

IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA AT ERNAKULAM**PRESENT****THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE RAJA VIJAYARAGHAVAN V****&****THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE K. V. JAYAKUMAR****Friday, the 13th day of March 2026 / 22nd Phalguna, 1947****SSCR NO. 43 OF 2025**

**IN THE MATTER OF TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD - SABARIMALA SPECIAL COMMISSIONER
REPORT - SM.NO.43/2025 - REPORT SUBMITTED BY THE SPECIAL COMMISSIONER,
SABARIMALA REGARDING TIMELY REMOVAL OF COLLECTED CLOTHES FROM PAMBA RIVER BANKS
- SUO MOTU PROCEEDINGS INITIATED - REG:**

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

- 1. STATE OF KERALA
REPRESENTED BY THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT,
REVENUE (DEVASWOM) DEPARTMENT , THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
PIN - 695001**
- 2. CHIEF POLICE COORDINATOR
(ADDITIONAL DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE) (POLICE HEAD QUARTERS)
SABARIMALA, PATHANAMTHITTA - 689713**
- 3. TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD
REPRESENTED BY ITS SECRETARY, NANTHANCOD, KAWDIAR POST,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM-695003**
- 4. DEVASWOM COMMISSIONER
TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD, DEVASWOM BUILDINGS, NANTHANCOD,
KAWDIAR POST, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM-695003**
- 5. THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER
SABARIMALA, SABARIMALA P.O., PATHANAMTHITTA - 689662**

6. THE CHIEF VIGILANCE AND SECURITY OFFICER
(SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE), TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM HEAD QUARTERS,
NANTHANCOD, KAWDIAR POST, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695003
7. PRINCIPAL CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695014
8. DEPUTY DIRECTOR,
PERIYAR TIGER RESERVE, WEST DIVISION, PEERUMEDU,
IDUKKI - 685531
9. ASSISTANT ENGINEER (ENVIRONMENTAL),
SABARIMALA DEVELOPMENT PROJECT, TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD,
PATHANAMTHITTA - 689645
10. THE ENVIRONMENT ENGINEER
KERALA STATE POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD, DISTRICT OFFICE,
PATHANAMTHITTA - 689645
11. THE ENVIRONMENT ENGINEER
KERALA STATE POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD, PATTOM,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695004
12. KERALA STATE POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD
REPRESENTED BY ITS MEMBER SECRETARY, MIG AND HIG COLONY,
GANDHI NAGAR, ELAMKULAM, ERNAKULAM - 682020
13. THE STATION HOUSE OFFICER
PAMBA POLICE STATION, PAMBA - 689662
*ADDL.R14 TO R16 IMPEADED
14. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
SUCHITWA MISSION, LOCAL SELF GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT (LSGD),
PUBLIC OFFICE BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, REVENUE COMPLEX, LMS,
VELLAYAMBALAM ROAD, UNIVERSITY OF KERALA SENATE HOUSE CAMPUS,
PALAYAM, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM – 695033.
15. KERALA STATE POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD,
DISTRICT OFFICE, PATHANAMTHITTA, REPRESENTED BY THE
ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEER, OPPOSITE GENERAL HOSPITAL,
K.K.NAIR ROAD, PATHANAMTHITTA DISTRICT.

**16. RANNI PERUNAD GRAMA PANCHAYAT,
REPRESENTED BY ITS SECRETARY, PATHANAMTHITTA DISTRICT,
PIN - 689711.**

***ARE SUO MOTU IMPEDED AS ADDITIONAL RESPONDENTS 14 TO 16 VIDE
ORDER DATED 27/01/2026 IN SSCR.NO.43/2025**

BY SRI.S.RAJMOHAN, SENIOR GOVERNMENT PLEADER

BY SRI.NAGARAJ NARAYANAN, SPECIAL GOVERNMENT PLEADER (FOREST)

BY SRI.G.BIJU, STANDING COUNSEL FOR TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD

BY SRI. T. NAVEEN, SC, KERALA STATE POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD

BY SMT.SAYUJYA RADHAKRISHNAN, AMICUS CURIAE FOR

SABARIMALA SPECIAL COMMISSIONER

BY SMT.CHITHRA CHANDRASEKHARAN, SC, RANNY PERUNAD GRAMA PANCHAYAT

BY GOVERNMENT PLEADER FOR SUCHITWA MISSION

**THIS SABARIMALA SPECIAL COMMISSIONER REPORT HAVING COME UP FOR
ORDERS AGAIN ON 13/03/2026, UPON PERUSING THE REPORT AND THIS COURT'S
ORDER DATED 23/02/2026, THE COURT ON THE SAME DAY PASSED THE
FOLLOWING:**

RAJA VIJAYARAGHAVAN V.,

&

K.V. JAYAKUMAR, JJ.

SSCR No. 43 of 2025

Dated this the 13th day of March, 2026

ORDER

Raja Vijayaraghavan V., J.

This matter pertains to the cleaning operations being carried out in the Pamba River at Cheriya Palam and within the limits of the Ranni–Perunad Grama Panchayat. This Court had called for a report on the measures undertaken for the removal of clothes and other materials that have accumulated and clogged portions of the Holy Pamba River and its surrounding areas.

2. The learned Standing Counsel submitted that nearly 95% of the accumulated clothes from the accessible portions of the river have already been removed. It is stated that the contractor entrusted with the task has engaged labourers and supervisors to carry out the removal operations under the supervision of the engineering staff of the Travancore Devaswom Board. It is further submitted that the clothes accumulated in and around the Pamba Cheriya Palam area have been removed by the contractor using his workforce and by deploying a hydraulic excavator. However, certain pockets in the said location still contain accumulated clothes in the deeper and uneven portions of the river bed. The learned Standing

Counsel submits that the engineering wing has opined that further excavation using earth-moving machinery poses several practical difficulties. According to them, the cleaning operations have already been carried out to the maximum practicable extent without endangering the safety of the labourers or causing damage to the existing irrigation structures. It is also submitted that detailed technical consultation and advice will be sought from the Maramath Wing of the Travancore Devaswom Board in order to examine the feasibility of further excavation, levelling of the deep portions of the river bed, or the adoption of alternative technical methods for the safe removal of the remaining clothes.

3. The learned Standing Counsel appearing for the Pollution Control Board submitted that once the clothes are completely removed, the Environmental Inspectors of the Board will carry out an inspection and place a report before this Court.

4. From the submissions advanced by both sides, it appears that almost 95% of the accumulated clothes have already been removed. However, in certain portions of the river bed, some quantity of clothes still remains. In the above circumstances, we direct the learned Government Pleader to obtain instructions from the Suchitwa Mission as to whether the Mission can provide the necessary technical support or expertise for removing the clothes that remain embedded in the river bed, so that the Pampa River can be properly cleaned before the commencement of the next pilgrimage season.

5. The learned Government Pleader submitted that he shall obtain instructions in this regard and place a report before this Court within a period of one week.

Post on 25.03.2026.

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



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

APM