

Title: Need to withdraw move to close down Maduari-Bodi railway route - Laid.

SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN (PERIYAKULAM) : The people of Theni and Madurai Districts are agitated because of the threat to close down the 90 kms Madurai-Bodi metre gauge route. This route caters to the needs of various sections of people like students, office-goers, farmers, businessmen and tourists. This is the life line of transportation of this backward region. This route runs through Karumathur, Usilampatti, Andipatti and Theni.

It is reported that, due to non-profitability, Railways are thinking of closing down this route. Such a decision would strike a severe blow to the economy of the region besides being a handicap to commuters. Lot of cardamom is grown in this region. Cardamom growers use this train route for trading purposes and also for taking fertilizers etc. for raisin crop. Since Railways have a social commitment, profitability alone should not be the criterion. Rail routes are the only hope for the underdeveloped regions. If Madurai-Bodi route is closed, six railway stations including Andipatti will be closed. Tourists going to see the enhancing Vaigaidam also take this route.

In view of the importance of this route, I appeal to the Government not to ponder over closing down this route.