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Title: Regarding the need to convert the only express train from Chennai to Shirdi from weekly to daily to cater to the needs of the pilgrims.

SHRI S.R. VIJAYA KUMAR (CHENNAI CENTRAL): Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to draw the attention of the Government of India to the increasing number of pilgrims travelling between Chennai and Shirdi. Presently, only one Express Train, Shirdi Express is operated between Chennai and Shirdi, that too weekly once.

The Train No.22601 starts from Chennai on every Wednesday morning and reaches Shirdi on the next morning with a journey time of nearly 25 hours. On the reverse side, the same train, No.22602, starts from Shirdi to Chennai and reaches Chennai on the next day.

This train stops in 23 stations between Chennai and Shirdi and covers a total distance of 1392 kilometres. In view of this, a large number of pilgrims in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh use this train to visit Shirdi. Since there is only one train every week, the reservation tickets are booked within a few hours of opening.

I urge the Government of India and the Ministry of Railways to operate this train on all the seven days of the week so that the passengers of both the States get the benefit. Thank you.