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Title: Need to start work on gauge conversion between Madurai and Bodinayakkanur, Tamil Nadu and also laying of rail route between Dindigul and Sabarimala.

*SHRI R. PARTHIPAN (THENI): The railway line between Madurai and Bodinayakkanur is the only rail connectivity in my Theni parliamentary constituency. In order to commence work relating to broad-gauge conversion, rail transport was stopped on this route in the year 2010 and funds were subsequently allotted in the year 2011. The work relating to broad-gauge conversion has not commenced since then. People and business establishments are very much affected due to lack of better transport facilities . Even though a new rail route between Dindigul-Sabarimala (Kerala) was announced, the work has not commenced. Moreover, lakhs of devotees of Lord Ayyappa from the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu are using bus as a mode of transport to visit Sabarimala. In view of the hardships faced by devotees of Lord Ayyappa, Railway authorities should allocate adequate funds and commence the work immediately. Although work has been completed in the urban areas in the Dindigul-Kumuli for four laning National Highway, but still laying work in the bypass roads is yet to be completed which results in so many accidents. I therefore urge that laying work in this Dindigul-Kumuli four lane National Highway should be expedited. The laying work of two roads viz (i) the road that connects Virudhunagar and Theni districts with the shortest route via Kamarajapuram-Kizhavan Koil road, Manoothu 9th mile road and (ii) the road which connects Tamil Nadu and Kerala i.e. Thevaram-Sakkaluthu Mettu. road are awaiting permission from the Chief Ranger of Forests. I urge upon the Hon'ble Prime Minister to look into this issue. Thank you.

HON. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Sultan Ahmed – Not present

...(Interruptions)