

Period	09.09.2015 to 31.10.2015	09.09.2016 to 31.10.2016
Total vacant berths in Rajdhani, Shatabdi and Durgonto trains	12428	5871*

* 22413/22414 Nizamuddin-Madgaon Rajdhani Express (which was not running during 09.09.2015 to 31.10.2015) has not been included in the above figure.

Gauge conversion between Peralam and Karaikal

1237. SHRI N. GOKULAKRISHNAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the train services between Peralam in Tamil Nadu and Karaikkal in the Union Territory of Puducherry were stopped for many years due to gauge conversion;

(b) whether there is any proposal in pipeline for gauge conversion between Peralam and Karaikal;

(c) the total distance to be covered under gauge conversion;

(d) the total estimate for undertaking the gauge conversion work; and

(e) whether Government will initiate immediate action to start the gauge conversion work which is pending for many years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN): (a) Yes, Sir. Train services between Peralam and Karaikal are not available, but not due to gauge conversion, as there is no metre gauge line for conversion.

(b) to (e) Peralam and Karaikal are already connected on broad gauge rail network *via* Thiruvarur and Nagapattinam and no metre gauge line exists between these two stations. As such, question of gauge conversion of line between Peralam and Karaikal does not arise. However, laying of Broad Gauge line between Karaikal and Peralam (23 km.) was included as material modification of Tiruchirappalli-Nagore-Karaikal gauge conversion project in Railway Budget 2013-14. The estimated cost of this new line is ₹ 178 crore. In-Principle Approval by erstwhile Planning Commission had included a condition of cost sharing by M/s Karaikal Port Limited. However, due to refusal by M/s Karaikal Port Limited to share the cost, the work could not be taken forward.