

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 63
TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.02.2026**

VANDE BHARAT SLEEPER TRAINS IN KERALA

***63. SHRI K C VENUGOPAL:
SHRI ANTO ANTONY:**

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government plans to introduce Vande Bharat Sleeper trains in Kerala and if so, the details thereof including the timeline for rollout and the number of trains allocated to the State;**
- (b) the details of the specific routes proposed for Vande Bharat Sleeper trains in Kerala including expected reductions in travel time on this count;**
- (c) whether the Government is aware of the persistent overcrowding on Kerala's coastal railway routes via Alappuzha including the Ernakulam-Thiruvananthapuram corridor, where MEMU/passenger trains face severe capacity issues leading to passengers fainting, reduced coaches and inadequate services during peak hours;**
- (d) if so, the details of the measures being taken to address this overcrowding including addition of coaches for MEMU trains, fastening of track doubling along with any plans for new trains/Vande Bharats for capacity enhancements;**
- (e) whether the Government proposes to introduce additional reservation quotas including a student quota in Vande Bharat Sleeper Trains and if so, the details thereof;**
- (f) whether the dynamic pricing system is applicable to Vande Bharat Sleeper trains and if so, the details thereof; and**
- (g) whether the introduction of dynamic pricing system will increase ticket fare equivalent or higher than airfare and if so, the details thereof?**

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF RAILWAYS, INFORMATION & BROADCASTING AND
ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)

(a) to (g): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (g) OF STARRED QUESTION NO.63 TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.02.2026 IN LOK SABHA

(a) to (g) As the railway network straddles across State boundaries, trains are introduced across such boundaries as per network requirement. Presently, on originating/terminating basis, the following six Vande Bharat (Chair Car) train services are catering to the needs of various stations located in the State of Kerala:

- i. 20631/32 Mangaluru Central - Thiruvananthapuram Vande Bharat Express**
- ii. 20633/34 Kasaragod-Thiruvananthapuram Vande Bharat Express**
- iii. 26651/52 Ernakulam-Bengaluru Vande Bharat Express**

On end to end basis, Ernakulam-Thiruvananthapuram sector is being served by 118 train services, while Ernakulam- Alappuzha sector is catered by 65 train services while Alappuzha-Thiruvananthapuram sector is catered by 52 train services.

Train services over Ernakulam-Thiruvananthapuram sector

SN	Train number and name
1	12075/76 Kozhikode – Thiruvananthapuram Central Jan Shatabdi Express
2	12081/82 Kannur – Thiruvananthapuram Central Jan Shatabdi Express
3	12201/02 Lokmanya Tilak (T) – Thiruvananthapuram North Garib Rath Express
4	12218/17 Chandigarh - Thiruvananthapuram North Express
5	12257/58 Yesvantpur – Thiruvananthapuram North Garib Rath Express
6	12432/31 Hazrat Nizamuddin – Thiruvananthapuram Central Rajdhani Express

7	12484/83 Amritsar - Thiruvananthapuram North Express
8	12508/07 Silchar – Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
9	12511/12 Gorakhpur - Thiruvananthapuram North Express
10	12623/24 MGR Chennai Central – Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
11	12626/25 New Delhi–Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
12	12644/43 Hazrat Nizamuddin–Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
13	12660/59 Shalimar – Nagercoil Express
14	12695/96 MGR Chennai Central – Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
15	12697/98 MGR Chennai Central – Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
16	12777/78 SSS Hubballi - Thiruvananthapuram North (Kochuveli) Express
17	16128/27 Guruvayur - Chennai Egmore Express
18	16301/02 Shoranur–Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
19	16303/04 Ernakulam–Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
20	16311/12 Shri Ganganagar - Thiruvananthapuram North (Kochuveli) Express
21	16315/16 Mysuru - Thiruvananthapuram North (Kochuveli) Express
22	16318/17 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra – Kanniyakumari Express
23	16320/19 SMVT Bengaluru - Thiruvananthapuram North (Kochuveli) Express

24	16330/29 Mangaluru – Nagercoil Amrit Bharat Express
25	16331/32 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj (T) – Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
26	16333/34 Veraval –Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
27	16335/36 Gandhidham – Nagercoil Express
28	16341/42 Guruvayur – Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
29	16344/43 Rameswaram – Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
30	16345/46 Lokmanya Tilak (T) – Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
31	16348/47 Mangaluru Central – Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
32	16350/49 Nilambur Road - Thiruvananthapuram North (Kochuveli) Express
33	16356/55 Mangaluru Jn. - Thiruvananthapuram North (Kochuveli) Express
34	16381/82 Pune – Kanniyakumari Express
35	16526/25 KSR Bengaluru - Kanniyakumari Express
36	16561/62 Yesvantpur - Thiruvananthapuram North (Kochuveli) Express
37	16603/04 Mangaluru Central –Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
38	16605/06 Mangaluru Central –Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
39	16630/29 Mangaluru Central –Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
40	16649/50 Mangaluru Central – Kanniyakumari Express

