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Digital money a big hit at Sannidhanam

The steps taken by Travancore Devaswom Board in association with Dhanalaxmi Bank for addressing the problems of pilgrims due to currency shortage following demonetisation have turned out to be an instant hit, board president Prayar Gopalakrishnan has said. The electronic service system has come as a boon for the pilgrims as well as the service providers, he said. Board member Ajay Tharayil said that e-services would be extended to all possible realms for further reducing the problems being faced by pilgrims. While ATMs across the country are facing currency shortage, three machines stacked with currency are operational round-the-clock at the Sannidhanam. The fourth ATM would start functioning at Malikappuram on Saturday. Dhanalaxmi Bank has provided two places for exchanging Rs.1,000 and Rs.500 notes that are no more legal tender, at the branch near Bhasmakulam and another 24-hour counter near the aravana parasadam counter. Thus the bank has earned the unique distinction of becoming the first one that provides note exchange facility round-the-clock. Bank assistant manager M.P.Sreekumar said that the ATMs are being replenished thrice a day and about Rs.40 lakh is being withdrawn from the ATMs a day. About 400 pilgrims approach the bank for note exchange too. Card swiping machines have been installed at 10 places, including Pamba, Nilakkal and the pumps being run by the TDB. Machines have been installed at Annadana Mandapam, Appom, Aravana counters, Facility Centre, Book Stall, Vazhipadu Counter, Abhishekom Counter Dhanalaxmi Bank Deputy Project Head

S.V.Shalaji said that about 15 per cent of the money transactions at the Sannidhanam has turned digital. The e-Kanikka facility has come in handy for pilgrims who do not carry cash in hand, The TDB has plans to extend the e-Kanikka facility set up near Sopanam to more places. In addition to the 140 officers of the Dhanalaxmi Bank, 180 casual employees and seven technicians have been deployed to look after the functioning of the server. In addition to Mr.Sreekumar and Shalaji, Assistant Project Head Sankaranarayanan is also a member of the coordinating team.

A unique Post Office:

There are still a large number of pilgrims who strongly hold that the Sanndihanam Post Office is one place through which they can have a direct communion with lordy Ayyappa. The best instance is a letter the Post Office received from Visakhapatnam. The letter addressed Swami Saranam Ayyappa, Ayyappa Temple, Sabarimala-689713, Kerala, is a wedding invitation of the daughter of Kalpipatanam Jogi Raju from Visakhapatnam. Post Master Janardhanan Unnithan says that they receive a number of such letters and they hand it over to the TDB authorities. Life issues, thanksgiving, doubts about future, complaints and such others, the list goes on and on. Such letters usually come from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Money order for offering poojas too are there. The Post Office uses a seal having an impression of the idol of Lord Ayyappa and also the 18 holy steps. The office functions only during the Mandalam and Makaravilakku festivals and Vishu seasons. The letters reach here from Thiruvananthapuram RMS by noon via Pamba. Other than money order facility, the Post Office offers mobile phone recharging facility too.

Imported coin counting machines:

The TDB is using an imported coin counting machines costing Rs.1.5 crore for making the counting and sorting processes easy. The coins that dropped in the containers (vanchis) kept at different locations are deposited in a vault. TDB employees open the vault, sort and count it. As many as 1,000 coins are kept in a bundle and kept in different trays according to their denominations. Notes are kept in different trays. Dhanalaxmi Bank officers examine the trays and further sort it using note counting machines. The coins are packed in bags using the machine. The notes and coins are then entrusted with the bank with chalan and receipt and then accounted. They money is then moved to the bank chests in Thrissur and Thiruvananthapram depending on the denominations. As many as 14 persons have been deployed for counting under the supervision of the Vigilance. Moreover, 24 cameras too have been installed.

Uninterrupted power supply in Sabarimala:

Uninterrupted power supply has been ensured at Sabarimala following the inception of a new feeder last year, KSEB authorities said. In the event of a break down arrangements have been made for providing power from other lines. Aerial Benched Cables have been used for all lines from Pamba to Sannidhanam. Earlier two 11 KV feeders were used for providing power from Pamba to Sabarimala. The ABC cables would not cause any danger to wildlife. Cutting overhanging tree branches is also not needed following the use of new cables These insulation cables were used as per the

KSEB direction under the Sabarimala Master Plan. According to KSEB Special Officer R.Bijuraj, all modernisation works for improving distribution were completed by October 15. Light posts have been installed en route to Sabarimala. Now 20 posts have one meter each to gauge the power consumption. As many as 45 connections were given for streetlights alone. Transformers have been relocated to safer places with warnings in six different languages. The 100 KVA transformer installed at Sabarimala this year would help to improve the functioning of the drinking water supply plants at Sannidhanam. Power to Sannidhanam , Pamba and precincts is being provided from the 66 KV sub-station at Hill Top..

Caption:Dhanalaxmi Bank Assistant Manager examining the functioning of the card swiping machines at Sannidhanam and surroundings. Post Man Mohan getting ready to distribute postal articles. 3.Crowd at Sabarimala.



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