

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA AT ERNAKULAM****PRESENT****THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE RAJA VIJAYARAGHAVAN V****&****THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE K. V. JAYAKUMAR****Wednesday, the 25<sup>th</sup> day of February 2026 / 6th Phalguna, 1947****DBP NO. 52 OF 2025**

**IN THE MATTER OF COCHIN DEVASWOM BOARD - COMPLAINT ALLEGING MALADMINISTRATION  
AND CORRUPTION AT CHOTTANIKKARA - SUO MOTU PROCEEDINGS INITIATED BASED ON A  
COMPLAINT DATED 24.04.2025 FROM SRI.THAMPY THILAKAN-REG.**

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**PETITIONER:****SUO MOTU****RESPONDENTS:**

- 1. STATE OF KERALA**  
**REPRESENTED BY THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT,**  
**REVENUE (DEVASWOM) DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT,**  
**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695001.**
- 2. COCHIN DEVASWOM BOARD**  
**REPRESENTED BY ITS SECRETARY, ROUND NORTH,**  
**THRISSUR - 680001.**
- 3. COMMISSIONER**  
**COCHIN DEVASWOM BOARD, SWARAJ ROUND NORTH,**  
**ROUND NORTH, THRISSUR, PIN-680 001**
- 4. THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER**  
**CHOTTANIKKARA DEVASWOM, CHOTTANIKKARA P.O.,**  
**ERNAKULAM, PIN-682312**

5. DEVASWOM MANAGER  
CHOTTANIKKARA BHAGAVATHI TEMPLE, CHOTTANIKKARA P.O.,  
ERNAKULAM, PIN-682312
6. THE TEMPLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
REPRESENTED BY ITS SECRETARY, CHOTTANIKKARA TEMPLE COMPOUND,  
CHOTTANIKKARA P.O., ERNAKULAM, PIN-682312  
\*ADDL.R7 & R8 IMPEADED
7. THE CHOTTANIKKARA GRAMA PANCHAYAT,  
REPRESENTED BY ITS SECRETARY, CHOTTANIKKARA P.O.,  
ERNAKULAM DISTRICT – 682312
8. THE DISTRICT TOWN PLANNER,  
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT TOWN PLANNER, LSGD PLANNING,  
DPC SECRETARIAT BUILDING, 4TH FLOOR, CIVIL STATION, KAKKANAD,  
ERNAKULAM – 682030  
\*ARE SUO MOTU IMPEADED AS ADDITIONAL RESPONDENTS 7 AND 8 AS PER  
ORDER DATED 10/09/2025 IN DBP.NO.52/2025.  
\*ADDL.R9 TO R11 IMPEADED
9. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,  
SUCHITWA MISSION, DEPARTMENT OF LSGD, PUBLIC OFFICE BUILDING,  
3RD FLOOR, REVENUE COMPLEX, LMS, VELLAYAMBALAM ROAD,  
UNIVERSITY OF KERALA SENATE HOUSE CAMPUS, PALAYAM,  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695033
10. EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,  
MARAMATH WING, COCHIN DEVASWOM BOARD, CDB HEAD QUARTERS,  
SWARAJ ROUND NORTH, THRISSUR - 680001
11. ASSISTANT ENGINEER,  
CHOTTANIKKARA DEVASWOM, CHOTTANIKKARA, KOCHI - 682 312  
\*ARE SUO MOTU IMPEADED AS ADDL.RESPONDENTS 9 TO 11 VIDE ORDER  
DATED 19.09.2025 IN DBP 52/2025.

**\*ADDL.R12 IMPEADED**

**12. THE SPECIAL SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT,  
LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**

**\*IS SUO MOTU IMPEADED AS ADDL.R12 VIDE ORDER DATED 26.11.2025  
IN DBP.NO.52/2025**

**BY SRI.S.RAJMOHAN, SENIOR GOVERNMENT PLEADER**

**BY SRI.K.P.SUDHEER, SC, COCHIN DEVASWOM BOARD**

**BY M/S.T MADHU, C.R.SARADAMANI, B.S.SURAJ KRISHNA, AVANTHIKA R.,  
KARTHIK KRISHNA M., ARUNIMA A.R. and T.S.DAVIS,**

**Advocates for R6**

**BY SRI.VINEETH KOMALACHANDRAN, Advocate for R7**

**THE DEVASWOM BOARD PETITION ALONG WITH CONNECTED CASES HAVING  
COME UP FOR ORDERS AGAIN ON 25/02/2026, UPON PERUSING THE PETITION AND  
THIS COURT'S ORDERS DATED 19/09/2025, 24/09/2025, 26/11/2025,  
10/12/2025, 17/12/2025 & 11/02/2026, THE COURT ON THE SAME DAY PASSED  
THE FOLLOWING:**

