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Title: Regarding sabari rail project.

SHRI BENNY BEHANAN (CHALAKUDY): Sir, I would like to bring to the attention of this august House an important Railway development project in Kerala which is going on from 1997 onwards. The name of the project is Sabari Rail Project.

Sir, Sabarimala is one of the most important places of worship in South India. Every year, a very huge number of devotees from various parts of India and abroad, cutting across religions, throng to this Holy Shrine, which is surrounded by thick forests. Sir, at present, Sabarimala is connected only by road. Devotees coming from faraway places, especially outside the State of Kerala, find it extremely difficult to visit the shrine due to the absence of direct railway connectivity.

In the year 1997, a proposal was approved at an estimated project cost of Rs.550 crore for laying direct railway line from Angamaly, which is in the Ernakulam district, up to Erumeli in the Pathanamthitta district which is closer to Sabarimala. Though the budgetary provisions keep getting allocated for this project year after year, very little progress in work has been reported. Up to 2018-19, a budget provision of sum of Rs.726 crore was allotted. But unfortunately, a sum of Rs.253 crore was the actual amount spent on the project. At present, a distance of eight kilometres from Angamaly to Kalady has been completed.

Sir, Rs.208 crore was sanctioned for the initial stage of work between Angamaly and Perumbavoor *via* Kalady, the birthplace of Adi Shankar. The work completed up to Kalady includes the construction of

a major bridge over the river Periyar. The construction of a railway station in Kalady is also completed. However, the work from Kalady to Perumbavoor is still pending. Even though all formalities, including land acquisition, were completed between Kalady and Perumbavoor, the work is pending. Please direct the officials to initiate immediate steps for the completion of work from Kalady to Perumbavoor.

**माननीय अध्यक्ष :** माननीय सदस्य संक्षिप्त में लिख कर लाया करें ।

**SHRI BENNY BEHANAN :** I am going to conclude.

The project cost is said to have risen to Rs.2,600 crore as on 14.9.2017 from Rs.550 crore over the years, due to increase in the cost of labour, material and land acquisition. The total distance of the project is 115 km. The other formalities like demarcation and putting stones have been completed up to Ramapuram, a distance of 69 km. The acquisition process from Ramapuram to Erumeli is stopped because of agitation from landowners.

I would also request the Government of India to write to the State Government to contribute their share of project cost without delay. The Minister may be pleased to direct the Railway Board to approve the estimated project cost without any further delay and allocate funds in the ensuing Central Budget.

Sir, in the end, I wish to point out that this project, once completed, will be a prestigious one for the Railways because it is going to benefit millions of people, thereby winning their hearts, besides increase in revenues for the Railways. Thank you.

**SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH (MAVELIKKARA):** I may be allowed to associate with this issue. ...(*Interruptions*)

**माननीय अध्यक्ष:** श्री टी. एन. प्रथापन, एडवोकेट अदूर प्रकाश और एडवोकेट ए.एम. आरिफ को श्री बैत्री बेहनन द्वारा उठाए गए विषय के साथ संबद्ध करने की अनुमति प्रदान की जाती है ।

...(व्यवधान)

**माननीय अध्यक्ष :** आप सभी एसोसिएशन के लिए लिख कर दे दें ।