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Title: Need to operate a daily passenger train from Salem to Chennai.

SHRI S. SEMMALAI (SALEM): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir, for giving me this opportunity.

In today's 'Zero Hour', I intended to raise the issue of requesting the hon. Railway Minister to operate a daily passenger express train between Salem and Chennai. So now, while speaking on this matter during the 'Zero Hour', it is heartening that the announcement was already made in the Rail Budget presented today of operating a new train daily from Palani to Chennai *via* Salem. Salem is the headquarters of my Constituency.

Through this announcement, my repeated representations and requests to the Railway Ministry have been partly fulfilled. Even though the Salem Railway Division was formed long back, yet so far there is no train service from Salem to Chennai between 9.30 a.m and 4.30 p.m. This causes a great amount of inconvenience and hardship to the traders and general public in and around Salem. Because of this reason, I actually demanded a day time train to be operated from Salem to Chennai and vice-versa on daily basis. There has been a great demand for it.

However the announcement of operating the train from Palani has come as a relief for us.

One more advantage with this announcement is that Palani, which is a famous pilgrimage centre of Lord Muruga, is getting linked with Salem and Chennai. So, I thank the hon. Railway Minister for having complied with my repeated requests and having fulfilled the long pending demand of the people of Salem District.

Therefore, instead of pressing any demand, I would once again take this opportunity to thank the hon. Railway Minister for having complied with my repeated requests.