



2024:KER:85114

IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA AT ERNAKULAM

PRESENT

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE ANIL K. NARENDRAN

&

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE MURALEE KRISHNA S.

THURSDAY, THE 14TH DAY OF NOVEMBER 2024 / 23RD KARTHIKA, 1946

SSCR NO. 80 OF 2024

(IN THE MATTER OF TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD - SABARIMALA
SPECIAL COMMISSIONER REPORT - SM.NO.80/2024 - REPORT
SUBMITTED BY THE SPECIAL COMMISSIONER, SABARIMALA BASED ON
THE REPORT OF CHIEF VIGILANCE AND SECURITY OFFICER ,
TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD , THIRUVANATHAPURAM REGARDING
ALLOWING THE MEDIA PERSONS HAVING ACCREDITATION TO REPORT THE
MATTERS AT SABARIMALA- SUO MOTU PROCEEDINGS INITIATED -REG:.)

PETITIONER:

SUO MOTU

RESPONDENTS:

- 1 STATE OF KERALA
REPRESENTED BY THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY TO
GOVERNMENT, REVENUE (DEVASWOM) DEPARTMENT,
GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM-695001
- 2 SENIOR DEPUTY DIRECTOR
STATE AUDIT DEPARTMENT, TRAVANCORE DEVASOM BOARD
AUDIT, NANTHANCODE, KAWDIAR POST ,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM -695003
- 3 THE TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD
REPRESENTED BY ITS SECRETARY, NANTHANCODE, KAWDIAR
POST, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM -695003



2024:KER:85114

- 4 DEVASWOM COMMISSIONER
TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD, DEVASWOM BUILDINGS,
NANTHANCODE, THIRUVANNATHAPURAM-695005
- 5 THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER
SABARIMALA, SABARIMALA P.O., PATHAMATHITTA-689662
- 6 CHIEF VIGILANCE & SECURITY OFFICER (SUPERINTENDENT
OF POLICE)
TRAVACORE DEVASWOM HEAD QUARTERS, NANTHANCODE,
KAWDIAR POST, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM -695003
- 7 THE CHIEF POLICE CO-ORDINATOR (ADDITIONAL DIRECTOR
GENERAL OF POLICE (POLICE HEAD QUARTERS))
SANNIDHANAM, SABARIMALA, PATHANAMTHITTA, PIN-689713

OTHER PRESENT:

SRI. S. RAJMOHAN, SR. GP;
SRI. G. BIJU, SC, TDB,
SMT. SAYUJYA RADHAKRISHNAN, AMICUS CURIAE

THIS SABARIMALA SPECIAL COMMISSIONER REPORT HAVING COME
UP FOR ADMISSION ON 14.11.2024, THE COURT ON THE SAME DAY
DELIVERED THE FOLLOWING:



2024:KER:85114

ORDER

Anil K. Narendran, J.

The Special Commissioner, Sabarimala has filed this report regarding stay of media persons at Sabarimala, in connection with Maasapoojas and Mandala-Makaravilakku festival season of 1200ME (2024-25).

2. The earlier report, i.e., SSCR No.19 of 2024 filed by the Special Commissioner, Sabarimala, was disposed of by order dated 22.10.2024, based on Annexure R3(a) Board order dated 11.09.2024, whereby the Travancore Devaswom Board was directed to follow the guidelines contained in that Board order, which was extracted in paragraph 4 of the affidavit dated 09.10.2024 sworn to by the Secretary of the Board, in letter and spirit, during Mandala-Makaravilakku festival season of 1200ME (2024-25).

3. In this report, which is one filed based on a report dated 13.11.2024 of the 6th respondent Chief Vigilance and



2024:KER:85114

Security Officer (Superintendent of Police), the Special Commissioner has suggested that the Board may be directed to issue identity cards for media persons on a written recommendation of the Head of a print media having registration with Registrar of Newspapers of India or visual media having licence with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, based on the recommendation of the 6th respondent Chief Vigilance and Security Officer (Superintendent of Police).

4. When this matter came up for consideration at 12.30 p.m., on a query made by this Court, the learned Standing Counsel for the Travancore Devaswom Board submitted that the keys of all donor rooms, including the rooms allotted to media persons during previous Mandala-Makaravilakku festival season and Maasapoojas are with the 5th respondent Executive Officer, Sabarimala. The learned Senior Government Pleader sought time to get instructions from the 7th respondent Chief Police Co-ordinator and accordingly the matter was directed to be listed at 2.00 p.m.



2024:KER:85114

for further consideration.

5. Heard the learned Senior Government Pleader for respondents 1, 2 and 7, the learned Standing Counsel for Travancore Devaswom Board for respondents 3 to 6 and the learned Amicus Curiae for Special Commissioner, Sabarimala.

6. The learned Senior Government Pleader, on instructions from the 7th respondent Chief Police Co-ordinator would submit that the suggestion made by the Special Commissioner, Sabarimala, based on the report dated 13.11.2024 of the 6th respondent Chief Vigilance and Security Officer (Superintendent of Police), can be accepted.

7. The learned Senior Government Pleader would point out the stand taken in the affidavit dated 29.08.2024 filed by the 7th respondent Chief Police Co-ordinator in SSCR No.19 of 2024, which has been quoted in paragraph 20 of that order. Sabarimala and its vicinity are declared as a 'Special Security Zone' under Section 83(1) of the Kerala Police Act, 2011, in order to exercise the powers under Section 83(2) of the said Act, to ensure a safe, secure and hassle-free pilgrimage.



2024:KER:85114

Having considered the pleadings and materials on record and also the submissions made at the Bar, we deem it appropriate to dispose of this SSCR, accepting the suggestion made by the Special Commissioner, Sabarimala, based on the report dated 13.11.2024 of the 6th respondent Chief Vigilance and Security Officer (Superintendent of Police). Accordingly, the Board is directed to issue identity cards for media persons on a written recommendation by the Head of a print media having registration with Registrar of Newspapers of India or Visual Media having licence with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, based on the recommendation of the 6th respondent Chief Vigilance and Security Officer (Superintendent of Police). Subject to the availability of accommodation facilities at Pranavam Guest House and Darshan Complex, persons holding the identity card issued by the Board alone shall be accommodated in the allotted room, who has to act as the reporter of that print media or visual media. No other person shall be permitted to occupy the allotted room. Persons holding identity cards alone shall be



2024:KER:85114

permitted to remain at Sannidhanam, since the entry of pilgrims to Sabarimala is regulated by Virtual-Q booking and spot booking, against available slots.

Sd/-

ANIL K. NARENDRAN, JUDGE

Sd/-

MURALEE KRISHNA S., JUDGE

MIN