

IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA AT ERNAKULAM
PRESENT
THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE ANIL K.NARENDRAN
&
THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE MURALEE KRISHNA S.
Wednesday, the 23rd day of July 2025 / 1st Sravana, 1947

SSCR NO. 18 OF 2025

**IN THE MATTER OF TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD-SABARIMALA SPECIAL COMMISSIONER
REPORT-S.M.NO.18/2025-REPORT REGARDING THE PERMISSION GRANTED BY TRAVANCORE
DEVASWOM BOARD TO INSTALL A FIVE-PRECIOUS-METAL SACRED IDOL OF LORD AYYAPPA AT
SABARIMALA TEMPLE - SUO MOTU PROCEEDINGS INITIATED - REG**

PETITIONER:

SUO MOTU

RESPONDENT:

- 1. STATE OF KERALA,
REPRESENTED BY THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT,
REVENUE (DEVASWOM) DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM-695001**
- 2. THE TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD
REPRESENTED BY ITS SECRETARY NANTHANCODE ,
KAWDIAR POST, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695003**
- 3. THE DEVASWOM COMMISSIONER,
TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD, DEVASWOM BUILDINGS,
NANTHANCODE, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - PIN - 695003**
- 4. EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
SABARIMALA, SABARIMALA P.O., PATHANAMTHITTA -689662**
- 5. CHIEF VIGILANCE & SECURITY OFFICER (SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE),
TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM HEADQUARTERS, NANTHANCODE, KAWDIAR POST,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695003**

6. CHIEF POLICE COORDINATOR (ADDITIONAL DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE),
POLICE HEADQUARTERS, SABARIMALA,
PATHANAMTHITTA - PIN - 689713
7. DR. E.K. SAHADEVAN,
CHAIRMAN LOTUS HOSPITAL, 90, THAYUMANAVA SUNDARAM STREET,
POONDURAI MAIN ROAD, KOLLAMPALAYAM, ERODE - PIN - 638002

BY SRI.S.RAJMOHAN, SR. GOVERNMENT PLEADER

BY STANDING COUNSEL FOR TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD

BY SMT.SAYUJYA RADHAKRISHNAN, AMICUS CURIAE FOR
SABARIMALA SPECIAL COMMISSIONER

THIS SABARIMALA SPECIAL COMMISSIONER REPORT HAVING COME UP FOR
ORDERS AGAIN ON 23/07/2025, UPON PERUSING THE REPORT AND THIS COURT'S
ORDER DATED 18/07/2025, THE COURT ON THE SAME DAY PASSED THE FOLLOWING:



ANIL K. NARENDRA & MURALEE KRISHNA S., JJ.

SSCR No.18 of 2025

Dated this the 23rd day of July, 2025

ORDER

Anil K. Narendran, J.

The Special Commissioner, Sabarimala has filed this report regarding the permission granted by the Travancore Devaswom Board to the 7th respondent to install a Panchaloha Vighram of Lord Ayyappa in the premises of Sabarimala Sree Darma Sastha Temple.

2. On 17.07.2025, this Court passed a detailed order, which was followed by another order dated 18.07.2025.

3. Pursuant to the directions contained in the order dated 17.07.2025, Registry has issued notice to the 7th respondent through the e-mail ID provided in the pamphlet, which is enclosed along with the report of the Special Commissioner, Sabarimala. Despite the issuance of notice by e-mail, none appears for the 7th respondent.

4. Pursuant to the directions contained in the order of this Court dated 17.07.2025, the learned Standing Counsel for Travancore Devaswom Board has made available for the perusal of this Court, file No.ROC-5322/25/SAB regarding the permission

granted by the Board to the 7th respondent to install a Panchaloha Vighram of Lord Ayyappa in the premises of Sabarimala Sree Dharma Sastha Temple.