41	17041/42 Charlapalli - Thiruvananthapuram North Amrit Bharat Express
42	19260/59 Bhavnagar Terminus - Thiruvananthapuram North (Kochuveli) Express
43	19578/77 Jamnagar – Tirunelveli Express
44	20629/30 Secunderabad – Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
45	20631/32 Mangaluru Central – Thiruvananthapuram Central Vande Bharat Express
46	20633/34 Kasargod – Thiruvananthapuram Central Vande Bharat Express
47	20910/09 Porbandar - Thiruvananthapuram North (Kochuveli) Express
48	20924/23 Gandhidham – Tirunelveli Express
49	20932/31 Porbandar - Thiruvananthapuram North (Kochuveli) Express
50	22113/14 Lokmanya Tilak (T) – Thiruvananthapuram North (Kochuveli) Express
51	22207/08 MGR Chennai Central – Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
52	22504/03 Dibrugarh - Kanniyakumari Express
53	22619/20 Bilaspur – Tirunelveli Express
54	22634/33 Hazrat Nizamuddin – Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
55	22642/41 Shalimar – Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
56	22645/46 Indore – Thiruvananthapuram North (Kochuveli) Express
57	22647/48 Korba – Thiruvananthapuram North (Kochuveli) Express

58	22654/53 Hazrat Nizamuddin – Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
59	22660/59 Yog Nagari Rishikesh – Thiruvananthapuram North (Kochuveli) Express

Train services over Ernakulam- Alappuzha sector

SN	Train number and name
1	16127/28 Guruvayur - Chennai Egmore Express
2	16603/04 Mangaluru Central - Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
3	12697/98 Chennai Central - Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
4	12643/44 Hazrat Nizamuddin - Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
5	16331/32 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus - Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
6	22207/08 Chennai Central - Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
7	16355/56 Mangaluru - Thiruvananthapuram North (Kochuveli) Express
8	16315/16 Mysuru - Thiruvananthapuram North (Kochuveli) Express
9	16341/42 Guruvayur - Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
10	12217/18 Chandigarh - Kochi Ernakulam Express
11	22659/60 Yog Nagari Rishikesh - Thiruvananthapuram North (Kochuveli) Express
12	12483/84 Amritsar - Thiruvananthapuram North (Kochuveli) Express
13	22639/40 Chennai Central - Alappuzha Express

14	20931/32 Indore - Thiruvananthapuram North (Kochuveli) Express
15	20909/10 Porbandar - Thiruvananthapuram North (Kochuveli) Express
16	19577/78 Jamnagar - Tirunelveli Express
17	12511/12 Gorakhpur - Kochi Ernakulam Express
18	22645/46 Indore - Thiruvananthapuram North (Kochuveli) Express
19	16307/08 Kannur - Alappuzha Express
20	16345/46 Lokmanya Tilak Terminus - Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
21	13351/52 Dhanbad - Alappuzha Express
22	22641/42 Shalimar - Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
23	22633/34 Hazrat Nizamuddin - Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
24	20923/24 Gandhidham - Tirunelveli Express
25	16605/06 Mangaluru Central - Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
26	22619/20 Bilaspur - Tirunelveli Express
27	12075/76 Kozhikode - Thiruvananthapuram Central Janshatabdi Express
28	66300 Ernakulam - Alappuzha MEMU
29	66309/66310 Ernakulam - Kollam MEMU
30	66313/66314 Ernakulam - Alappuzha Passenger
31	56319/56320 Ernakulam - Kayamkulam Passenger

32	12431/12432 Hazrat Nizamuddin - Thiruvananthapuram Central Rajdhani Express
33	20631/20632 Mangaluru Central - Thiruvananthapuram Central Vande Bharat Express

