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Title: Need to introduce an additional train between Rameswaram and Chennai Egmore.

SHRI A. ANWHAR RAAJHAA (RAMANATHAPURAM): Hon. Chairman, Sir, I am thankful to you for giving me this opportunity to raise a matter of urgent public importance.

Rameswaram is one of the famous pilgrimage cities in the South India after Varanasi. Everyday, thousands of people are coming to Rameswaram from all over the country as also abroad. But there is no direct day time express train to Rameswaram from the North India. The pilgrims and tourists from the North have to de-board at Chennai and again board another train to Rameswaram and vice-versa.

The main occupation and income of the people in these areas is fishing; and it is very difficult to export these catches to other parts of the country and to abroad due to lack of a day time express train to Chennai. A special variety of prawn is generally exported abroad from Rameswaram, which earns more foreign exchange to India even without sufficient train facilities.

Hence I would request the hon. Railway Minister to introduce a day time express train to Rameswaram from Chennai.

Sir, at Mandapam railway station, the ticket reservation counter was closed before the broad gauge conversion. But after the conversion, the reservation counter at Mandapam railway station has not been reopened yet. Once Mandapam Town Panchayat was a destination to Rameswaram before the construction of sea over bridge to connect Rameswaram by road. Mandapam is also having a lot of offices like Centre Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Indian Coastguard, Sri Lankan Refugee Camp, Kendriya Vidyalayas and other State Government offices.

I would, therefore, request the hon. Railway Minister to re-open the ticket reservation counter at Mandapam railway station.

Similarly, in Perungulam near Uchipuli railway station, there is a Naval Air Force Station, which consists of several offices in and around Uchipuli railway station. But there is no stoppage of express trains in Uchipuli.

So, I would request the hon. Railway Minister that all the trains from Rameswaram to Chennai may be made to stop at Uchipuli railway station.

Sir, I would welcome the hon. Railway Minister to Rameswaram by the new day time express train to be introduced, for special darshan at Rameswaram.

Thank you.