

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 16th day of January 2026 / 26th Pousha, 1947

DBAR NO. 2 OF 2025

**IN THE MATTER OF TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD - SPECIAL REPORT (FINAL) ON THE
SERIOUS EMBEZZLEMENT AT THE PETROL PUMP, NILAKKAL - REG:**

PETITIONER:

**JOINT DIRECTOR,
KERALA STATE AUDIT DEPARTMENT, TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695003**

BY GOVERNMENT PLEADER for the petitioner

RESPONDENTS:

- 1. THE SECRETARY, TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD, NANTHANCOD, KAWADIAR POST, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695003**
***ADDL.R2 IMPEADED**
- 2. THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL, NATIONAL INFORMATICS CENTRE (NIC), MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, E2A, RAJAJI BHAVAN, BASANTH NAGAR, CHENNAI - 600 090**
***IS SUO MOTU IMPEADED AS ADDITIONAL RESPONDENT AS PER ORDER DATED 17/09/2025 IN DBAR.NO.2/2025**
***ADDL.R3 IMPEADED**
- 3. KERALA STATE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE LIMITED (KSITIL), REPRESENTED BY ITS MANAGING DIRECTOR, 1ST FLOOR, SAANKETHIKA, PF ROAD, PATTOM PALACE P.O., THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695004**
***IS SUO MOTU IMPEADED AS ADDITIONAL RESPONDENT NO.3 AS PER ORDER DATED 16.01.2026 IN DBAR NO.2/2025**

BY SRI.G.BIJU, SC, TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD FOR R1

**BY SMT.O.M.SHALINA, DEPUTY SOLICITOR GENERAL OF INDIA
FOR ADDL.R2**

BY SRI.K.A.ABDUL SALAM, COUNSEL FOR ADDL.R3

**THIS DEVASWOM BOARD AUDIT REPORT ALONG WITH CONNECTED CASE HAVING COME UP
FOR ORDERS AGAIN ON 16/01/2026, UPON PERUSING THE REPORT AND THIS COURT'S COMMON
ORDER DATED 05/12/2025, THE COURT ON THE SAME DAY PASSED THE FOLLOWING:**



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

DBAR Nos. 2 of 2025

Dated this the 16th day of January, 2026

ORDER

Raja Vijayaraghavan V. J.

When the matter was taken up for consideration, the learned Standing Counsel appearing for the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) submitted that, in compliance with the directions issued by this Court, the Board has taken a conscious decision to have a Request for Proposal (RFP) professionally prepared, strictly based on the functional requirements already identified in the earlier proceedings. It was submitted that, having regard to the complexity, scale, and sensitivity of the proposed digitisation exercise, and in view of the admitted lack of adequate in-house technical expertise within the TDB to design such a comprehensive technology framework, the Board has resolved to entrust the task of preparation of the RFP to the Kerala State Information Technology Infrastructure Limited (KSITIL) as a technical consultant.

2. It was further submitted that, pursuant to discussions held between the TDB and KSITIL, it has been mutually agreed that the preparation of the RFP document would be completed within a period of one month and that the bidding process would thereafter be finalised within a further period of two months. The TDB has proposed to complete the selection process and award the contract to the successful IT service provider on or before 30.04.2026, after

strictly adhering to the applicable statutory procedures, financial rules, and transparency norms governing public procurement.

3. Having considered the submissions made and taking note of the far-reaching institutional, financial, and governance implications of the proposed digitisation initiative, we are of the considered view that Kerala State Information Technology Infrastructure Limited (KSITIL), represented by its Managing Director, 1st Floor, Saankethika, PF Road, Pattom Palace P.O., Thiruvananthapuram – 695004, is required to be suo motu impleaded as an additional respondent, so as to enable this Court to directly obtain necessary technical inputs and ensure effective judicial oversight at this critical stage of the process. Accordingly, KSITIL is impleaded as additional respondent No.3.

4. Adv. K.A. Abdul Salam, learned counsel, takes notice on behalf of KSITIL.

5. It is apposite to recall that, in our order dated 30.10.2025, after advertng in detail to the systemic deficiencies, lack of transparency, and archaic accounting practices prevailing within the Travancore Devaswom Board, this Court had issued the following directions:

“16. In view of the foregoing circumstances, we direct that the Technical Committee already constituted by the Travancore Devaswom Board shall, within one month, convene on a war footing and place before this Court a detailed roadmap and software architecture for the complete digitisation of the Board’s administration. We would urge the Committee to consider and advise the TDB as to whether to proceed with the limited NIC-developed module or to adopt an enterprise-grade, microservices-based platform that is scalable and modular. It has to seamlessly integrate all essential functions, including—(i) accounting and finance; (ii) auditor access and risk profiling; (iii) procurement, contracts, and vendor

management; (iv) human resources and payroll; (v) project and construction management; (vi) inventory and asset control; (vii) temple services and offerings; and (viii) online accommodation booking. The proposed architecture shall include role-based access controls, tamper-proof audit trails, and real-time monitoring of all temples and institutions under the Board. The Kerala State Audit Department shall be made a mandatory stakeholder at every stage of design and implementation to ensure “audit-by-design” compliance. The Committee shall also propose a phased implementation plan, beginning with pilot deployment in high-value institutions such as Sabarimala, followed by a full-scale rollout across all divisions, along with defined timelines, milestones, and accountability mechanisms. After perusing the report, this Court shall consider whether an interaction with the members of the above committee is required to carry forward with the proposals that are submitted.”

6. In the above factual background, and having regard to the scale, complexity, and systemic impact of the proposed digitisation exercise, this Court is presently not satisfied as to whether KSITIL possesses the requisite domain expertise, demonstrable prior experience, and technical capacity to conceptualise, architect, and prepare an enterprise-grade RFP of the nature contemplated in the earlier orders of this Court. We therefore deem it necessary, in the interest of effective judicial supervision and institutional accountability, to seek direct clarification on these aspects.

7. Accordingly, we direct that the technical lead of the project responsible for the preparation of the RFP on behalf of KSITIL shall make himself available for virtual interaction with this Court on 28.01.2026, so as to enable this Court to meaningfully assess the technical competence, institutional preparedness, and prior experience of KSITIL and the team set up to undertake a project of this magnitude, sensitivity, and public importance. It is further directed that the concerned technical personnel of the additional 3rd respondent shall, prior to such interaction, carefully peruse the previous orders

passed by this Court in the present proceedings so as to fully appreciate the scope, scale, and gravity of the issues involved.

Post on 28.01.2026.

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

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

APM

