 – a magistrate's urgent order to prevent nuisance or danger. The BNSS came into force on 1 July 2024.

5. Which Ettuthogai anthology, with songs on Murugan and Thirumal, sings of Thiruparankundram and the Vaigai?

A) Kurunthogai

B) Ainkurunuru

C) Purananuru

D) Paripadal

Answer: D – Explanation: Paripadal – songs set to music, on Murugan, Thirumal, the Vaigai and Madurai. Purananuru has 'puram' poems on war and ethics.

Sources: LiveLaw, 20 Nov 2026; LiveLaw, 22 Nov 2026 (review petition); LiveLaw, 23 Jun 2026; SC Observer (case page); The News Minute, 20 Nov 2026; Deccan Herald; News On AIR; Outlook (BNSS Section 163); TN HR&CE – Arulmigu Subramaniaswamy Temple, Thiruparankundram. © Shanmugam IAS Academy.