IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA AT ERNAKULAM

PRESENT

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE RAJA VIJAYARAGHAVAN V

&

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE K. V. JAYAKUMAR

FRIDAY, THE 6TH DAY OF NOVEMBER 2026 / 15TH KARTHIKA, 1948

DBAR NO. 1 OF 2026

PETITIONER:

THE JOINT DIRECTOR
KERALA STATE AUDIT DEPARTMENT, TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD, NANDANCODE, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695003

BY ADVS.
GOVERNMENT PLEADER
SHRI.K.R.SUNIL, SPL.GP (DEVASWOM)

RESPONDENT:

THE SECRETARY
TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD, NANTHANCODE, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695003

BY ADVS.
SRI. G.BIJU, SC, TDB,
SRI. K.R. SUNIL - SPL.GP (DEVASWOM) ;
SMT. SAYUJYA RADHAKRISHNAN, AMICUS CURIAE;
SRI. RAJESH A- SPL.GP (VACB)

THIS DEVASWOM BOARD AUDIT REPORT HAVING COME UP FOR FINAL HEARING ON 06.11.2026, ALONG WITH SSCR.3/2026, THE COURT ON THE SAME DAY DELIVERED THE FOLLOWING:

IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA AT ERNAKULAM

PRESENT

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE RAJA VIJAYARAGHAVAN V

&

THE HONOURABLE MR.JUSTICE K. V. JAYAKUMAR

FRIDAY, THE 6TH DAY OF NOVEMBER 2026 / 15TH KARTHIKA, 1948

SSCR NO. 3 OF 2026

IN THE MATTER OF TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD - SABARIMALA SPECIAL COMMISSIONER REPORT - S.M. NO. 3/2026 - REPORT SUBMITTED BY THE SPECIAL COMMISSIONER, SABARIMALA REGARDING MISAPPROPRIATION OF MONEY IN GHEE SALE COUNTER - SUO MOTU PROCEEDINGS INITIATED - REG

PETITIONER:

SUO MOTU

RESPONDENTS:

1 **STATE OF KERALA**
REPRESENTED BY SECRETARY, REVENUE (DEVASWOM)
DEPARTMENT, GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT,
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695001

2 **THE CHIEF POLICE CO-ORDINATOR**
ADGP (HQ), SANNIDHANAM, SABARIMALA,
PATHANAMTHITTA - 689713

3 TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD
REPRESENTED BY ITS SECRETARY, NANTHANCODE KAWDIAR POST, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 695 003

4 DEVASWOM COMMISSIONER
TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD, NANTHANCODE, KAWDIAR POST, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN-695 003

5 EXECUTIVE OFFICER
SABARIMALA, SABARIMALA P.O., PATHANAMTHITTA-689 662

6 THE CHIEF VIGILANCE AND SECURITY OFFICER
(SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE)
TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM HEAD QUARTERS, NANTHANCODE, KAWDIAR POST, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, PIN - 695003

ADDL R7 THE DIRECTOR
VIGILANCE & ANTI-CORRUPTION BUREAU, OPPOSITE KSRTC DEPOT, VIKAS BHAVAN, PMG, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM – 33

(IS SUO MOTU IMPLEADED AS ADDL.R7 AS PER ORDER DATED 13.01.2026)

BY ADVS.
SHRI.G.BIJU,SC,TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD
SRI.RAJESH A., SPL. G.P. (VIGILANCE AND ANTI CORRUPTION BUREAU)
SMT. SAYUJYA RADHAKRISHNAN, AMICUS CURIAE
SHRI.K.R.SUNIL, SPL.GP (DEVASWOM)

THIS SABARIMALA SPECIAL COMMISSIONER REPORT HAVING COME UP FOR FINAL HEARING ON 06.11.2026, ALONG WITH DBAR.1/2026, THE COURT ON THE SAME DAY DELIVERED THE FOLLOWING:

O R D E R

[SSCR No. 3 of 2026 & DBAR No. 1 of 2026]

Raja Vijayaraghavan V, J.

SSCR No. 3 of 2026 has been filed by the Sabarimala Special Commissioner concerning the detection by the Devaswom Vigilance of serious instances of criminal misappropriation of the sale proceeds of "Adiya Sishtam Ghee" at various counters at Sannidhanam.

