Mini-train to chug along Veli tourist village from Oct. 7

Traditionally modelled station, tunnel, rail bridge await tourists

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The solar-powered mini-train, with an engine modelled on the exterior of a yesteryear steam engine, will chug along the idyllic Veli tourist village from next month.

The mini-train will be available for tourists from October 7, Tourism Minister Kadakampally Surendran said on Saturday after having a ride on the train along with Rani George, Secretary, Tourism, and others.

It is part of the 100 projects of the LDF government. Artificial fumes as from a steam locomotive, a traditionally modelled station, tunnel, and rail bridge await tourists during the 1.76-km ride.

Track-changing points, additional tracks for facilitating train crossings, and old-fashioned ‘arm signals’ provided along the route add aestheticism with safety to the 40-minute ride. Turntables at one end to turn the locomotive engines around the old-fashioned way are another attraction.

48 passengers

To be operated by the Kerala State Cooperative Tourism Federation (Tourfed), the 10-ft locomotive with three coaches will accommodate 48 passengers, including two crew members.

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Each sleekly designed coach will have rooftop solar panels to draw power directly.

The train will begin its journey from the mini-railway station, named Veli Village, near the main entrance of the tourist village, and traverse the artificial lake.

It will go to the other side of the village across a 60-m new railway bridge constructed parallel to the present floating bridge and go around the artificial mound and tunnel, and stop at the Pozhikkara station, before returning.

The technical assistance for the maiden narrow-gauge project in this part of the country has been extended by Quilon Miniature Railway.

Linking the rail and the work on the 60-m bridge that will link the village and Pozhikkara is in the final lap, Tourfed managing director Shaji Madhavan said.

The ticket is priced at ₹60.

The Uralungal Labour Contract Society has executed the ₹9-crore miniature rail project for Kerala Tourism and the project is part of the ongoing ₹30-crore development works at the tourist village.