5. As discernible from the said files, the 7th respondent made a representation dated 21.05.2025 seeking permission to dedicate a Panchaloha Vighram of Lord Ayyappa at Sabarimala Sree Dharma Sastha Temple. Paragraph 2 of that representation reads thus:

"To honour these blessings and deepen our collective devotion, we have commissioned Artist and Sculptor J. Venkatesh, M.F.A., a world-record holder and founder of Kadugu Arts International Institute of Arts and Crafts, to craft a two-foot-tall, 150 kg sacred idol of Lord Ayyappa, fashioned from five precious metals, along with the traditional ceremonial paraphernalia. With utmost devotion, the artist will incorporate all seven divine energy chakras in perfect alignment within the idol. This creation is intended as a humble token of our faith and a permanent devotional gift to the Sabarimala Temple."

6. The said representation was considered vide Board Note dated 01.07.2025, wherein it is stated that though the Devaswom Commissioner was required to submit a report on the aforesaid representation made by the 7th respondent, vide letter No.ROC 16061/24/SAB dated 02.06.2024, no report was received. In the Board Note dated 01.07.2025, an endorsement is made by Sri.P.S. Prasanth, the President of the Travancore

Devaswom Board, on 01.07.2025, granting permission to the 7th respondent to install an idol of Lord Ayyappa at the Annadhana Mandapam at Sabarimala Sannidhanam and to direct the Executive Officer, Sabarimala, to do the needful. The said endorsement is approved by Sri.A. Ajikumar, the Member of Travancore Devaswom Board. However, in communication ROC No.55 dated 04.07.2025 of the Secretary of the Board addressed to the Executive Officer, Sabarimala, is to the effect that the Board has decided to grant permission to the 7th respondent to install the idol of Lord Ayyappa at the temple premises without causing any kind of hindrance to the structure and rituals of the temple.

7. The files do not show as to whether the opinion of the Tantri of Sabarimala Sree Dharma Sastha Temple was taken before granting permission to the 7th respondent to install an idol of Lord Ayyappa in the premises of the temple. Admittedly, the decision taken on 01.07.2025, vide a Board Note, is without awaiting the report of the Devaswom Commissioner. We deprecate in the strongest words the casual approach of the Board while considering the request made by the 7th respondent for installation of an idol of Lord Ayyappa in the premises of Sabarimala Sree Dharma Sastha Temple.

8. Having considered the pleadings and materials on record and also the submissions made at the Bar, we deem it appropriate to stay the operation of the decision taken by the Travancore Devaswom Board vide Board Note ROC No.5322/2025/ Sab dated 01.07.2025 and also communication ROC No.55 dated 04.07.2025 issued by the Secretary of the Board and all further proceedings pursuant thereto, for a period of one month.

9. The learned Senior Government Pleader, on instructions from the 6th respondent Chief Police Coordinator, Sabarimala, would submit that substantial amounts have already been credited into the Bank account mentioned in the pamphlet published by the 7th respondent. In the absence of any complaint by the concerned officer of the Travancore Devaswom Board, the police have not registered a crime regarding unauthorised collection of money based on the pamphlet published by the 7th respondent, which forms part of the report filed by the Special Commissioner, Sabarimala.

10. Since the concerned officer of the Travancore Devaswom Board is yet to file a complaint regarding the aforesaid incident, before the Station House Officer, Pamba Police Station, we deem it appropriate to direct the 6th respondent Chief Police Coordinator, Sabarimala, to take necessary steps to ensure that a crime is

registered in connection with the said incident and that appropriate measures are taken to ensure that the amount credited in the account referred to in the pamphlet is not withdrawn by the 7th respondent or any person connected with Rotary Freedom India Trust.

11. Registry to keep the files handed over by the learned Standing Counsel for Travancore Devaswom Board in the safe custody of Registrar (Judicial).

12. An affidavit sworn to by the Secretary of the Travancore Devaswom Board shall be placed on record within a week.

13. Since there is no response to the notice sent to the 7th respondent by e-mail, Registry to issue fresh notice to the 7th respondent, by speed post, returnable by 04.08.2025.

List on 04.08.2025.

Sd/-
ANIL K. NARENDHAN, JUDGE

Sd/-
MURALEE KRISHNA S., JUDGE

DSV/-