



Malfunction of musical fountain at Vazhani Dam triggers YC agitation

Seeks comprehensive vigilance inquiry into the quality of construction, contract procedures

M K SAJEEVKUMAR @Guruvayur

THE controversy surrounding the musical water fountain at Vazhani Dam has resurfaced after the installation — built at a cost of ₹6 crore from the MLA's Asset Development Fund — has remained non-functional for more than two years.

Alleging serious irregularities and corruption in the execution and implementation of the project, a Youth Congress team led by national secretary P N Vaishakh visited the site on Monday and demanded a vigilance investigation.

The delegation included Youth Congress leaders Aneesh Kandannattil and Thekkumkara panchayat members Maya Sunil, Sharath, and V J Jamal. After inspecting the site, the leaders alleged that the fountain's water jets, electrical systems, and control equipment had been left unused for years and were now rusting and deteriorating.

Speaking to the media after the visit, Vaishakh alleged that a project constructed with crores of rupees of public money had failed to provide any meaningful benefit. He demanded a comprehensive vigilance inquiry into the quality



Musical water fountain at Vazhani Dam in ruins | EXPRESS

₹6 crore

was utilised from the MLA's Asset Development Fund for the installation of the fountain. Local residents said the fountain never functioned consistently after its completion. Though it was reportedly operated on a trial basis on a few occasions, recurring technical failures prevented it from becoming operational.

of construction, contract procedures, procurement of equipment, and the expenditure incurred on the project. If public funds had been misused, action should be taken against the officials and contractors respon-

sible, he said.

The musical fountain was conceived as part of efforts to develop Vazhani Dam into a major tourism destination in the state. Designed with computer-controlled water jets synchronised to music, colourful lighting, and modern display systems, the project aimed to boost evening tourism and attract more visitors to the reservoir.

However, according to local residents, the fountain never functioned consistently after its completion. Though it was reportedly operated on a trial basis on a few occasions, recurring technical failures and maintenance issues prevented it from becoming operational.

The Youth Congress leaders claimed that several components of the installation have since deteriorated, while electrical equipment has also suffered extensive damage.

Vazhani Dam is not only an important irrigation and drinking water source but also a popular tourist attraction that draws thousands of visitors every year. Over the years, the government has introduced several tourism development initiatives at the site, with the musical fountain being projected as one of its flagship attractions. Its failure, however, has disappointed visitors and affected local businesses that had expected increased tourist footfall.

Residents have called for clarity on whether the project's failure resulted from technical flaws, poor maintenance, deficiencies in contract execution, or other administrative lapses.

Meanwhile, no official response has been issued by the departments concerned or the implementing agency regarding the allegations.

The Youth Congress leaders said they had sought explanations from the authorities and would make them public once received.

Hortus Malabaricus botanical garden, research institute opens Ayur Udhyan

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Thrissur

CHERUTHURUTHI-based Hortus Malabaricus Botanical Garden and Research Institute (HMBGRI) on Monday inaugurated Ayur Udhyan, a unique living sanctuary designed according to the principles of Ayurveda.

Ayurveda Medical Association of India (AMAI) president K S Vishnu Nampoothiry inaugurated the Udhyan, in the presence of distinguished Ayurveda scholars, academicians, researchers, and conservationists.

Developed as a first-of-its-kind experiential space, Ayur Udhyan seamlessly integrates the timeless wisdom of Ayurveda with biodiversity conservation, environmental stewardship, and scientific learning. The sanctuary showcases a curated collection of medicinal plants within a thoughtfully designed landscape that reflects the holistic philosophy of Ayurveda, offering visitors an immersive experience of nature's role in health and well-being.

Inspired by the classical principles of Ayurveda, Ayur Udhyan is laid out in the traditional Sarvadhobhadra design, thoughtfully recreating the three Ayur Deshas – Jangala (arid), Anoopaa (marshy), and Sadharana (moderate) – to provide ecologically appropriate



An aerial view of Ayur Udhyan

habitats for a diverse range of medicinal plants. The sanctuary features a carefully curated collection of medicinal species representing the Ashtangas (eight branches) of Ayurveda, alongside traditional terracotta installations celebrating India's rich medicinal plant heritage. It also showcases medicinal plants together with their classical substitutes (Pratinidhi Dravyas), illustrating an important concept in Ayurvedic pharmacology. In addition, Ayur Udhyan preserves plant collections associated with indigenous ethnomedicine, regional healing traditions, and the specialised Kerala disciplines of Visha Chikitsa (toxicology) and Marma Chikitsa (vital point therapy), making it a unique centre for conservation, education, and research

The initiative reflects HMBGRI's continued commitment to conserving Kerala's rich medicinal plant heritage while advancing research, education, and public awareness of traditional knowledge systems

Sam Santhosh, Founder of SciGenom Research Foundation under which HMBGRI functions, said, "Ayur Udhyan represents an inspiring convergence of India's traditional knowledge systems and modern scientific thinking. As we continue to advance genomics and precision medicine, it is equally important to preserve and scientifically explore the biodiversity and medicinal plant heritage that has supported healthcare for centuries. This initiative by HMBGRI creates a living platform for education and conservation."



BJP councillor Raghunath C Menon moving the resolution in the council meeting

BJP prods AIIMS dream in Thrissur corporation

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Thrissur

BJP councillors in Thrissur Corporation on Monday moved a resolution in the council meeting, urging the state government to recommend Thrissur as the location for setting up AIIMS.

BJP councillor and West mandalam president Raghunath C Menon presented the resolution. According to the resolution, Thrissur is the ideal location to set up a medical institution like AIIMS as it is the central part of the state. "While the state government recommended a list of 10 places, not even a single location that comes under Thrissur Lok Sabha constituency was included. It is definitely a political move as they know Union Minister Suresh Gopi would get its credit," alleged Raghunath.

