

Pilgrim town in Madurai district tensed, security heightened

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The police have denied permission for public meetings organised by religious and political groups, citing the prohibitory orders imposed in town. (HT photo)

The pilgrim town of Thiruparankundram in Tamil Nadu's Madurai district — a place where Hindus, Muslims and Jains have coexisted in harmony for over two centuries — is now facing communal tension.

Despite strong vigilance by the state government and police, backed by a recent Madras high court order to maintain the harmonious coexistence of people in the small town bordering Madurai city, right-wing Hindu groups have asserted that the entire hill, which houses both a temple and a mosque, belongs to Lord Murugan and is part of the Shaivite sect of Hinduism.

They also have opposed the animal sacrifices occasionally conducted by members of the Muslim community near the mosque and alleged that there have been deliberate attempts to name the hill as Sikkandar Hill, as it has been noted in government records for a long time.

To prevent any violence in the region, authorities have clamped prohibitory orders and additional police personnel have been deployed to monitor the entire pilgrim town round the clock. The police have denied permission for public meetings organised by religious and political groups, citing the prohibitory orders imposed in town.

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