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Title: Need for gauge conversion between Villupuram and Katpadi and construction of ROB at crossing of National Highway on Tiruvannamalai-Puduchery section.

\*SHRI D. VENUGOPAL (TIRUVANNAMALAI): Tiruvannamalai is an ancient pilgrimage town famous in Tamil Nadu and the Railways have currently undertaken the gauge conversion work in the section near Tiruvannamalai which is between Villupuram- Katpadi. Completion of this work will take a long time because the work progresses at a snail's pace. This work has been delayed beyond measure and at least four years behind the schedule. Several newspapers have reported about it and this is being highlighted by media often. At least now the work is being carried out near Tiruvannamalai. This needs to be speeded up as this traditional pilgrim town draws thousands of people not only from Tamil Nadu but from several parts of the country and also from different parts of the world. Thousands of people throng only for the Karthigai Deepam but also for the monthly pournami (full moon) Giri Valam. For this monthly girivalam, lakhs of people gather in Tiruvannamalai and hence connectivity both by road and rail must be improved. As such the connectivity by train stands disrupted. Hence there is a need to hasten the completion of gauge conversion work between Villupuram-Katpadi sections that ensures better rail connectivity to Tiruvannamalai. Considering the fact that this pilgrim center is famous for Ramana Maharishi Ashram, Arunagirinathar Swami Sthal, Seshdri Swamigal Mutt where these saints attained Mukthi thereby drawing devotees through out the year. Hare Rama Hare Krishna Bhakts also come to this town in big way. Hence you must improve railway connectivity and facility by way of completing gauge conversion work and resuming the rail service and also by modernizing Tiruvannamalai railway station. The Railway platform in Tiruvannamalai station of which length is about 500 metres must get platform shelter roof at least to the tune of about 250 metres instead of the proposed 80 metres. The Computerized Advance Reservation Centre in Tiruvannamalai must be functional through out the day from 8 AM to 8 PM instead of 8 AM to 2 PM as at present. This will help the pilgrims in big way. Hence I urge upon the Railway Minister to provide the needed facilities in Tiruvannamalai Railway Station.