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Title: Need to restore train services on Palakkadu-Pollachi railway line

SHRI P.K. BIJU (ALATHUR): From the date of its commissioning on 1st April 1932, the Palakkadu-Pollachi meter gauge line was extensively used for travel, trade and pilgrimage mainly by the people of Kerala and Tamilnadu. The route was closed in 2008 for gauge conversion works. The work had been completed at the end of 2015 and a train started operating on this route, but lasted only for one month. Southern Railway spent Rs.350 crores for constructing the Broad gauge line, new station buildings, level crossings, signalling and telecommunications system, standard platforms, foot over bridges, subways, shelters, ramps and other passenger amenities. Even after spending such a huge amount to build up the extensive infrastructure, it is quite unfortunate that the route is being underutilized by the southern railway. Conversion of the gauge resulted in modernization of Palakkad Town-Pollachi section and changed its entire outlook. But, presently, there is only one passenger special train operating on the route.

The Palakkadu-Pollachi route connects important religious centres such as Guruvayoor in Kerala and Rameswaram and Tamil Nadu via Palakkadu, Dindigal and Madurai. A train connecting Guruvayoor —Rameswaram was proposed long back.

I urge the Government to take necessary steps to restore the previous train services stopped following gauge conversion of Palakkadu —Pollachi line and take urgent steps to start new trains on the route as early as possible.