

The Hindu 17.07.2009

Temple land grabbing will not be allowed: Minister

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CHENNAI: The government will not allow grabbing of temple land, Urban Development Minister Parithi Ilamvazhuthi asserted on Thursday. The Chief Minister will not remain a mute spectator to any such attempt.

The Minister was replying to a debate in the Assembly on a special call attention notice on reports in a section of the press about the grabbing of land belonging to the Thirumangaleeswarar temple at Koyambedu.

A private company had obtained permission from the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA) for constructing a complex on 42.31 acres on Jawaharlal Nehru Salai at Koyambedu. The Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments department had contended that a portion of the land, measuring 3.03 acres, belonged to the temple.

On perusal of the application for building permit, it had come to light that the earlier owner of the land, years ago, sold 1.26 acres to the Central Public Works Department.

The application had mentioned only the remaining 1.77 acres, which was disputed. At the hearing in November 2008, the Supreme Court had ordered status quo on the possession of the disputed land. When the CMDA gave its approval, it had stipulated that there should be no construction work on the disputed land.

The approval was based on the guidelines of the Second Master Plan.

On the basis of the CMDA's plan permit, the Corporation had given approval for the building. In the wake of news reports, the Corporation's executive engineer in the zone-V had submitted to the Corporation Commissioner that the approval for the proposed construction was given, adhering to building rules and CMDA's Second Master Plan.

As mentioned in the Supreme Court order, the construction should be taken up on those portions of land other than the disputed portion, Mr. Ilamvazhuthi said. On another special call attention notice on the issue of pay hike for Noon Meal Programme and Anganwadi workers, Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi gave an account of measures taken by the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam regime, in phases, for hiking their wages.

Noting that the NMP was working well, he said his government had given the workers manifold pay rise and more facilities and concessions than what they had sought.