

2025 LiveLaw (SC) 1055

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

J.K. MAHESHWARI; J., VIJAY BISHNOI; J.

Petition(s) for Special Leave to Appeal (C) No(s). 29687/2024; 30-10-2025

P.C. HARY & ORS. versus GURUVAYOOR DEVASWOM MANAGING COMMITTEE & ORS.

Hindu Law - Temples and Religious Practices - Interim Relief Granted - Supreme Court grants interim relief in a Petition for Special Leave to Appeal, directing the Respondents to continue performing the Udayasthamana Pooja at the Guruvayur Sree Krishna Temple on Vrishchikam Ekadasi (01.12.2025), strictly in accordance with the temple's tradition and without any change - Any ritual which has become a long-standing tradition and assumed religious significance "ought not be unsettled on the apprehension that there would be potential public inconvenience"- The "faith of the worshippers at large ought not to be put aside on the anvil of managerial and administrative concerns and must be given precedence and respect as far as possible" - Inconvenience to the public cannot be a ground to discontinue / alter the rituals / pooja to be performed on the sacred day for the deity. [Paras 5-8]

[Arising out of impugned final judgment and order dated 07-12-2024 in WP(C) No. 39434/2024 passed by the High Court of Kerala at Ernakulam]

For Petitioner(s): Mr. C. S. Vaidyanathan, Sr. Adv. Mr. Guru Krishna Kumar, Sr. Adv. Mr. K. Parameshwar, Sr. Adv. Mr. A. Karthik, AOR Ms. Smrithi Suresh, Adv. Mr. Ujjwal Sharma, Adv. Mr. Sugam Agrawal, Adv.

For Respondent(s): Mr. Rakesh Dwivedi, Sr. Adv. Mr. Abhllash M.R., Adv. Mr. T K Vipindas, Adv. Mr. Vipindas T.K., Adv. Mr. Eklavya Dwivedi, Adv. Mr. Mohd. Yasir, Adv. Mr. Ann Melvin, Adv. M/s M R Law Associates, AOR Mr. C Aryamasundaram, Sr. Adv. Mr. T K Vipindas, Adv. Mr. Anoop R, Adv. Mrs. Beena Prakash, Adv. Mr. Jishnu M. L., AOR Mr. V. Giri, Sr. Adv. Mr. Harshed Sundar, Adv. Ms. Aishwarya Mishra, Adv. Mr. S.mahesh Sahasranaman, Adv. Mr. Shyam Gopal, AOR Mr. P . Krishnadevan, Adv. Mr. V. Giri, Sr. Adv. Mr. Sayooj Mohandas M, Adv. Ms. Aishwarya Raj Mishra, Adv. Ms. Manjari Singh, Adv. Mr. Sandeep Singh, AOR Mr. Nishe Rajen Shonker, AOR Mrs. Anu K Joy, Adv. M/S. Kmnp Law Aor, AOR Mr. K.S. Bharathan, Adv. Mr. Alim Anvar, Adv. Mrs. Devika A.I., Adv. Mr. Santhosh K, Adv. Ms. Smita Amratlal Vora, AOR Mr. Ankur Kashyap, AOR

ORDER

1. Leave granted.

2. Heard on IA No. 269508 of 2025 filed by the appellant seeking directions against the respondents to –

a. *direct the respondents to conduct and perform the Udayasthamana Pooja at the Guruvayur Sree Krishna Temple on Vrishchikam Ekadasi falling on 01.12.2025 (Monday), strictly in accordance with the age-old customs, rituals and traditions of the temple; and*

b. *restrain the respondents from altering, rescheduling, or substituting the Udayasthamana Pooja to any date other than Vrishchikam Ekadasi (01.12.2025).*

3. After hearing learned counsel for the parties at length on the issue of grant of interim relief, it is to be noted at the outset that the *Udayasthamana Pooja* is one of the most important *pooja* performed on *Vrishchikam Ekadasi*. As contended by the appellant, it is being performed at the temple since time immemorial, however, as per the affidavit filed by the Guruvayoor Devaswom Managing Committee (in short '**Committee**'), it is being performed since 1972. The performance of the said *pooja* on *Vrishchikam Ekadasi* was altered/discontinued with the consent of Thantri in consultation with Committee after

ascertaining *Devahitham*, on the ground of public inconvenience caused due to high inflow of devotees on the said auspicious day.

4. On filing of the present appeals before this Court, the matter came up for hearing on 11.12.2024, which was also the date of *Vrishchikam Ekadasi*. Keeping in view that time of the pooja on the said date was already over by the time matter came up for hearing, this Court refrained from passing any order on interim relief except to say that the chart of the daily Pooja, as available on the website of the temple shall not be changed or deleted until next date of listing.

5. It is prayed that *Vrishchikam Ekadasi* is on 01.12.2025 and *Udayasthamana Pooja* which was not performed last year because of the decision of Thantri, may be permitted to be performed this year. The reason for stopping performance of such Pooja, as alleged, is based on increased number of devotees for darshan at temple, which causes administrative and public inconvenience. The said contention has been supported by learned senior counsel for the Thantri as well as learned counsel appearing on behalf of the management of temple.

6. Upon hearing, we find that *Udayasthamana Pooja* was being performed on *Vrishchikam Ekadasi* since long. It is to observe that any ritual which is being performed at any place or site of worship as part of long-standing tradition, and has assumed religious significance, ought not be unsettled on the apprehension that there would be potential public inconvenience. The faith of the worshippers at large ought not to be put aside on the anvil of managerial and administrative concerns and must be given precedence and respect as far as possible. The Guruvayur temple has a rich religious historical background and a large number of devotees depose their faith in the deity. The temple has long run customs, practices and rituals, which if affected, might run scramble through the sentiments of the devotees/people.

7. It is to be noted that, the performance of the pooja by Acharyas is conducted for enhancing the divinity of deity. On special occasions such as *Vrishchikam Ekadasi*, inconvenience to public cannot be a ground to discontinue/alter the rituals/pooja to be performed on the said day for deity. Thus, at this juncture, for the purposes of interim relief, we are not convinced by the reasons stated by the respondents.

8. In this view of the matter, subject to final outcome of the appeal, by way of interim measure, we direct that *Udayasthamana Pooja* shall be continued in the manner as it was being performed as per the tradition of the temple on *Vrishchikam Ekadasi* without any change. In case the Thantri is of the view that *Udayasthamana Pooja* has also to be performed on 02.11.2025 as stated in the counter affidavit, he may do so. The Interlocutory Application is accordingly disposed of.

9. Parties are at liberty to complete their pleadings within a period of eight weeks. List the case for hearing in the month of March, 2026.