2. Devaswom Board Audit Report No. 1 of 2026 has been filed by the Joint Director of the Kerala State Audit Department, Travancore Devaswom Board Audit Wing, pursuant to the verification of Abhisheka Neyy Prasadam (Adiya Sishtam Ghee) conducted during the 1201 M.E Mandalam and Makaravilakku Festivals at Sabarimala.

3. The learned Standing Counsel appearing for the Travancore Devaswom Board has brought to our notice the proceedings of the Devaswom Board dated 10.09.2026, wherein the various measures proposed and adopted by the Board to prevent the recurrence of such incidents have been detailed.

4. We find that specific directions have been issued to ensure that the Assistant Temple Special Officers and the employees engaged at the counters for the sale of "Adiya Sishtam Ghee" are made fully aware of their respective duties and responsibilities. The Board has also decided to clearly define the duty hours of the employees and specify the timings during which they are required to be deployed at the respective counters. It has further been decided that inexperienced officers shall not be entrusted with the responsibilities of Special Officers or deployed at the counters. Another important measure is the segregation of duties, whereby the issuance of tickets and the distribution of ghee will be entrusted to separate wings of officers and employees. This is intended to ensure accountability and minimise the possibility of manipulation in the transactions.

5. One of the most significant decisions taken by the Devaswom Board is to introduce a scientific system for measuring the quantity of ghee available in the storage tanks. This would enable the Board to accurately ascertain the stock available at any given point of time, account for every transaction and reconcile the quantity of ghee received, stored and distributed with the sale proceeds. We are informed that scientific measures have already been initiated for this purpose.

Such a system is essential to eliminate discrepancies in stock accounting and ensure that the entire quantity of ghee is properly accounted for.

6. The Board has also decided to ascertain the precise quantity of ghee flowing through the pipelines to the packing machines and to install digital flow meters for this purpose. Further, the income and expenditure registers, stock registers and other relevant records are required to be maintained strictly in accordance with the prescribed procedures. Frequent physical verification of the stock is also contemplated. Any loss, wastage or damage to the ghee shall be properly quantified and recorded in the relevant registers, so that no discrepancy remains unexplained or unaccounted for.

7. The Board has decided that the timings of shift changes and transfers of stock between employees shall be properly recorded in the relevant registers. The entire process relating to the preparation, storage, accounting and distribution of ghee is proposed to be computerised. The Board has also decided to introduce digital tracking measures, including the imprinting of batch numbers, packing dates and QR codes on the packages. The steel storage tanks and the vessels used for drawing ghee from the tanks will be duly calibrated to ensure

accuracy in measurement. CCTV cameras are also proposed to be installed at all the counters to facilitate continuous monitoring and prevent unauthorised activities. In addition, transaction tracking mechanisms and individual login credentials will be provided to all employees engaged in the online booking and distribution portals, thereby ensuring traceability of each transaction and fixing individual responsibility for the activities undertaken.

8. Having carefully perused the proceedings of the Devaswom Board dated 10.09.2026, we are satisfied that the measures contemplated therein address the major deficiencies in the existing system and are intended to strengthen transparency, accountability and financial discipline in the sale and distribution of "Adiya Sishtam Ghee". We particularly appreciate the decision to introduce scientific measurement systems, digital monitoring, computerised stock management and individual transaction tracking. These measures, if properly implemented, would substantially reduce the scope for manipulation and ensure that the revenue generated from the sale of this sacred offering is duly accounted for and safeguarded.

9. We accordingly direct the Travancore Devaswom Board to ensure

that all the measures detailed in its proceedings dated 10.09.2026 are implemented strictly and in their entirety. The Board shall ensure that the necessary technological and administrative arrangements are put in place and that the officers and employees concerned are made fully accountable for their respective duties. The entire exercise shall be completed before the commencement of the ensuing pilgrimage season 2026-27. The Board shall also ensure that the systems introduced are subjected to regular monitoring and verification so that incidents of this nature do not recur.

Accordingly, this DBAR and SSCR are closed.

Sd/-
RAJA VIJAYARAGHAVAN V,
JUDGE

Sd/-
K.V. JAYAKUMAR,
JUDGE

APM