



IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA AT ERNAKULAM

PRESENT

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE S.MANU

TUESDAY, THE 21ST DAY OF APRIL 2026 / 1ST VAISAKHA, 1948

WP(C) NO. 15564 OF 2026

PETITIONER:

**STATE OF KERALA, REPRESENTED BY ITS SECRETARY TO
GOVERNMENT
REVENUE (DEVASWOM) DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT
SECRETARIAT, STATUE, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN -
695001**

BY ADV GOVERNMENT PLEADER

RESPONDENTS:

- 1 ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA, REPRESENTED BY ITS
SECRETARY NIRVACHAN SADAN, ASHOKA ROAD,
NEW DELHI., PIN - 110001**
- 2 THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER, KERALA
KERALA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMPLEX, VIKAS
BHAVAN P.O., THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695 033.**
- 3 COCHIN DEVASWOM BOARD, REPRESENTED BY ITS
SECRETARY
ROUND NORTH THRISSUR. PIN:680 001**

**SRI AJITH VISHWANATHAN, GP
SRI K P SUDHEER, SC, SRI M AJAY, SC**

**THIS WRIT PETITION (CIVIL) HAVING COME UP FOR
ADMISSION ON 21.04.2026, THE COURT ON THE SAME DAY
DELIVERED THE FOLLOWING:**



J U D G M E N T

(Dated this the 21st day of April, 2026)

This writ petition is filed by the State of Kerala represented by the Secretary, Revenue (Devaswom) Department. The prayer in this writ petition is for a direction to respondents 1 and 2 to permit the Minister for Devaswom to convene a meeting for ascertaining the preparatory works and other measures in connection with the Thrissur Pooram to be held on 26.04.2026 and 27.04.2026. The writ petition has been filed as the Model Code of Conduct for the general elections to the State Assembly remains in force.

2. It is stated that the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala scheduled a meeting on 16.03.2026 to discuss the arrangements for Thrissur Pooram, and while so, on 15.03.2026, the Model Code of Conduct was enforced in the State. Therefore, the meeting scheduled on 16.03.2026 could not be convened by the Hon'ble Chief Minister. Instead, a meeting was conducted by the Chief Secretary to the Government. It is also submitted that it is necessary to convene a meeting presided by the Minister of Devaswom to co-ordinate various departments of Government and to address all relevant issues. Ext P1 request was submitted by



the petitioner to the 2nd respondent on 17.04.2026 seeking permission to conduct a meeting. However, there was no response from the 2nd respondent and the pooram festival is scheduled to be held on 26.04.2026 and 27.04.2026. Therefore, the State Government approached this Court in this writ petition.

3. I have heard the learned Government Pleader for the petitioner and the learned Standing Counsel for respondents 1 and 2. The learned Standing Counsel for the 3rd respondent (Devaswom board) was also heard.

4. The learned Government Pleader pointed out Ext.P2 order passed on 19.11.2025 by a Division Bench of this Court in SSCR No.37 of 2025. He submitted that the said order was passed by a Division Bench of this Court when the Model Code of Conduct for the local body elections was in force. The Division Bench permitted the Devaswom Minister to convene a meeting for the proper coordination of all activities relating to the Sabarimala pilgrimage. However, the Division Bench further directed that the Minister shall strictly refrain from making statements to the media or engaging in any form of election-related canvassing. He further submitted that the Government proposes to hold a meeting on 23.04.2026, to be



presided over by the Devaswom Minister if this Court permits the same.

5. The learned Standing Counsel for the respondents 1 and 2 stoutly opposed the prayer of the State Government. He submitted that the Election Commission of India has already permitted the Chief Secretary to Government of Kerala to hold a review meeting in connection with Thrissur Pooram. He submitted that the Chief Secretary had effectively convened a meeting and taken all appropriate actions required for the effective and peaceful conduct of the Pooram festival. He added that presence of the Devaswom Minister is not required for the said purpose. He pointed out that the Modal Code of Conduct is enforced with a purpose and permitting the Minister to convene a meeting will be against the spirit of enforcement of the Modal Code of Conduct. He also submitted that permitting a political leader to convene meeting when the code of conduct is in force will give a different perception and therefore, the writ petition may not be allowed. The learned Standing Counsel for the 3rd respondent supported the request of the State Government and submitted that it is essential to convene a meeting presided by the Minister for Devaswom to ensure proper preparations, co-ordination and effective and



peaceful conduct of the pooram festival.

6. I have considered the rival submissions.

7. No doubt, the proper and peaceful conduct of the Pooram festival is a matter of concern. The learned Government Pleader submitted that there has been a practice for years whereby the Devaswom Minister convenes a meeting of all concerned at Thrissur prior to the Pooram festival to ensure that the Pooram festival is conducted in a proper manner. He submitted that convening of such a meeting is essential and the presence of the Minister for Devaswom would ensure proper participation and co-ordination of all concerned. He also submitted that the Minister would not involve in any press briefing or making public statements in connection with the meeting or regarding the pooram festival. He also submitted that the meeting can be convened without affecting the duties of any officers connected with the conduct of election process.

8. In view of the permission granted by the Division Bench of this Court in Ext.P2 order dated 19.11.2025 in SSCR No. 37 of 2025 in connection with the Sabarimala Pilgrimage, I am of the view that a similar direction can be passed in the instant writ petition also. Therefore, this writ petition is



allowed. The Minister for Devaswom is permitted to convene a meeting on 23.04.2026 at Thrissur for ascertaining the preparatory works and ensuring proper coordination of all concerned in connection with the Thrissur Pooram. In view of the fact that the Model Code of Conduct is in force, the Minister for Devaswom is required to refrain from interacting with the media and making any public statements with regard to the discussions held in the meeting and also about the conduct of the Pooram festival. It is also directed that the 2nd respondent or his representative shall be permitted to attend the meeting to ensure that no violation of the Model Code of Conduct takes place. It is further directed that the conduct of the meeting on 23.04.2026 shall not affect the duties of any officers associated with the general election.

With the above direction, this writ petition is disposed of.

Sd/-
S.MANU
JUDGE

AKH



APPENDIX OF WP(C) NO. 15564 OF 2026

PETITIONER EXHIBITS

Exhibit P1 **TRUE COPY OF COMMUNICATION ISSUED BY THE PETITIONER TO THE 2ND RESPONDENT ON 17.04.2026 VIDE LETTER BEARING NO.DEV-A1/90/2026-REV-PART(1).**

Exhibit P2 **TRUE COPY OF THE ORDER DATED 19.11.2025 PASSED IN SSCR NO.37/2025.**