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Title: Need to execute the railway project announced 58 years back and allocate necessary funds for laying new railway track between Chinnasalem to Thanjavur.

DR. K. KAMARAJ (KALLAKURICHI): Thank you Speaker Madam. Arulmigu Arunachaleswarar Temple is located in Thiruvannamalai. It is the largest temple in the world dedicated to Lord Shiva which was built thousand years back. ...(*Interruptions*) Annamalaiyar Temple is one of the *pancha bhoota stalam* or *pancha bhoota stala*. The temple represents the manifestation of fire out of the five prime elements of nature, land, water, air, sky and fire.

At the Thiruvannamalai temple, the Lord Shiva is said to have manifested Himself in the form of massive column of fire, whose crown and feet could not be found by the Hindu God of creation, Brahma and Hindi God of preservation (or maintainer) Vishnu. ...(*Interruptions*)

12.35 hours

(At this stage, Shri Bhagwant Mann came and stood on the floor near the Table.)

DR. K. KAMARAJ : A celebration of this manifestation is seen even today in the age-old traditions observed during the festivals of Shivaratri and Karthigai Deepam. Lakhs of people come to Thiruvannamalai to worship Lord Shiva in the month of Karthikai (November). Every month, during the auspicious full moon day, more than one lakh devotees take part in Girivalam (circumambulation). The devotees circumambulate the Arunachala Mountain and pray Lord Annamalaiyar that their wish comes true.

Fully acknowledging the importance of the temple and to provide railway connectivity to Thiruvannamalai, the then Railway Minister, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri announced the survey between Chinnasalem to Chengalpattu *via* Kallakurichi, Thiruvannamalai and Vandavasi in the year 1956-57 in his Railway Budget Speech, that is, 58 years back.

In the year 2005 only, the Railway Board had sanctioned a Reconnaissance Engineering-cum-traffic Survey for a new Broad-gauge line between Chennai Egmore and Thanjavur *via* Chengalpattu, Vandavasi, Thiruvannamalai, Vanapuram, Mungilduraipattu, Vadponparappi, Sankarapuram, Alathur Road, Kallakurichi, Pennakaram, Ariyalur and Thirumanur. The project survey details were submitted to the Railway Board in the year 2007 and the project cost was estimated to be about Rs.968 crore with Rate of Return of 5.27 per cent which is better than most of the railway projects under planning and executed.

Hence, I would request the Railway Minister to execute the project announced 58 years back and allocate necessary funds for laying the new railway track between Chinnasalem to Thanjavur in the forthcoming Railway Budget 2016-2017 so that lakhs of devotees can be benefited by having railway connectivity to Thiruvannamalai to worship the Lord Siva. Thank you.

HON. SPEAKER:

Shri Bhairon Prasad Mishra and

Kunwar Pushpendra Singh Chandel are permitted to associate with the issue raised by Dr. K. Kamaraj.