

## **294 Special Trains to Run During Sabarimala Season**

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM:**The Railways will run 294 special trains during the Sabarimala pilgrimage season, Union Minister of State for Railways Manoj Sinha has said.

“Smart card-operated ticket vending machines will be available at Chengannur, Kottayam, Thiruvalla and Ernakulam stations. Coin/currency-operated vending machines will be arranged at all major stations visited by the pilgrims,” he said after chairing a review meeting of the Southern Railway on the pilgrimage arrangements here on Saturday.

All mail and express trains on the route will have halt at Thiruvalla. Medical assistance, Janata meals, safe drinking water and clean toilets will be ensured at stations visited by the pilgrims, he said.

### **Nemom Has to Wait**

The minister said that the state’s proposal for developing Nemom as a third terminal would have to wait as the second terminal Kochuveli was not utilised properly.

“The utilisation of Kochuveli is sub-optimal and the priority is to increase it. The state’s present requirement is more trains and increasing the line capacity,” he said.

The minister said that the Railways was actively considering a proposal to increase the line capacity between Thiruvananthapuram and Kayamkulam. Works are on to start goods traffic on the Ernakulam-Ernakulam Goods Shed and Ernakulam-Cochin Harbour lines. The latter will be started in four months.

The minister said that the state was granted a huge allocation from the Railways in the 2015-16 fiscal, compared to the previous terms. “The total allocation was Rs 1,050 crore in 2015-16, while it was Rs 267 crore and Rs 265 crore in the 14-15 and 13-14 fiscals respectively.