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Title: Need to complete the gauge conversion work for the railway line between Thiruvarur and Pattukkottai.

SHRI P. LINGAM (TENKASI): Mr. Chairman, Sir, in India we have got some of the oldest railway lines that are famous worldwide. The railway line between Chennai and Rameswaram linking the East Coast towns especially Thiruvarur, Muthupettai, Vedaranyam, Adhirampattinam, Agasthiampalli going upto Karaikudi en route Rameswaram. This metre gauge line is there right from the days of Britishers. Our country ranks number two in salt production by the side of sea. Salt produced in this area used to be transported to the northern parts of India right from British days. But now, the gauge conversion work taken up all over India has taken its toll. So, the famous and popular trains like Kamban Express and Manora Express that used to ply in this route are not operative because of the gauge conversion work pending for long. Now, the people of Thiruvarur District in Tamil Nadu are greatly agitated about the priority not being given to the gauge conversion work for the railway line between Thiruvarur and Pattukkottai. Various organizations in the towns covered in this rail route are greatly agitated and have announced a dharna on 5<sup>th</sup> of May. Hence, I urge upon the Railways to take into consideration the strong sentiments of the people here and take up the gauge conversion work between Thiruvarur and Pattukkottai on priority basis.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

Shri O.S. Manian is associating with the matter raised by Shri P. Lingam.