Train services over Alappuzha-Thiruvananthapuram sector

SN	Train name and number
1	16127/28 Guruvayur - Chennai Egmore Express
2	16603/04 Mangaluru Central - Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
3	12697/98 Chennai Central - Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
4	22207/08 Chennai Central - Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
5	16331/32 Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus - Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
6	12643/44 Hazrat Nizamuddin - Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
7	16355/56 Mangaluru - Thiruvananthapuram North Express
8	16315/16 Mysuru - Thiruvananthapuram North Express
9	16341/42 Guruvayur - Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
10	12483/84 Amritsar - Thiruvananthapuram North Express
11	12217/18 Chandigarh - Kochi Ernakulam Express
12	22659/60 Yog Nagari Rishikesh - Thiruvananthapuram North Express

13	20931/32 Indore - Thiruvananthapuram North Express
14	19577/78 Jamnagar - Tirunelveli Express
15	20909/10 Porbandar - Thiruvananthapuram North Express
16	12511/12 Gorakhpur - Kochi Ernakulam Express
17	22645/46 Indore - Thiruvananthapuram North Express
18	20631/32 Mangaluru Central - Thiruvananthapuram Central Vande Bharat Express
19	16345/46 Lokmanya Tilak Terminus - Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
20	22641/42 Shalimar - Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
21	22633/34 Hazrat Nizamuddin - Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
22	20923/24 Gandhidham - Tirunelveli Express
23	16605/06 Mangaluru Central - Thiruvananthapuram Central Express
24	12075/76 Kozhikode - Thiruvananthapuram Central Jan Shatabdi Express
25	12431/32 Hazrat Nizamuddin - Thiruvananthapuram Central Rajdhani Express
26	22619/20 Bilaspur - Tirunelveli Express

Besides, introduction of new train services, including Vande Bharat sleeper services, is an on-going process.

The speed and travel time of train services, is dependent *inter alia* on capacity of the section concerned, availability of path and terminals etc.

Increased accommodation:

The passenger volume over various sections of Indian Railways including Kerala's coastal Railway routes via Alappuzha, including the Ernakulam-Thiruvananthapuram corridor is not uniform throughout the year and it varies over lean and peak periods. During peak rush periods, the occupancy of the trains especially on popular routes remains full whereas during lean period and on less popular routes, there is sub optimal utilization.

Indian Railways (IR) have significantly increased the facilities for passengers demanding general class travel. During the last financial year 2024-25 alone, 1250 general coaches have been utilised in various long-distance trains.

To cater to the travel demand of the low and middle income families, Indian Railways have taken up manufacturing of 17,000 non-AC coaches (general/sleeper).

On IR, the percentage of non-AC coaches, is about 70% as indicated below:

Table 1: Distribution of coaches:

Non-AC coaches (general and sleeper)	~57,200	~70%
AC coaches	~25,000	~30%
Total coaches	~82,200	100%

Due to higher availability of general coaches, the number of passengers traveling in general/ unreserved coaches has shown an increasing trend as shown below:

Table 2 : Passengers in general/unreserved coaches:

Year	Nos. of Passengers
2020-21	99 Cr (Covid year)
2021-22	275 Cr (Covid year)

2022-23	553 Cr
2023-24	609 Cr
2024-25	651 Cr

The number of seats available for non-AC passengers has also increased.

The current composition is as follows:

Table 3: Distribution of seats:

Non-AC seats	~ 54 lakhs	~ 78%
AC seats	~ 15 lakhs	~ 22%
Total	~ 69 lakhs	100%

Moreover, to provide greater accommodation for the passengers using General and non-AC Sleeper Coaches, the extant policy regarding composition of Mail/Express trains provides for 12 (Twelve) General class & Sleeper class non- AC coaches and 08 (eight) AC-Coaches, in a train of 22 coaches, thereby providing greater accommodation for the passengers using General and non-AC Sleeper Coaches.

Accordingly, Mail/Express trains serving stations located in Kerala has been standarised to have minimum 04 unreserved coaches. Further, since April, 2025, Mail/Express and Passenger trains have been permanently augmented utilising 8 unreserved Coaches and 04 pairs of MEMU train services operated with 12-Car have been augmented to 16-Car MEMU services. Further, to cater to the stations located in Kerala, 66325/66236 Nilambur Road - Shoranur MEMU has been introduced w.e.f 24.08.2025 and 56115/56116 Thrisur - Guruvayur Passenger has been introduced w.e.f. 26.01.2026.

