

IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA AT ERNAKULAM

PRESENT

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE ANIL K.NARENDRAN

&

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE P.G. AJITHKUMAR

WEDNESDAY, THE 12TH DAY OF JANUARY 2022 / 22ND POUSHA,
1943

SSCR NO. 3 OF 2022

PETITIONER:

SUO MOTU

RESPONDENTS:

- 1 THE TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD
REPRESENTED BY ITS SECRETARY, NANTHANCODE,
KAWDIAR POST, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM-695003.
- 2 DEVASWOM COMMISSIONER,
TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD, NANTHANCODE,
KAWDIAR POST, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM-695003.
- 3 STATE OF KERALA
REPRESENTED BY THE CHIEF SECRETARY TO
GOVERNMENT, GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM-695001.
- 4 B.MADHUSOODHANAN NAIR
(BHANDARAM SPECIAL OFFICER SABARIMALA)
DEPUTY DEVASWOM COMMISSIONER, DEPUTY DEVASWOM
COMMISSIONER OFFICE, FORT,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM-695023.
- 5 CHIEF VIGILANCE OFFICER
TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD, NANTHANCODE,
KAWDIAR POST, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM-695003.
BY ADVS.

SRI S RAJMOHAN- SR GOVERNMENT PLEADER ;
SRI N RAGHURAJ - AMICUS CURIAE ;
SRI G BIJU- STANDING COUNSEL- TRAVANCORE
DEVASWOM BOARD

THIS SABARIMALA SPECIAL COMMISSIONER REPORT HAVING
COME UP FOR ADMISSION ON 12.01.2022, THE COURT ON THE
SAME DAY DELIVERED THE FOLLOWING:

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ORDER

Anil K. Narendran, J

The Special Commissioner, Sabarimala has filed this report regarding theft of currency notes from the Bhandaram at Sabarimala Sannidhanam by an employee engaged in Sabarimala duty.

2. As per the report, on 08.01.2022 at 12.45 hrs, an employee named Unnikrishnan, Palliyarakkavu Devaswom Kazhakam, Changanassery, Kottayam, Kerala, who was engaged in counting currency notes of the Bhandaram at Sabarimala Sannidhanam committed theft of Rs.3500/- and was apprehended by the Vigilance wing of the Travancore Devaswom Board. Crime No.1 of 2022 of Sannidhanam Police Station has already been registered against him, under Section 381 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 and he is remanded on judicial custody.

3. Heard the learned counsel, who represented the learned Standing Counsel for the Travancore Devaswom Board, the learned Senior Government Pleader and also the learned Amicus Curiae for the Special Commissioner, Sabarimala.

4. Regarding alleged theft of currency notes from the

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Bhandaram at Sabarimala, by an employee engaged in Bhandaram duty, on 16.12.2021, the Special Commissioner has filed SSCR No.19 of 2021, in which we passed an order dated 21.12.2021. Paragraph 4 to 7 of that order reads thus:

"4. It is stated in the report of the Special Commissioner that there are CCTV cameras inside the Bhandaram for surveillance of the employees and the Vigilance Wing monitors the activities inside Bhandaram by watching the CCTV visuals. Apart from that, police constables from Armed Police Battalion are posted inside the Bhandaram to keep a close watch of the employees and the whole process is supervised by the Bhandaram Special Officer.

5. During the course of arguments, the learned Standing Counsel for Travancore Devaswom Board would submit that, based on the reports of the Bhandaram Special Officer and also the Executive Officer, Sabarimala, the Devaswom Commissioner has already taken prompt action by placing the concerned employee under suspension, pending disciplinary proceedings.

6. The learned Senior Government Pleader would submit that crime has already been registered at Sannidhanam Police Station, as Crime No.2 of 2021, for offence punishable under Section 381 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, and the employee has been remanded to judicial custody.

7. Having considered the report of the Special Commissioner and also the submissions made by the

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learned Standing Counsel for Travancore Devaswom Board, the learned Senior Government Pleader and also the learned Amicus Curiae for the Special Commissioner, Sabarimala, we deem it appropriate to direct the 4th respondent Bhandaram Special Officer, Sabarimala, and also the 5th respondent Chief Vigilance Officer to have constant vigil of the entire activity in the Bhandaram at Sabarimala Sannidhanam, in order to prevent any theft of money, offerings, etc., by the employees engaged for counting currency notes, coins, offerings, etc. Stringent action shall be taken against commission of any such offence by the employees. Such incidents shall be brought to the notice of the Special Commissioner, forthwith, who shall bring it to the notice of this Court by filing reports. The action taken against such employees shall also be brought to the notice of the Special Commissioner, so as to enable him to file proper reports before this Court."

5. Having considered the report of the Special Commissioner and also the submissions made by the learned Standing Counsel for Travancore Devaswom Board, the learned Senior Government Pleader and also the learned Amicus Curiae for the Special Commissioner, Sabarimala, we deem it appropriate to direct the 4th respondent Bhandaram Special Officer, Sabarimala, and also the 5th respondent Chief Vigilance Officer to have constant vigil of the entire activity in the

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Bhandaram at Sabarimala Sannidhanam, in terms of the direction contained in the order dated 21.12.2021 in S.S.C.R.No.19 of 2021, in order to prevent any theft of money, offerings, etc., by the employees engaged for counting currency notes, coins, offerings, etc. Stringent action shall be taken against commission of any such offence by the employees.

6. The action taken against the employee in question shall be brought to the notice of the Special Commissioner, so as to enable him to file report before this Court.

With the above direction, this report is disposed of.

Sd/-
ANIL K.NARENDRA
JUDGE

Sd/-
P.G. AJITHKUMAR
JUDGE

PV