

IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA AT ERNAKULAM  
PRESENT  
THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE ANIL K.NARENDRAN  
&  
THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE G.GIRISH

Wednesday, the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of January 2024 / 13th Pousha, 1945  
SSCR NO. 41 OF 2023

IN THE MATTER OF TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD - SABARIMALA SPECIAL COMMISSIONER  
REPORT-SM.NO.41/2023-REPORT SUBMITTED BY THE SPECIAL COMMISSIONER, SABARIMALA  
REGARDING CERTAIN ASPECTS CONCERNING CROWD MANAGEMENT WITH REFERENCE TO THE  
DEFICIENCY IN THE FASTAG PARKING FEES COLLECTION POINT AND VEHICLE PARKING AT  
NILAKKAL AND DEPLOYMENT OF PERSONNEL AT PARKING GROUNDS TO ARRANGE PARKING OF  
VEHICLES-SUO MOTU PROCEEDINGS INITIATED- 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, PIN - 695001
2. THE TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD  
REPRESENTED BY ITS SECRETARY, NANTHANCODE, KAWDIAR POST,  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695003
3. THE DEVASWOM COMMISSIONER  
TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD, DEVASWOM BUILDINGS, NANTHANCODE,  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695005
4. THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER, SABARIMALA,  
PAMPA TRIVENI P.O., PATHANAMTHITTA, PIN - 689670



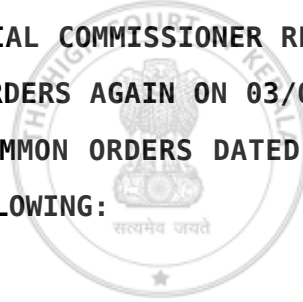
**\*ADDITIONAL R5 TO R7 IMPEADED**

5. THE DISTRICT POLICE CHIEF,  
PATHANAMTHITTA
6. THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR, PATHANAMTHITTA
7. THE ICICI BANK,  
T.K.ROAD, ABAN ARCADE, PATHANAMTHITTA, KERALA-689645,  
REPRESENTED BY ITS AUTHORIZED OFFICER

**\*ARE SUO MOTU IMPEADED AS ADDITIONAL RESPONDENTS 5 TO 7 VIDE  
ORDER DATED 04/12/2023 IN SSCR 41/2023**

**BY SRI.S.RAJMOHAN, SR.GOVERNMENT PLEADER  
BY STANDING COUNSEL FOR TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD  
BY SRI.N.RAGHURAJ, AMICUS CURIAE FOR SABARIMALA SPECIAL  
COMMISSIONER**

**THIS SABARIMALA SPECIAL COMMISSIONER REPORT ALONG WITH CONNECTED  
CASES HAVING COME UP FOR ORDERS AGAIN ON 03/01/2024, UPON PERUSING THE  
REPORT AND THIS COURT'S COMMON ORDERS DATED 25/12/2023, THE COURT ON  
THE SAME DAY PASSED THE FOLLOWING:**



**ANIL K. NARENDRAN & G. GIRISH, JJ.**

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**SSCR Nos.29, 36 and 41 of 2023**  
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**Dated this the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of January, 2024  
(10.15 a.m.)**

**ORDER**

**Anil K. Narendran, J.**

The District Police Chief, District Police Office, Collectorate P.O., Kottayam-686 002 and the District Police Chief, District Police Office, Civil Station, Idukki-685 603 are suo motu impleaded as additional respondents 30 and 31 in SSCR No.29 of 2023.

2. Registry to carry out necessary corrections in the cause title.

3. The learned Senior Government Pleader enters appearance for additional respondents 30 and 31.

4. On 25.12.2023 when these matters came up for consideration, this Court passed a detailed order on crowd management at Sabarimala and at various places like Ponkunnam, Mundakayam, Pala, Kanjirappalli, Thirunakkara, Ettumanoor and Vaikom.

5. Today, when these matters are taken up for consideration, the learned Senior Government Pleader would submit that on 02.01.2024, 1,00,372 pilgrims had darshan at Sannidhanam. Today's Virtual-Q booking is 80,000 plus 10,000

spot booking.

