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## Sabarimala: HC says no to vehicles on Vandiperiyar-Uppupara route

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KOCHI: The Ayyappa Seva Sangham's plea to run KSRTC services between Vandiperiyar and Uppupara in [Sabarimala](#) to help those trekking to the hilltop shrine through Pulmedu was turned down by the Kerala High Court on Wednesday.

While dismissing the petition, a division bench of Justice Thottathil B Radhakrishnan and Justice C T Ravikumar said that allowing the demand of the sangham would result in vacating an earlier court order that prevented vehicle movement through the area that was ecologically fragile.

The sangham had also sought for a directive to the forest department to conduct urgent repair of the trekking path to Pulmedu as well as to make the Kozhikkanam-Uppupara route motorable.

The high court had banned vehicle movement on the stretch on July 6 this year based on the submission of the deputy director of forest department that allowing vehicle movement would violate the provisions of the Wildlife Protection Act.

The forest department had contended that vehicle movement in the area would result in serious ecological damage. Further, the area would be prone to disposal of non-biodegradable and unmanaged bio-degradable leftovers if vehicle movement was allowed, the department had submitted to the court.

The forest department had filed an affidavit stating that allowing vehicle movement would affect the flora and fauna of Periyar Tiger Reserve. The court noted that the demands of the sangham ranked below the need for a ban on vehicle movement in the area as the latter was a constitutional requirement.

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