

ज्यादा पुराना है और इसके एयर ट्रैफिक कंट्रोल तथा बिल्डिंग की मरम्मत पर प्रति वर्ष करोड़ों रूपए खर्च हो रहे हैं, पर यहां की जनता को इसका कोई लाभ नहीं मिल रहा है। केशोद एयरपोर्ट से मात्र 40 किलोमीटर की दूरी पर गिर फॉरेस्ट है, जहां पर शेरों के रहने का एशिया का सबसे बड़ा स्थान है। इससे 40 किलोमीटर की दूरी पर ही पृथ्वीराज चौहान द्वारा निर्मित बारह ज्योतिर्लिंगों में से एक सोमनाथ मंदिर है, जिसका जीर्णोद्धार हमारे परम प्रिय नेता, सरदार वल्लभ भाई पटेल ने करवाया था। इसी के पास धारवाड़ भी है इन तीनों स्थानों के कारण यहां पर सालों भर श्रद्धालुओं और पर्यटकों की भीड़ लगी रहती है। इसके अतिरिक्त, यहां के लोगों का भी अनेक स्थानों पर जाना-आना होता है। मेरे विचार से इस एयरपोर्ट पर यात्री हवाई जहाजों का पुनः आना-जाना शुरू होना चाहिए।

अतः मेरा नागर विमानन मंत्री से अनुरोध है कि वहां की जनता की मांग को देखते हुए इस एयरपोर्ट पर यात्री हवाई जहाजों का नियमित रूप से आना-जाना पुनः प्रारंभ किया जाए ताकि इसका लाभ वहां के लोगों, श्रद्धालुओं और पर्यटकों को मिल सके और साथ ही सरकार की आय में भी वृद्धि हो सके।

SHRI CHUNIBHAI KANJIBHAI GOHEL (Gujarat): Sir, I associate myself with the Special Mention made by the hon. Member.

MAHANT SHAMBHUPRASADJI TUNDIYA (Gujarat): Sir, I also associate myself with the Special Mention made by the hon. Member.

SHRI MADHUSUDAN MISTRY (Gujarat): Sir, I also associate myself with the Special Mention made by the hon. Member.

DR. C.P. THAKUR (Bihar): Sir, I also associate myself with the Special Mention made by the hon. Member.

**Demand for expansion of Mettupalayam Railway Platform and
providing other train services in Nilgiris**

SHRI A. K. SELVARAJ (Tamil Nadu): Sir, presently the platform at Mettupalayam Railway Station can accommodate trains with only 13 coaches maximum and therefore there is an urgent need for expanding it to accommodate trains with at least 24 coaches. In the absence of a bigger platform, the Mettupalayam-Chennai 12672 Nilagiri Express starts from Mettupalayam with only 13 coaches and 11 more coaches are attached at Coimbatore railway station, including the general un-reserved coach. This causes a lot of inconvenience to the people of Mettupalayam in the absence of a general unreserved coach. This station also does not have a much required PIT-line for the maintenance of engines and coaches. There is space available for the same at this station. The following trains start or terminate at Coimbatore. Since Mettupalayam is the last destination on the foot-hill of Nilagiri Mountains and is close to the famous tourist place Ooty, there is always a mad rush to Mettupalayam in all seasons. Therefore, it is requested that the following trains be extended or terminated at Mettupalayam. 12674 Cheran Express which

presently runs between Coimbatore-Chennai-Coimbatore be extended to Mettupalaym. 22610 Coimbatore-Mangalore Intercity Express be extended to Mettupalaym. 56323 Coimbatore-Mangalore Fast Passenger be also extended to Mettupalaym. 15344 Amrita Express running between Palakkad and Thiruvananthapuram be extended to Mettupalayam. The people have been demanding for introduction of a new passenger train between Mettupalayam and Pollachi, Mettupalayam and Bangalore and a new passenger train between Mettupalayam and Coimbatore for an additional run of existing passenger train running between Mettupalayam and Coimbatore because of huge passenger traffic to all these places from Mettupalayam. The passenger train between Mettupalayam and Coimbatore does not run on Sunday and the people are facing huge hardship because of this. Therefore, this train should also be made run on Sunday too.

Another demand of the people is stoppage of the passenger train running between Mettupalayam and Coimbatore at Veerapandi, Puthu Pudur and Tudiyalur because of a large number of passengers from/to these places. Therefore, I urge upon the hon. Minister to look into the above and direct the Southern Railway to implement the above demands at the earliest. Thank you.

**Demand for declaring Tamil Nadu a drought-hit State and give assistance
to the affected farmers in time**

SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI (Tamil Nadu): Tamil Nadu is facing an urgent drought-like situation, which has led to poor agricultural productivity, rural distress, acute shortage of drinking water and fodder. For three consecutive years- 2011, 2012 and 2013- the State has been reeling under drought, having received below normal rainfall. In 2013, both the monsoons, the North- East and the South West, had failed. As per the warnings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the El Nino effect over the Indian subcontinent will be severe this year. Already the monsoons have arrived late, thus, creating a crisis situation in the state. Acute water scarcity, across the State, has curtailed the cultivation of short- term crops. Perennial crops, such as, Areca Plantations have also withered for want of water. Unable to bear crop loss and meet obligations of repaying crop loan, farmers are ending their lives. According to Cauvery Delta Farmers' Protection Association, since 2012, more than 13 farmers have committed suicide in delta districts owing to crop failure, following water scarcity. The State is also witnessing an acute shortage of drinking water with the situation being deplorable in remote tribal hamlets.

Therefore, I appeal to the Government to declare Tamil Nadu as a drought-hit State and help farmers get the required relief on time. I also urge upon the Government to provide a waiver in the crop loans to the farmers. Since water scarcity is a recurrent issue in my state, I urge upon the Agriculture Ministry and the Rural Development