



# Tension in Sabarimala persists, woman asked to show age proof

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**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM:** Kerala's Sabarimala continues to remain out of bounds for women of reproductive age (10 to 50 years) even as a special one-day pooja held at the hill temple on Tuesday concluded with a 52-year-old woman devotee being heckled by protesters in the morning after they suspected her to be below age. She was allowed in only after showing Aadhaar as age proof.

Lalitha who hails from Thrissur was mobbed by protesters near the 'nada pandal', the area just before devotees climb the 18 holy steps to reach the sanctum sanctorum. The protesters surrounded her clapping and chanting 'Ayyappa saranam' hymns and was allowed to proceed further only after verifying her age. The police later escorted her to safety. The protesters later apologised to her and led her to

**BJP STATE PRESIDENT SREEDHARAN PILLAI SAID HIS PARTY WILL MOVE THE NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION CITING SERIOUS VIOLATION OF RIGHTS IN SABARIMALA**

the temple for a darshan. Lalitha was later taken to a hospital after she complained of uneasiness. The police have filed a case against 200 protesters for obstructing her passage.

Reports said 12 other women pilgrims too were temporarily detained near the 'nada pandal'. The police, meanwhile, expressed their limitations in controlling angry protesters despite the heightened security in and around the shrine. At one point they even sought the help of RSS leader Valsan Thillankeri to pre-

vail over adamant protesters, according to media reports. Condemning the attack, chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan blamed right wing outfits for the ruckus. "Some forces affiliated to Sangh Parivar are trying to foil the communal fabric of the state. The government will sternly deal with troublemakers," he said.

BJP state president P S Sreedharan Pillai said his party will move the NHRC citing serious violation of rights in Sabarimala. "The state has never witnessed such violation of rights after the Emergency. Water connections were snapped and toilets were closed at hill top and base camps. Devotees were also denied the permit to travel in their vehicles," Pillai alleged.

Thousands of devotees trekked to the temple after it opened Monday for Sree Chithira Attathirunal pooja, an offering to honour the last king of the erstwhile Travancore dynasty Sree Chithira Tirunal Balarama Varma.



# BJP alleges human rights violation in Sabarimala



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BJP Kerala president P S Sreedharan Pillai on Tuesday alleged that the pilgrims reaching Sabarimala were denied rooms, drinking water, freedom of mobility and a peaceful darshan of Lord Ayyappa.

Speaking to media persons in Pathananthitta, Pillai said that the condition of devotees at Sabarimala is disastrous and their rights are being violated. They were not given facilities to conduct their primary needs like toilet facility and drinking water. Their freedom of mobility and a peaceful darshan of Lord

Ayyappa are also being curbed, he added.

He said the BJP has filed a complaint to the National Human Rights Commission regarding this human rights violation in Sabarimala.

RSS also alleged that there is a high degree of human rights violation in Sabarimala. RSS leader Valsanb Thillankery said that devotees who have thronged the hill shrine were not even allowed to conduct their primary needs.

He added that even drinking water supply was cut off to prevent devotees from staying back at Sannidhanam for conducting Neyyabhishekam.

It has been reported that drinking water amenities were not provided to the devotees and there was no water in the taps as water supply was cut off. It has also been reported that most of the toilets and washrooms at the Sannidhanam were also closed on Tuesday morning.