

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION
LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. : 150
(To be answered on the 5th December 2024)**

DEVELOPMENT OF SABARIMALA AIRPORT

***150. SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH**

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION

नागर विमानन मंत्री

be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether the Government has taken concrete steps to expedite the development of the Sabarimala-Erumely Airport in Kerala;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the status of environmental clearances, land acquisition and other necessary approvals;
- (c) whether the Government has set a timeline for the completion of the said project and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the current challenges and delays faced in the implementation of the said project and the measures being taken to address them;
- (e) whether any consultations have been held with the State Government of Kerala, local stakeholders and aviation experts regarding the said project and if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) the expected benefits of the Sabarimala-Erumely Airport in terms of enhancing connectivity to Sabarimala, promoting tourism, and supporting regional economic development?

ANSWER

Minister of CIVIL AVIATION

नागर विमानन मंत्री

(Shri Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu)

(a) to (f): A statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (F) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 150 FOR REPLY ON 05.12.2024 REGARDING "DEVELOPMENT OF SABARIMALA AIRPORT" ASKED BY SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH

(a)to (e): Government of Kerala (GoK) envisaged the development of a Greenfield Airport in Kottayam (Sabrimala) near Erumeli in Kottayam district for which the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India, has already granted "Site Clearance" in April 2023, as required under the Greenfield Airports (GFA) Policy 2008. Further, the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, GoI has also granted Terms of Reference (ToR) to the Project in July 2023 and State Government has conducted the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Study.

As per the GFA Policy, 2008, the responsibility for implementation of the Greenfield airport project including land acquisition, R&R, funding etc. lies with the concerned airport developer or the State Government, as the case may be. The timeline for completion of the airport projects depends upon many factors such as land acquisition, availability of mandatory clearances including environmental clearances, financial closure etc.

Going forward, the Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation Limited (KSIDC), a State Government of Kerala Agency being the project proponent is required to prepare a Detailed Project Report (DPR) including details like development plan, project cost & funding, traffic projections, timelines for completion of the project etc. As per GFA Policy, 2008 once completed, this report is required to be submitted along with an application to GoI for grant of "In Principle" approval, before the commencement of the work.

KSIDC has informed that it does not anticipate any difficulty or delay in the completion of the project other than a title dispute of the land related to the project.

(f): Airports have emerged as a nucleus of economic activities and have multiplier effect on the economy of the State. The linkage between the Civil Aviation Sector and Economic Growth is well recognised. The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) study shows that the air connectivity has an economic multiplier of 3.25 and employment multiplier of 6.1. KSIDC has stated that the proposed Kottayam Greenfield International Airport has been envisaged for the convenience of Sabarimala pilgrims, NRIs, tourists, and other passengers. It will improve access to pilgrimage sites in central Travancore, such as Vavaru Mosque, Maramon Convention, Ettumanoor Mahadeva Temple etc. The airport will boost the local economy and tourism, connecting key attractions like Kumarakom backwaters, Munnar hill stations, Gavi Forest, Thekkady Wildlife Sanctuary, Periyar Tiger Reserve, Idukki Dam etc. Thus, Kottayam Airport is expected to play a key role in boosting overall economic development of the region.
