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**TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD
SABARIMALA**

PRESS RELEASE

Added Facilities to Traditional Route Pilgrims

A host of facilities await pilgrims arriving at Pamba via the traditional forest route from Erumeli via Azhutha, Mukkuzhi, Karimala and Valiyanavattom. The Travancore Devaswom Board is planning to provide special darshan at Sabarimala for pilgrims taking the hard traditional forest path, President, Prayar Gopalakrishnan said. These pilgrims, who reach the sannidanam would be permitted to climb the 18 holy steps through a special or virtual queue. The TDB president's decision to do so comes in the wake of his recent trek through the traditional forest path, which he undertook for understanding the hardships involved in the trek. Pilgrims reaching the top of Karimala after ascending a 33 km stretch would be issued special pass, enabling them to reach the holy steps through a special or a virtual queue. The pass would be issued by a high-level committee comprising TDB, Forest Department and police personnel. Mr.Gopalakrishnan trekked this path last year too, making him the first TDB president to do so.

Mr Gopalakrishnan also met Gurumoorthy Chettiyar Swami who had served rice porridge to him during his trek last year. Mr Gurumoorthy recalled how the president had taken the lead to set up a dedicated water connection for him to get drinking water, which helped him to prepare porridge to pilgrims. Two days prior to the current trek by the TDB president, Mr Gurumoorthy informed the president that he was not getting enough water at

Karimala hilltop and hence could not continue the *anna danam* for the past five days. Earlier, attempts by Gurumoorthy to secure water from wells did not succeed. In this context, directions have been given to provide water in huge tanks so that *anna danam* would not be affected. Drinking water provided by Forest Conservation Society and Eco Development Societies are providing great relief to the pilgrims.

The TDB president also directed to shift the oxygen parlour from Koyikkakavu to the location where the climb begins. He asked the police to prevent anti-social activities at Inchippara and Mukkuzhi where pick-pocketing cases have been reported due to poor light. Steps would be taken to open a medical centre and set up an oxygen parlour at the peak of Karimala.

Sannidhanam
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