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15.00 hrs.

Title: Need to allocate adequate funds for extension of existing runway at Kargil airport.

SHRI HASSAN KHAN (LADAKH): With the start of air service on 14th February, 2003 from the new airport of Kargil which was completed recently by the Airport Authority of India at a cost of Rs.37 crore, this far off place in the Ladakh Region has again come up on the air map of India after 40 years. Kargil remains cut off from the rest of the country for more than six months in a year due to snow fall on mountain passes. Now the air service to this strategically important place is a memorable job of the Government, for the people of the area as well as to the brave jawans who are serving there in most inhospitable weather conditions and also to their family members. The people of this Region are highly thankful to the Ministry of Defence and Civil Aviation for starting air service after spending a huge amount on construction of the airport.

The airport has become operational for light and medium aircraft; and to make it operational for heavy aircraft like Boeing 737, the length of the runway needs to be extended by another 3,000 fts. from the present length of 6,400 fts. Space for the extension is also available. Expert on aviation has given this suggestion after visiting the site. We are highly hopeful that the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Defence will kindly carry out the survey and provide funds for extension so that Indian Airlines can start regular flights in due course of time.