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Title: Need to run Puducherry-New Delhi Express (Train Nos. 22403/22404), Howrah-Puducherry bi-weekly Train Nos. 12867-12868 via Tiruvannamalai, in Tamil Nadu.

SHRI D. VENUGOPAL (TIRUVANNAMALAI): Lakhs of people gather in Tiruvannamalai, the spiritual town, every month on the full moon day for Girivalam. On Kaarthigai Deepam day celebrated annually, a huge mass of more than 20 lakhs people throng Tiruvannamalai. The town also attracts several foreign devotees who visit the ashrams of Rammanna Maharishi, Seshadri Swamigal and Yogi Ram Suratkumar. So, in order to extend train connectivity to such passengers to visit Tiruvannamalai, Puducherry-new Delhi Express No. 22403/22404 must have Tiruvannamalai in its route. This will benefit thousands of village people in and around Tiruvannamalai to reach Jimper Hospital in Puducherry. It is also to be noted that the foreigners visiting Tiruvannamalai would also prefer to visit the Auroville in Puducherry. Besides, a large number of businessmen and students visit Delhi from Tiruvannamalai.

Howrah-Puducherry bi-weekly Train No. 12867/12868 must be provided with a stoppage at Tiruvannamalai. Villupuram-Vellore Passenger Train and also Villupuram-Kharagpur, Villupuram-Purulia trains via Tiruvannamalai must be introduced soon.

During the annual and monthly festival period, special trains must be operated between Tiruvannamalai and several parts of the State like Chennai, Madurai, Coimbatore, Tirunelveli and Tiruchi. Even from Delhi, introduction of special trains must be considered. As the public expected a lot from the railway authorities, they must ensure that the gauge conversion in Tiruvannamalai route at a cost of Rs. 500 crore should not go waste. Tiruvannamalai Railway Station should also be upgraded as a pilgrimage centre station in the similar pattern of Varanasi, Rameswaram, Kancheepuram and Madurai.