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title: Need to include Sabarimala shrine in Kerala under the PRASAD Scheme.

SHRI ANTO ANTONY (PATHANAMTHITTA): Thank you Madam Speaker. I request the Government to kindly enhance basic facilities at the Sabrimala Shrine under the Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spirituality Augmentation Drive (PRASAD).

The Sabrimala Shrine is the best example of India's rich heritage of eco-spirituality and interfaith harmony. The Shrine is located in the deep forest adjacent to the Periyar Tiger Reserve. Sabrimala is one of the largest pilgrim centres in the country in terms of the number of devotees pay pilgrimage every year. The Shrine is open to all, irrespective of caste, creed or religion.

Another important fact is that the Shrine is open to worship only for a limited period. Pilgrimage season spans from mid-November to mid-January. More than five crore devotees paid pilgrimage during the last pilgrimage season.

Therefore, the Shrine has to accommodate a large number of devotees in a short span of time and that is the greatest challenge faced by its authorities. The present facilities in the Shrine are not sufficient to accommodate the requirement of the devotees.

It should be noted that the Shrine falls within the ecologically sensitive Western Ghats and the constructions should not harm the spiritual and ecological serenity of the Sabrimala Shrine.

Therefore, a helping hand on the part of the Central Government is vital for the development of infrastructure at the Sabrimala Shrine. Hence, I humbly request the Government to kindly include the Sabrimala Shrine under the PRASAD Scheme.

HON. SPEAKER: Shri M.K. Raghavan, Shri Bhairon Prasad Mishra, Shri Jose K. Mani and Adv. Joice George are permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri Anto Antony.