

'Government Department Poking Nose into Pilgrim Affairs'

SABARIMALA: The Travancore Devaswom Employees Union has said that vested interests in government departments have hatched a conspiracy to sabotage the Sabarimala pilgrimage.

Addressing a news conference here on Tuesday, union president K P Madhusudanan Pillai and general secretary Mannar Vijayakumar said that the government departments, including the Home, Forests, Revenue and Pollution Control Board, were deliberately interfering in pilgrim matters to disrupt the smooth conduct of the pilgrimage.

Even the implementation of the projects cleared by the Sabarimala high-powered committee, set up under the order of the Kerala High Court, were affected due to the unwarranted and unfair interference of the government departments, they said.

The Food Safety personnel were sending samples of the 'nivedyam' and 'aravana' prepared for offering the deity, for lab analysis hurting the sentiments of devotees, they said.

They conduct checks and collect samples at the annadanamandapam, while the private hotels that supply overpriced and low quality food were exempted from such tests.

The Union sought formulation of schemes by the TDB taking into consideration the long-term needs of the Sabarimala pilgrimage, they said.

The Devaswom Employees Union also sought mechanisation of the production of aravana and appam, they said.

The union stressed the immediate need for upgrading accommodation facilities for employees on Sabarimala special duty and supply of quality food.