

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 187
ANSWERED ON 23.12.2022

UPGRADATION OF FACILITIES FOR SABARIMALA PILGRIMS

187 SMT. P. T. USHA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways would consider providing additional facilities in various railway divisions of Kerala or allowing more train coaches, for the travel of Sabarimala pilgrims, if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether Chengannur-Pamba elevated railway line is under consideration of Railways to ease the travel duration of Sabarimala pilgrims, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF RAILWAYS, COMMUNICATIONS AND
ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)

(a) and (b): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) AND (b) OF STARRED QUESTION NO.187 BY SMT. P. T. USHA ANSWERED IN RAJYA SABHA ON 23.12.2022 REGARDING UPGRADATION OF FACILITIES FOR SABARIMALA PILGRIMS

(a) Upgradation/modernization of railway stations including provision of enhanced facilities at stations on Indian Railways is a continuous and on-going process and priority is accorded to higher category of stations over lower category of stations while sanctioning and executing the works. Apart from the process of continuous upgradation, 77 stations were identified for development under Adarsh station scheme in the State of Kerala. Out of these, 71 stations have been upgraded/developed under this scheme. The remaining 06 stations are targeted to be completed by June 2023.

Ministry of Railways is also undertaking techno-economic feasibility studies for redevelopment of stations. Based on the outcome of these feasibility studies, stations are planned to be taken up for redevelopment in phases. So far, 04 Railway stations in the State of Kerala viz: Ernakulam Jn., Ernakulam Town, Kollam & Thiruvananthapuram have been identified for redevelopment under the scheme for “Major Upgradation of Railway Stations” on Indian Railways. Additionally, techno-economic feasibility studies for Chengannur, Kozhikode, Thiruvananthapuram and Varkala stations are in progress in the State of Kerala.

Further, following facilities are provided at Chengannur, Kottayam and Ernakulam Jn. Stations for the convenience of Sabarimala Pilgrims:

- Information kiosk for Kerala State Road Transport Corporation and permission to operate Bus services from station premises.
- Help desk and police aid post.
- Temporary medical Aid post at Chengannur & Kottayam.
- Temporary counter to book virtual queue for Sabarimala temple.
- Help desks by Sabarimala Ayyappa Seva Samajam & Vishwa Hindu Parishad.
- Kiosk in favour of Alappuzha District carriage operators association for pre-paid booth.

- At Kottayam, three storied pilgrim centre is available.
 - Counters by District administration to distribute cloth bags in exchange of plastic bags to spread awareness against use of plastic.
 - Additional ticket counters are operated at Chengannur, Kottayam, Ernakulam Junction and Ernakulam Town stations, and staff from other divisions are deployed to manage the additional demand. Announcements are made in other South Indian Languages also, in addition to Malayalam, Hindi and English.
 - With a view to facilitate the pilgrims of Sabarmala from various regions, 248 special trains are being operated on the Kollam – Tiruvananthapuram – Ernakulam section from 15.11.2022 to 18.01.2023, which are in addition to the regular services. However, operation of trains, including special trains, is an ongoing process on Indian Railways, subject to operational feasibility, traffic demand, availability of resources, etc.
- (b) Final Location Survey (FLS) of New Rail Line between Chengannur Railway Station – Pamba (75 Km) has been sanctioned. Further decision on the project is possible once survey is completed and result thereon, including traffic requirement, are firmed up.
