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Title: Need to address railway related problems faced by people of Kerala.

DR. SHASHI THAROOR (THIRUVANANTHAPURAM): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

I would like to draw the attention of the Government to the decision of the Southern Railway to deny sanction of new trains for Kerala. They are citing capacity constraints, Madam Speaker but instead of remedying this capacity related issue, this ground has been used to deny the State its legitimate interests. The Lalkuan- Thiruvananthapuram Express, that comes to my constituency, the extension of the Pune-Ernakulam Express to Thiruvananthapuram and the proposal to increase the frequency of the Kochuveli-Bikaner Express to thrice a week and the Kochuveli-Lokamanya Tilak Express to a daily basis as recommended by the Central Railway have all been denied by the Southern Railway.

Now, the people who depend heavily on the railways for long distance travel will now be inconvenienced by inconvenient and infrequent train routes. There is a disappointing neglect of Kerala, Madam Speaker, of the railway needs of Kerala. There have been long pending suburban rail projects – the coach factory in Palakkad, the development of Nemom-Kochuveli stations have been pending for years. The Thiruvananthapuram Central Railway station suffers from significant congestion as it has only six or seven track lanes, two of which are used for train servicing. I have submitted a proposal to the Ministry suggesting that the coach-care facility be shifted from Thiruvananthapuram Central Railway station to a new facility close to Nemom-Kochuveli but the Southern Railway has not done this either. There is a continued delay in the completion of track doubling work in and from Thiruvananthapuram which is contributing to this issue. With 70 per cent doubling work, the stretch has been neglected out

of Thiruvananthapuram and I really urge that the Ministry work with the State Government in order to do this.

I would request the Government to take immediate steps to prevent the neglect of Kerala's railway infrastructure and to enhance the development of the State's railways. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

HON. SPEAKER:

Shri P.K. Biju and

Adv. Joice George are permitted to associate with the issue raised by Dr. Shashi Tharoor.