The resolution proposed localities like land near Kerala

Agriculture University in Manuthy, KUHS campus in Mulakunnathkavu and Peechi. "Road connectivity in Thrissur is very well facilitated by NH 544. The district's proximity to CIAL is also an added advantage. With Union Minister Suresh Gopi representing the constituency, the process to get the sanctions will also be easier. We urge the state government to set aside the political differences and work together to bring AIIMS to Thrissur," added Raghunath. The BJP also urged MLAs from Thrissur to cooperate with the proposal.

The resolution also pointed to factors like employment opportunities for next one decade, medical facilities of international standards, economic development that can occur with the setting up of AIIMS in Thrissur. However, it did not get unanimous votes in the council.

M K SAJEEVKUMAR @Guruvayur

GURUVAYUR Devaswom chairman A V Gopinath has said the devaswom management views the High Court's observations on the temple's audit with utmost seriousness and will strictly implement all directions issued by the court. He said the issues flagged by the court would be examined in detail and corrective measures taken wherever necessary.

The High Court recently made significant observations on deficiencies in the audit and financial management of Guruvayur Devaswom. The court stressed the need to ensure complete transparency in online offerings and digital financial transactions. Based on the audit report submitted before it, the court directed the deputy director of the state audit department to appear in person and submit the findings so far, along with recommendations to address the deficiencies.

The audit report had pointed out that no annual physical verification of the temple's valua-

All affairs of the devaswom are conducted transparently. The locker containing the temple's valuable gold and other precious articles is secured through a three-key system

A V Gopinath, Guruvayur Devaswom chairman

ble assets had been conducted for the past 43 years. The court also noted that, although concurrent audit is mandatory under the rules, the audit department has been facing difficulties in obtaining the records required for verification.

According to the audit department, several important temple services, including offering receipts, have been shifted to digital platforms. However, the department has not been provided with the login credentials and passwords necessary to conduct a comprehensive audit of the digital systems. The audit also highlighted shortcomings in maintaining proper registers for valuable physical assets, including gold, bronze vessels, saffron, and other of-

ferings received from devotees. In view of these findings, the High Court ordered a detailed examination of the devaswom's administrative and financial systems.

Responding to the court's observations, Gopinath maintained that all affairs of the devaswom are conducted transparently. "The locker containing the temple's valuable gold and other precious articles is secured through a three-key system. The three keys are separately held by the temple trustee, the ooralan (traditional trustee), and the devaswom administrator. These keys are never transferred or exchanged under any circumstances. Therefore, there is no cause for concern regarding the safety of the temple's valuables," he said.

He further said the devaswom would undertake the administrative and technical reforms required to address the shortcomings identified in the audit process and to enhance transparency in digital transactions.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Guruvayur

A resolution presented by the LDF-led municipal council — protesting the state government's proposed reduction in development funds for local self-government institutions — sparked heated exchanges in the Chavakkad municipality on Monday.

The resolution, tabled by municipal chairperson A H Akbar, alleged that the revised state budget would adversely affect the functioning of local bodies across Kerala by substantially reducing plan allocations. According to the resolution, the allocation for local self-government institutions has been reduced from ₹10,189 crore in the budget presented in January to ₹8,655.45 crore in the revised budget — a reduction of ₹1,533.55 crore. The resolution claimed that the cut in-

cludes ₹1,261.40 crore under the general category, ₹236.70 crore for Scheduled Castes and ₹35.45 crore for Scheduled Tribes. The council expressed concern that the non-release of the third instalment of funds, delayed due to the election Model Code of Conduct, and the failure to treat it as spillover allocation

had created a financial crisis for local bodies. According to the resolution, the situation has affected the settlement of bills for ongoing projects and payments to contractors.

The meeting witnessed noisy scenes after opposition objected to the resolution. The chairperson said the opposition attempted to disrupt the proceedings by opposing the discussion. Akbar said the resolution was intended to highlight the challenges and alleged the opposition's protest was politically motivated.

Compensation for acquired land next week, says MLA

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Guruvayur

LANDOWNERS who surrendered property for the approach road to the Chingannath Kadavu bridge project are likely to receive compensation in the first week of August, MLA N K Akbar said after chairing the Guruvayur constituency public works monitoring committee meeting held at the Chavakkad Rest House.

Officials informed the meeting that the state government has released ₹10.5 crore to the special tahsildar for land acquisition and ₹40 lakh towards rehabilitation assistance for the approach road to the ₹40-crore bridge project.

EXPRESS READ

Rotary club honours Amala Hosp PRO



Thrissur: Joseph Varghese, public relations officer of Amala Hospital, has been honoured by the Rotary Club of Thrissur West in recognition of his service and outstanding contributions to the healthcare sector. The award was presented at a ceremony held at Elite Hotel, Thrissur.

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The pledges, in specific and the public, in general, are hereby notified that public auction of the gold ornaments pledged in the below accounts is proposed to be conducted at the following branches on 17/08/2026 from 10.00 am onwards. We are auctioning gold ornaments defaulted customers who have failed to make payment of his/her loan amount despite being notified by registered letters. Unauctioned items shall be auctioned on any other days without further notice. Changes in venue or date (if any) will be displayed at auction centre and on website without any further notice.

List of pledges:-

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Persons wishing to participate in the above auction shall comply with the following:- Interested Bidders should submit Rs. 10,000/- as EMD (refundable to unsuccessful bidders) by way of NEFT/RTGS on the same day of auction. Bidders should carry valid ID card/PAN card. For more details please contact 9072607147.

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