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Title: Need to take steps to declare Madurai airport as an International airport.

*SHRI S. VENKATESAN (MADURAI): Hon. Speaker, Vanakkam. Madurai Airport has to be declared as an International Airport. The statistics which I want to state here may give you a sort of shock. If you compare with the 20 International Airports in India, the number of passengers who used Madurai airport last year is more than that of nine international airports of the country. If you make a direct comparison with the Varanasi airport which is in our Hon. Prime Minister's Constituency. The number of international passengers who used this Varanasi airport last year was 1,24,950. But the number of international passengers who used this Madurai airport last year was 254163. That is exactly twice the number. Similarly, Tirupati, Imphal, Port Blair and Vijayawada airports have had no international passengers during last year. Still these four airports are considered as international airports by the Union Government. But even though the Madurai airport was used by 2.5 lakh international passengers last year, it has not been declared as international airport by the Union Government. Why is there such a partiality? The figures I quoted are not imaginary. This is the statistics released by Airports Authority of India. Madurai airport should be declared as an international airport. This is my humble request. This is a demand of people belonging to nine Parliamentary Constituencies of Tamil Nadu. I hope that Hon. Members from Tamil Nadu including ...

* in the House will accept this. I urge that Madurai airport should be declared as an international airport immediately. This should be declared

as an airport working 24x7, round the clock. Madurai airport should be included as per the BASA agreement. Moreover flight services should be started from Madurai to Singapore, Malaysia and UAE.

माननीय सभापति : जिन माननीय सांसद का नाम लिया गया है, वह रिकॉर्ड से निकाल दिया जाए ।