Railway Network

To strengthen the railway network in Kerala, the following surveys have been sanctioned:

SN	Route	Length (Km)
1	Shoranur-Mangalore 3rd & 4th Line	307
2	Coimbatore-Shoranur 3rd & 4th line	99
3	Shoranur – Ernakulam 3rd Line	106
4	Ernakulam-Kayankulam 3rd line (via Kottayam)	115
5	Kayankulam-Thiruvananthapuram 3rd Line	105
6	Thiruvananthapuram-Nagercoil 3rd Line	71
7	Turavur-Ambalappuzha Doubling	46

After firming up of Detailed Project Report (DPR), sanctioning of project requires consultation with various stake-holders including State Governments and necessary approvals viz. appraisal of NITI Aayog, Ministry of Finance etc. As sanctioning of projects is a continuous and dynamic process, exact timelines cannot be fixed.

Kerala:-

Budget allocation in the recent years has increased significantly. Budget allocation for infrastructure projects and safety works, falling fully/partly in the State of Kerala is as under:-

Period	Outlay
2009-14	₹ 372 crore/year
2025-26	₹3,042 crore (more than 8 times)

As on 01.04.2025, 06 projects (02 new line and 04 doubling) of 266 km length, costing ₹9,415 crore falling fully/partly in Kerala are sanctioned.

The summary is as under:-

Category	No. of projects	Total Length	Length Commissioned	Balance to complete	Expenditure upto March 2025 (₹ in Crore)
New line	02	146 km	0 km	146 km	309
Doubling /multitracking	04	120 km	26 km	94 km	2,941
Total	06	266 km	26 km	240 km	3,250

Details of some of the recently completed projects falling fully/partly in Kerala are as under:

SN	Project	Cost (₹ in Crores)
1	Dindigul-Pollachi-Palghat & Pollachi-Coimbatore gauge conversion (217 km)	1,360
2	Quilon-Tirunelveli-Tiruchendur gauge conversion (357 km)	1,122
3	Mulanturutti-Kuruppantara doubling (24 km)	303
4	Chenganur-Chingavanam doubling (27 km)	436
5	Ambalapuzha-Haripad doubling (18 km)	346
6	Kuruppanthara-Chingavanam doubling (27 km)	749

Some of the projects falling fully/partly in Kerala which have been taken up are as under:

SN	Project	Cost (₹ in Crores)
1	Tirunnavaya – Guruvayur new line (35 Km)	138
2	Angamali-Sabarimala new line (111 km)	3,801
3	Ernakulam-Kumbalam doubling (8 km)	595
4	Kumbalam-Thuravur doubling (16 km)	803

5	Trivandrum- Kanyakumari doubling (87 km)	3,786
6	Shoranur - Vallathol doubling (10 km)	367

Execution of important infrastructure projects falling fully/partly in the State of Kerala are held up due to delay in land acquisition. Status of land acquisition in the State of Kerala is as under:

Total Land required for Projects in Kerala	476 ha
Land Acquired	65 ha (14%)
Balance Land to be acquired	411 ha (86%)

Railway had deposited ₹1,975 crore for land acquisition to Government of Kerala. Support of the Government of Kerala is needed to expedite the land acquisition. For instance, details of some major projects which are delayed due to land acquisition are as under:-

SN	Name of the project	Total land required (in Ha)	Land acquired (in Ha)	Balance Land to be acquired (in Ha)
1.	Angamali - Sabarimala new line (111 km)	416	24	392
2.	Ernakulam – Kumbalam Patch doubling (8 km)	4	3	1
3.	Kumbalam – Turavur Patch doubling (16 km)	10	9	1
4.	Shoranur - Vallathol doubling (10 km)	5	0	5

Government of India is geared up to execute projects, however success depends upon the support of Government of Kerala.

Sanction of any railway project depend upon many parameters/factors which include the following:

- **Anticipated traffic projections and remunerativeness of the proposed route**

- **First and last mile connectivity provided by the project**
- **Connection of missing links and providing additional route**
- **Augmentation of congested/saturated lines**
- **Demands raised by State Governments/Central Ministries/Public representatives**
- **Railway's own operational requirements**
- **Socio-economic considerations**
- **Overall availability of funds**

Completion of Railway project/s depends on various factors which include the following:

- **Land acquisition by State Government**
- **Forest clearance**
- **Shifting of infringing utilities**
- **Statutory clearances from various authorities**
- **Geological and topographical conditions of area**
- **Law and order situation in the area of project site**
- **Number of working months in a year for particular project site etc.**

All these factors affect the completion time and cost of the project/s.

Reservation quota:

There is Ladies quota, quota for Persons with Disabilities (PWD), Senior Citizen quota and Duty Pass quota as per existing instructions issued from time to time.

Vande Bharat Sleeper Express introduced over Indian Railways has an all inclusive basic fare structure. No dynamic pricing is applicable in this train.
