

therefore, request the Central Government to formulate a suitable scheme for finding a permanent solution to the drinking water problem in Saurashtra Kutch region.

(vii) NEED TO DECLARE PALANI IN DINDIGUL ANNA DISTRICT IN TAMIL NADU AS A TOURIST CENTRE

[English]

SHRI P. KUMARASWAMY (Palani) : Sir, Palani Murugan Temple is the most important and famous of all the temples of Lord Murugan in Tamil Nadu. This is the temple which attracts largest number of pilgrims throughout the year, next only to Tirupathi in South India. This temple of Karthik, is situated on a hilltop surrounded by lush green shrubs and meadows. Since Lord Murugan is associated with culture of the Tamils from times immemorial, people from all parts of Tamil Nadu visit the temple to worship the Lord and have a glance of the beauty of the hilly terrain reverberating with life. Pilgrims from the neighbouring States of Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh too visit Palani to have *darshan* of the Lord.

The Tamil Nadu Government has taken seen interest to develop Palani and provide amenities to the pilgrims. The inflow of tourists is constantly increasing and because of this, more tourist amenities like lodges, restaurants and transport, need to be provided. Since Palani is located at the centre of four other tourist centres, Nandy, Kodaikanal, Ooty, Madurai and Thanjavur, the tourists visiting these places, invariably visit Palani. Though thousands of pilgrims visit the temple every day, lakhs of pilgrims throng Palani during festivals. The Ministry of

Tourism has recently announced a Rs. 39,000 crore package for promoting tourism in the country in phases. Though more attention needs to be paid for promoting foreign exchange oriented tourism, interests of native tourists should not be ignored. Therefore, I request the Central Government to declare Palani as a tourist centre and allocate necessary funds for providing amenities to the pilgrims visiting Palani temple.

(viii) NEED FOR CONSTRUCTION OF PUCCA BRIDGES ON GAUTAMI AND VAINETEYA GODAVARI RIVERS AT AMALAPURAM IN ANDHRA PRADESH

SHRI G.M.C. BALAYOGI (Amalapuram) : Sir, the Gas Authority of India Ltd. is going to construct two foot-path pipe line bridges on river Gautami and Vaineteya Godavari rivers in Amalapuram in andhra Pradesh by investing Rs. 50 crore. My parliamentary constituency, Amalapuram, is almost an island. The people in this area are demanding construction of pucca bridges and not the footpath bridges.

This area is exporting nearly Rs. 1,500 crore worth of paddy, coconut and other commercial crops. In addition to the above agricultural produce, the ONGC and the Gas Authority of India are getting Rs. 200 crore per year from crude and gas, which are available in this area. Already the ONGC has invested more than Rs. 2,000 crore in L.G. project area, particularly in Amalapuram, for drilling operations and got very good results from crude and natural gas from this area. The State Government of Andhra Pradesh is also coming forward for the construction of above bridges by paying some portion of share of the above bridges cost. The people and the market-