

The temples declared as Heritage Sites like Darasuram, Gangaikonda, Cholapuram, Pazhayarai etc. are also easily accessible from Kumbakonam.

Kumbakonam is noted for fine arts like music, dance, folk arts, sculpture, etc. The silk fabrics, brass, silver and bronzewares, jewellery, etc. manufactured here find their way to all places in India and abroad. The idols, statues, etc. made of brass, bronze or panchaloka conceived and shaped in this area are not only installed in our temples and worshipped but also exported to many foreign countries. This city has been attracting many Indian and foreign tourists.

In view of the above factors, I request the Union Government to declare the holy city of Kumbakonam as a very important tourist centre and to do the needful in propagating and publicizing this message in all the communications and publications of the Tourism Department. This is important in view of the forthcoming Mahamaham Festival in February-March, 2016.

Demand for widening of certain stretches of National Highway No. 67 in Tamil Nadu and reconstructing a steel bridge on Highway at Kallar

SHRI A. K. SELVARAJ (Tamil Nadu): The widening four lane from km 360/6-380/0 of NGM road (NH-67) was previously under the control of NHAI. Last year this road was handed over to NH due to cancellation of Kangeyampalayam -- Mettupalayam (54 km) four lane work. Existing Coimbatore to Narasimanaickenpalayam stretch was already four laned. Balance stretch from Narasimanaickenpalayam to Mettupalayam is only two lane. Hence, traffic congestion occurs at this stretch. Hence, four laning of this stretch is necessary. Cost required for this work is ₹ 35 crores. This work is recommended by Tamil Nadu State NH Wing.

Another thing which needs the urgent attention of the Government is concerning the steel bridge at Kallar km 388/8 of Nagapatnam -- Gudalur -- Mysore Road (NH-67) located between Mettupalayam and Ooty at Kallar on NH-67. The bridge was constructed in the year 1925, and load carrying capacity of ten tons only. For the past several years the said distressed and narrow steel bridge about 200 length has not been taken up for reconstruction. If any untoward thing happens to this bridge, the NH-67 road will be cut off. It is ascertained that the cost required for the above bridge is Rs. 8 crores.

Therefore, I urge upon the hon. Minister to pay special attention to the widening of the above said road and reconstruction of the above said distressed and narrow steel bridge and direct the concerned to commence the work on it at the earliest.