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**Press Release**

**Centre's Swadeshi Tourism to Benefit 3 Kerala temples**

**Thiruvananthapuram, Dec 12:** Three major temples of Kerala are poised to get a boost to their pilgrim hospitality as the central government has given the state the permission to go ahead with a Rs-100 crore project to improve facilities around the temples of Padmanabhaswamy here, Parthasarathy in Aranmula and for Sabarimala pilgrimage tourism.

"The mega project, under the Swadeshi Darshan Tourism of the central government, was announced during Onam festival time this year when Union Tourism Minister Mahesh Sharma during his visit to Kerala," Kerala Tourism Minister Shri AP Anilkumar said.

"The package, which got the official clearance now, does not pertain to expenses on temple rituals, instead aims at bettering the infrastructure for the pilgrims in the three renowned shrines," he added.

The main attraction of the Padmanabha Swamy temple package that would feature 25-odd vintage buildings, museums and a stone-paved 5.2-km heritage walk that would permit viewing all the four gateways of the shrine. The other plans include a renovation of the pathway running adjacent the four gateways and the sprawling Padmateertha tank, construction of drinking water fountain and toilet blocks, providing dustbins around the complex and signage boards and uniform name boards, underground cabling of electric cables and other service lines, better drainage including that for storm-water, opening a new information centre, digital museum and installation of a solar panel.

At south-central Kerala's Aranmula, there will be a roof coming up for the VIP gallery watching the famed Onam-time boat race, erecting stronger walls, toilets, bathing ghats, solar street lights and signage, besides better facilities for the feast at the famed vallassadya.

The Sabarimala project involves a waiting hall at Nilakkal, cloak rooms, shower rooms, toilets, parking bays, a walking bridge parallel to the one now running across the Pampa river and another bridge parallel to the one now starting from the parking lot.

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