6. Paragraph 24 of the order of this Court dated 20.01.2023 in SSCR No.23 of 2022 deals with crowd management and pilgrim facilities at Makarajyothi view points. Paragraphs 24 and 24.1 of the said order read thus;

**"24. Crowd management and pilgrim facilities in Makarajyothi view points:-** The District Collector, Idukki conducted an inspection on 12.01.2023, in order to ensure that proper facilities are provided to Sabarimala pilgrims at Makarajyothi view points in Idukki District. Insofar as Makarajyothi view points in Pathanamthitta District are concerned, the District Collector, Pathanamthitta and the District Police Chief, Pathanamthitta have conducted inspection on 13.01.2023 and issued necessary directions to strengthen the barricades at some view points, which have already been carried out. Ambulance facilities are provided in almost all view points, except Appachimedu and Neelimala. Sufficient drinking water facilities are provided in all Makarajyothi view points. On 13.01.2023 when this SSCR was taken up for consideration at 4.00 p.m., the learned Senior Government Pleader submitted that the District Collector, Pathanamthitta and the District Police Chief, Pathanamthitta have identified additional parking grounds at Angamuzhy in Seethathodu Grama Panchayat, where 500 vehicles can be parked. Parking places are identified at Chittar and Maniyar within Chittar Grama Panchayat, where 300 vehicles each can be parked. An additional parking place at Vadasserikkara has also been identified. By the order dated 13.01.2023 this Court directed the Secretary of Seethathodu Grama Panchayat and also the Secretary of Chittar Grama Panchayat to render necessary assistance to the

District Collector, Pathanamthitta and the District Police Chief, Pathanamthitta in providing additional parking facilities at Angamuzhy, Chittar and Maniyar. It was ordered that once the parking place at Nilakkal is full, the District Police shall divert the vehicles to the additional parking grounds identified and that the direction in this regard shall be made known to the pilgrims through the Public Address System at Nilakkal.

24.1. It is for the District Administration to ensure that proper facilities are provided to pilgrims at Makarajyothi view points in Idukki District and Pathanamthitta District on the Makarajyothi day. One week prior to the Makarajyothi day the concerned District Collector/District Police Chief shall conduct inspection of the view points, in order to ensure that the view points are provided with proper barricades to ensure the safety of the pilgrims, that ambulance facility is provided in view points except Apachimedu and Neelimala and that sufficient drinking water facility is provided in all view points. The District Collector, Pathanamthitta and the District Police Chief, Pathanamthitta shall identify additional parking grounds in Seethathode Grama Panchayat and Chittar Grama Panchayat for parking vehicles on Makarajyothi day. Once the parking grounds at Nilakkal are full, the District Police Chief shall divert the vehicles to the additional parking grounds."

7. The learned Senior Government Pleader and also the learned Standing Counsel for Travancore Devaswom Board seek time to get instructions on crowd management and pilgrim facilities at Makarajyothi view points.

8. By the order dated 06.12.2023 in SSCR No.41 of 2023, this Court directed the Travancore Devaswom Board to take

necessary steps to ensure that a second track of FASTag scanning/parking fee collection at Nilakkal is provided within a week. Today, the learned Standing Counsel for Travancore Devaswom Board would submit that the second track of FASTag scanning/parking fee collection provided at Nilakkal has become operational on 28.12.2023. The works relating to the second track of FASTag scanning/parking fee collection could be done only after the closure of the temple on 27.12.2023, after Mandalapooja.

9. The learned Standing Counsel for Travancore Devaswom Board would submit that the total capacity of the parking grounds at Nilakkal is around 8,000 vehicles. The parking fee is being collected through FASTag. After pointing out the total number of vehicles parked at the parking ground on various dates, the learned Standing Counsel would submit that there was underutilization of parking facilities at Nilakkal during the Mandala-Makaravilakku festival season, despite heavy footfall of the pilgrims at Sannidhanam.

10. An affidavit of the Secretary of the Board and the District Police Chief, Pathanamthitta on the above aspect shall be placed on record by 05.01.2024.

11. Having considered the submissions made at the Bar, we

deem it appropriate to direct the Travancore Devaswom Board and the District Police Chief, Pathanamthitta to ensure that maximum number of vehicles are parked at the Devaswom parking grounds at Nilakkal.

12. The learned Amicus Curiae, on instructions from the Special Commissioner, Sabarimala, would submit that there is shortage of drinking water and light refreshments near U-turn and S-valavu. The Travancore Devaswom Board has to deploy more number of volunteers/employees at those locations, especially during night hours.

13. Having considered the submissions made at the Bar, we deem it appropriate to direct the Travancore Devaswom Board to take immediate steps to deploy sufficient number of volunteers at U-turn and S-valavu, especially during night hours, and provide drinking water and light refreshments to the pilgrims stranded at those locations.

14. The additional 17<sup>th</sup> respondent Superintending Engineer, Kerala Water Authority, Public Health Circle, Pathanamthitta is directed to make provisions for adequate supply of drinking water at U-turn and S-valavu, in consultation with the Travancore Devaswom Board.

SSCR Nos.29, 36 and 41 of 2023

List today (03.01.2024) at 3.00 p.m.

Sd/-

**ANIL K. NARENDRAN, JUDGE**

Sd/-

**G. GIRISH, JUDGE**

AV/3/1