**RAJA VIJAYARAGHAVAN V.,  
&  
K.V. JAYAKUMAR, JJ.**

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**DBP Nos. 52 of 2025 & 64 of 2025 and  
W.P.(C) No. 32689 of 2023**  
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**Dated this the 25<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2026**

**ORDER**

**Raja Vijayaraghavan V, J.**

This matter concerns serious deficiencies in cleanliness, sanitation, and overall maintenance within the precincts of the Chottanikkara Temple.

2. In our earlier orders, we have recorded that the prevailing conditions do not meet even the minimum standards of public health and safety expected of a major place of worship that attracts a large number of devotees every day. During the course of these proceedings, this Court has passed orders on 19.09.2025, 24.09.2025, 26.11.2025, 10.12.2025, 17.12.2025, and 11.02.2026. By order dated 10.12.2025, we specifically directed the Executive Director, Suchitwa Mission, to depute two senior officers to conduct a comprehensive cleanliness audit of the Chottanikkara Temple and to submit concrete and implementable recommendations to ensure that the premises are maintained in a clean and hygienic condition on a permanent basis.

3. We had also directed the Temple Advisory Committee to actively intervene and coordinate with the local authority to ensure that remedial measures were undertaken on a war footing. Subsequently, by order dated 11.02.2026, we directed the Devaswom Board to examine the report of the Suchitwa Mission in its entirety and to place before this Court a detailed statement outlining the time frame and the manner in which the Mission's recommendations would be implemented.

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4. We have carefully perused the report submitted by the Executive Director, Suchitwa Mission. The report is structured in three parts: Part I deals with solid waste management practices and proposed improvements; Part II addresses liquid waste management; and Part III sets out strategies relating to information, education, and communication. Having examined the report, we are of the clear view that its recommendations require implementation in letter and spirit by the Devaswom Board. We are informed that the temple generates a monthly income of approximately two crores, which increases to four crores or more during festival seasons. Given such substantial revenue, the continued neglect of basic sanitation and hygiene is wholly unacceptable.

5. When the matter was taken up today, Smt. Resmi A., the learned counsel for the complainant, placed before us photographs of a water dispenser and various portions of the temple premises. The images are deeply disturbing and present a most unsatisfactory state of affairs. They indicate that, despite repeated judicial directions, effective measures have not been taken by the responsible officers to ensure cleanliness. We are informed that the Devaswom Board maintains a unit within the temple premises consisting of one Engineer and more than twenty staff members. However, in the report submitted by the Devaswom Commissioner, while it is stated that steps would be taken to implement the recommendations of the Suchitwa Mission, the actual measures undertaken so far fall far short of what is required.

6. For instance, with regard to solid waste management, it is stated that the work can be executed through the Maramath Wing. It is further stated that an estimate has been prepared for the Thumboormuzhy Project and that tenders were invited, but no response was received. We find that in several

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instances, estimates appear to have been prepared in a casual and perfunctory manner. Projects of this nature demand detailed implementation plans and properly prepared project reports prior to tendering. In the absence of clear specifications and technical details, it is unrealistic to expect responsible contractors to come forward. Merely generating a tender estimate using price software, without a comprehensive project report, will not attract competent bidders or ensure meaningful execution. Moreover, the time sought by the Commissioner—even for preparing an estimate—is three months, which, in the circumstances, is wholly inordinate and indicative of a lack of urgency.

7. In these circumstances, we direct the learned Standing Counsel for the Devaswom Board to place before this Court the name of a competent and responsible officer who can be designated as a Nodal Officer for this project and a team of officers who shall work underneath him to ensure time bound implementation of the report of the Suchitwa Mission. The Board shall also place its views on the implementation framework, so that it can be ensured that the directions issued will be carried out effectively and without further delay.

Post on 05.03.2026.

**Sd/-**  
**RAJA VIJAYARAGHAVAN V,**  
**JUDGE**

**Sd/-**  
**K.V. JAYAKUMAR,**  
**JUDGE**

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