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Title: Regarding gauge conversion of Mayiladuthurai-Tharangampadi railway line.

***SHRI R.K.BHARATHI MOHAN (MAYILADUTHURAI):** Hon'ble Madam Speaker, I wish to raise an important issue. The rail route between Mayiladuthurai and Tharangambadi, for a stretch of 30 kms, functioned profitably from 1926 to 1991. During that period since road facilities were not upgraded, the rail connectivity remained as the lifeline of this people. In 1991 the metre gauge operations were stopped and remain so till date. Between Mayiladuthurai and Tharangambadi this rail route had railways stations at the following places: (i) Mayiladuthurai Town (3.82 kms); (ii) Mannampanthal (8.35 kms); (iii) Sembanaarkovil (12.35 kms); (iv) Aakoor (18 kms); (v) Thirukkadaiyur (21.89 kms); Thillaiyadi (25.33 kms); Poraiyaar (28.13 kms); and Tharangambadi (29.35 kms). Important schools, Arts colleges like AVCC and TBML, AVCC Engg. College, Teacher Training Institute, and other professional institutions are functioning in this area. Poor people and people below poverty line, students do not find a transport system in this area which can suit their needs. Tharangambadi is an area full of fishermen and fishing activities. Fishermen do not have proper transport facility for exporting to other countries. Moreover they do not have adequate storage facilities. Livelihood of fishermen is affected. Hindu pilgrim centres like Thirukkadaiyur (DharumapuramAatheenam), Thirunallaru (Saturn) and Nagoor Mosque, Vailankanni temple, Tharangambadi Holy Church, Danish Fort are some of the tourist attractions. If this route is extended by 9 km and connected with Karaikkal, you can get a big rail network in southern Tamil Nadu. Around 30 km long land between Mayiladuthurai and Tharangambadi is already with the Railway Department. Only 9 kilo meter stretch of land between Tharangambadi and Karaikkal has to be acquired. This project can be completed at a cost of Rs.100 Crore. Only when this rail route is extended and connected, people of Tharangambadi can have rail connectivity to go to Chennai for medical treatment and technological benefits. Thank you. Tamil Nadu Government under the able guidance of *Puratchithalaivi* Amma has included Tharangambadi in the list of small ports and development activities are being undertaken. I therefore, urge that already existing metre- gauge railway line should be converted as broad-gauge and rail services should be made functional between Mayiladuthurai and Tharangambadi very soon. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER: You have mentioned your point about gauge conversion. It has come in the records.