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Title: Need to allocate funds for gauge-Conversion of railway line between Madurai and Bodinayakanur and construction of new railway line between Dindigul-Sabarimala.

SHRI R. PARTHIPAN (THENI): I would like to bring it to the kind notice of the Government that Madurai - Bodinayakanur railway line is in my parliamentary constituency. Due to broad-gauge conversion in the year 2010, rail services were stopped on this rail route. A study for financial estimation was done in the year 2011 and since then the work has not commenced. Transportation of people and several business activities have been affected. Even though a new railway line between Dindigul-Sabarimala (Kerala) was announced, no work has begun in this regard. Several lakhs of pilgrims and devotees of Lord Sri Ayyappa belonging to the States of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra are affected due to lack of adequate rail connectivity to Sabarimala. The pilgrims are now forced to travel by overcrowded buses. There were expectations that there would be announcements in this regard in the railway budget presented on 26 February 2015. It is highly disappointing that no allocation has been made for these rail projects in the current budget. I, therefore, urge the Ministry of Railways to allocate funds for these projects and expedite their implementation.