

infrastructural facilities in the stations immediately. In order to operate more trains from Kanniyakumari station, terminal facilities at Nagercoil have to be improved by providing more pit lines, stabling lines and 24 coach platforms.

Three daily trains ply between Chennai and Hyderabad (Train No.2603, 2759 and 7651). Any one of these trains can be extended up to Kanniyakumari via Tiruchirapalli and Madurai. Otherwise, a new daily train can start operating between Hyderabad and Kanniyakumari via Vijayawada, Tirupati, Chengalpattu, Tiruchirapalli and Madurai.

Secondly, there is an urgent need to run daily train from Hyderabad to Ajmer as hundred and thousands of pilgrims go to Dargah Sharif. I have already mentioned it in the last Budget Session. Please consider above two proposals as early as possible.

Demand to lay new railway lines in Tamil Nadu

DR. K. MALAISAMY (Tamil Nadu): Sir, in the process of an active and all out effort towards further growth and development, the Indian Railways have rightly gone on a study and survey and identified certain deserving areas for forming new railway lines in Tamil Nadu. In one such attempt, it is gratifying to note that the Railways have earmarked five new lines in Tamil Nadu — Dindigul to Kumli, Dharamapuri to Muraipur, Ariyalur to Tanjavur Mannargudi to Pattukottai and one more line for execution. In that context, it is needless to point out that Tamil Nadu was a neglected State for quite some time from the point of view of railway service and development and the above said projects are mostly passing through the very backward areas that are yet to touch and taste the fruits of railway services and facilities.

Coming to the five new railway lines, the Planning Commission seemed to have estimated the cost around Rs. 1500 crores and suggested that the concerned State Government may share 50 per cent of the cost in view of economic viability, *etc.* It is most unfortunate that the present Government of Tamil Nadu is not willing to share the cost of the project, while the eight other States are too willing to share the cost from 50 per cent to 70 per cent. It is all the more very much disappointing that the personal meeting of hon. Minister of State, Railways, recently with the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in that connection could not persuade him from the negative stand.

It is the popular and public demand of Tamil Nadu that these projects should come through within a time frame by some means or other. Thank you.

SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I associate myself with the Special Mention made by Dr. K. Malaisamy.

SHRI S. ANBALAGAN (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I associate myself with the Special Mention made by Dr. K. Malaisamy.

Demand to take appropriate measures to make existing Community Health Centres fully functional and increase their numbers in the Country

SHRI A. ELAVARASAN (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I would like to bring to the notice of the Government the dismal situation of Community Health Centres in our country. It is understood

that nearly 50 per cent of sanctioned posts of specialists at various Community Health Centres (CHCs) throughout the country are vacant. The CHCs are formed especially to provide specialised medical care and to promote child health throughout the country in rural areas. Unfortunately, the number of CHCs is less and even in the 4500 community health centres in our country, there are equal number of posts lying vacant.

Further, out of the sanctioned posts for these community health centres, a significant percentage of posts are vacant at various levels. For instance, about 8.8 per cent of the sanctioned posts of female health workers are vacant as compared to about 32 per cent of the male health workers. Same is the situation in Primary Health Centres also. In PHCs, nearly 39 per cent of the sanctioned posts of Health Assistants are vacant and shockingly, about 5.6 per cent of the PHCs are without even a doctor.

Therefore, in view of the fact that medical facilities extended by these centres are more essential for the rural population, I request the Government, through this august House, to take appropriate action to make all existing CHCs fully functional as well as increase the number of Community and Primary Health Centres. Most importantly, I urge upon the Government to fill up immediately all vacant posts existing at various levels.

SHRI S. ANBALAGAN (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I associate myself with the Special Mention made by Shri A. Elavarasan.

Concern over Jeopardizing of Indian Rice Genes by Mahyco

MS. MABEL REBELLO (Jharkhand): The Mahyco seed company has conducted unprotected field trials of GM Rice Hybrids in Jharkhand flouting all rules prescribed for field trials of GM crops.

The company lied to the Government (DBT) stating that it had burnt the crop residue after harvest, in compliance with the rules. Gene Campaign has recorded that no burning had taken place. Alarmingly, new GM rice plants were coming up. This has started the process of contaminating other rice crops in the region.

Mahyco's careless trials can contaminate natural rice populations with alien GM genes. Orissa, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh are acknowledged as the birthplace of rice, where its maximum genetic diversity is found. On this genetic wealth rests the stability and viability of all the rice cultivated in the world.

Countries like Mexico (corn), Peru (potato) and China (soybean) have banned GM versions of their special crops. Only India takes this risk.

Careless field trials can contaminate our rice exports. The Agbiotechnology Task Force, chaired by Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, recommended that GM rice should be kept far away from centres of rice diversity and that crops, in which India had a trading interest like rice and soybean, should not be genetically engineered, for fear of losing export markets.