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Title : Need to declare Sabarimala Temple in Kerala as a National Pilgrim Centre and provide adequate infrastructure, basic amenities and railway connectivity for the pilgrims.

SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL (ALAPPUZHA): Sabarimala is considered as one of the major pilgrim centres in India and its pilgrimage begins in the month of November and ends in January every year. The temple attracts lakhs of pilgrims from all over the world in these days. The shrine is thronged by large number of devotees especially during peak season, but still this temple is facing lack of proper infrastructure and facilities to meet the needs of increasing number of devotees. The Central Government had handed over 220 acres of land at Nilakkal and 225 acres land at Pamba – Sannidhanam area to Travancore Devaswom Board, the authority of the temple, during 2005 for arranging necessary facilities for pilgrims according to a Master Plan. But no master plan has been prepared for the proposal utilizing this forests land. As a result, lakhs of pilgrims, who come to visit Lord Ayyappa are still suffering a lot due to insufficient facilities for drinking water, sanitation, accommodation and upward uphill journey to temple site. A large number of aged devotees are facing lot of difficulties due to lack of proper medical facilities and rest rooms on the way to mountain, as it is a forest temple located at hill top in Periyar reserve forest. The only way to develop Sabarimala is that the Central Government should announce it as a national pilgrim centre and uplift this temple in all aspects. I urge the Government to take steps to ensure proper rail connectivity to nearest stations of Sabarimala from other states including north, as a large number of devotees are coming Sabarimala from these states and ensure proper coordination among passengers through arranging facility centres. Also, an effective crowd management system needs to be devised with the support of State Government of Kerala and using modern technology.