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Press Release

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A Call of Duty Spanning 29 Years

If Lord Ayyappa desires to create a police force exclusively for Sabarimala, the name of N Vijayakumar without doubt would feature in that line up. In the past, though several officers have served at Sannidanam during the festival season on many occasions, the number of those who have rendered selfless service and undertook duties with utmost dedication is less. Superintendent of Police N Vijayakumar, the current Special Officer at Sannidanam is one of them. As a police officer, he reckons his association with Sabarimala that spans 29 years as a call of duty by none other than Lord Ayyappa. Right from his career in Kerala Police as sub-inspector to the present position of superintendent of police, he had on many occasions requested authorities of his department to assign him with Sabarimala duty.

Vijayakumar takes special interest in translating his qualities of dedication and selfless service to his colleagues and in the process helps them to acquire the desired traits best suited for a police person serving in Sabarimala. Over the years, he has become an endearing personality not just among his colleagues but also among officials of other government departments, organizations, traders, priests, devaswom workers and pilgrims. Vijayakumar will never let pass an opportunity to serve Lord Ayyappa and considers each one of them as a means to better his previous endeavors. With an experience of 29

years behind him, and with the kind of confidence he possesses, Vijayakumar strives to go the extra mile in implementing necessary security measures with changing times. The man, who had witnessed a cross section of pilgrims, faced unprecedented security challenges and worked with colleagues of different psyche and personality, is in the process of completing his 29 years of service in Sabarimala as an offering to Lord Ayyappa.

Mandala pooja is only two days away and the Thanga Angi procession from Aranmula is scheduled to reach Sannidanam on 25th evening. Vijayakumar is fully aware of the situation and all required measures for security and for the smooth darshanam of Ayyappa for the pilgrims have been streamlined.

35,000 Sought Treatment at Sannidanam

This pilgrim season at Sabarimala saw 35,000 pilgrims seeking medical assistance from the homoeo and ayurveda healthcare centres functioning at Sannidanam. While 24,000 sought ayurvedic medical intervention, the homoeo centre registered cases numbering 11,000. The ayurveda centre at Sannidanam is served by Dr Subhash Narayanan, Dr K M Gokulan, Dr K Praveen, Dr K K Santosh, Dr Sivadas Menon and eight paramedic staff. Most of the cases registered at the ayurveda centre are related to cough, breathing difficulty and joint pain.

Pilgrims who sought treatment from the homoeo centre at Sannidanam mostly had problems related to stomach. There were also pilgrims in need of preventive medicines for chickenpox and conjunctivitis. The homoeo centre is managed by Dr S Abhilash, Dr Sunanda Kumar, two pharmacists and three attenders.

Mandalam Season: Inspection at Sannidanam Intensified

A total of Rs 12,500 was imposed as fine on various counts following inspection of hotels and sales outlets located at Sannidanam, Sabari Peetom, Saramkuthi and queue complex by a team led by Sannidanam Duty Magistrate. Traders were fined for selling goods in excess of the approved rates and also for non-adherence to quantity. Rs 2500 each was levied as fine from a person who was having necklaces meant for sale at the resting centre managed by him, located near the water tank at Pandi Thavalam and from another running a hotel at Sannidanam for non-compliance of food quantity. Owner of a hotel at Marakoottam was fined Rs 5000 for serving ghee roast that did not meet the prescribed quantity and also for selling Cola on excess rate. A tea-stall owner at Marakoottam was imposed a fine of Rs 2500 for selling tea at a price well above the prescribed one.

With Mandala pooja two days away, cleaning process at Sannidanam has gained momentum. Special squad has been formed to deal with hawkers dealing in necklaces and *pori* (roasted grain of corn). Nine groups comprising members of Sannidanam Sanitation Society is engaged in cleaning works.

The inspection was carried out by Duty Magistrate V Rajendran, assisted by Legal Metrology Inspector Joshi T J, Rationing Inspector M S Gopakumar, Village Officer Thulasi Raj, Health Inspector Sisupalan and Junior Superintendent P Shibu.