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Title: Regarding upgrading Rajahmundry Airport to International Airport -laid.

**SHRI MARGANI BHARAT (RAJAHMUNDRY):** The Rajahmundry airport is a domestic airport located at a distance of 16 km north of Rajahmundry in the Madhurapudi area in Andhra Pradesh. Besides the commercial low cost flights to Hyderabad, the air strip is also extensively used by the helicopters of ONGC and other Government agencies for its offshore oil exploration operations.

Sprawling on an area of 366 acres of land, the airport at Rajahmundry has been operational since the British period. It was served by Vayudoot between 1985 and 1994 and by VIF Airways in 1995. The new terminal at the Rajahmundry airport was inaugurated on 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2012 and AAI plans to extend the existing runway from 1,749 metres to 3,125 metres in order to enable landing of aircraft like Airbus A320. Limited by runway length, presently airlines operate smaller 70 seat ATR turbo-prop aircraft and Bombardier from Rajahmundry. Rajahmundry is a hub to Godavari district which has a population of nearly one crore. Therefore, A.P. State Government proposed International Cricket Stadium in Rajahmundry. The nearest international airport connecting Rajahmundry to the rest of the world is the Vishakhapatnam airport, which is 200 km away. There is one terminal at the Rajahmundry airport which has the capacity of holding 150 passengers during peak hours. There is only one gate at the terminal serving both arriving as well as departing passengers. Proposals for the

expansion of this airport are under progress and I understand that the Government has sanctioned about Rs. 80 crore for its expansion.

I request the Government to upgrade it to international airport as lakhs of people from West Godavari and East Godavari are working in the Gulf countries so that they could travel to Rajahmundry directly from the Gulf and other countries too.