

Title : Need to grant exemptions to the Kerala Government for setting up of Kerala Airlines for the benefit of the Indians working in Gulf countries.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : Sir, the grievances of Keralites working in the Gulf countries have become acute. The Kerala Government had submitted a proposal before the Union Government towards the formation of Kerala Airlines. The proposal is under the consideration of the Government. They have also applied for exemption in the guidelines so far as sanctioning private airlines are concerned having 20 aircraft and all that. But it is

* Translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil.

a public concern and it is sponsored by the Kerala Government themselves. They are doing it for the benefit of Keralites in Gulf countries.

Now, if we see, both the national and international airlines are taxing these poor workers heavily. I may not be incorrect if I may put it that they are collecting airfare from these people equivalent to the sum required for air travel round the globe. They are collecting charges up to New York and some other far off places. So, these poor people find it difficult to return to their houses for their household affairs.

The Kerala Government took the initiative of starting a new airline so that these poor people may get less fare than the fare of an air ticket to US which will be a boon to these workers. So, I would request the Central Government to sanction the proposal of the Kerala Government for floating a new airline with public participation. This is an urgent matter and necessary exemptions may be made so that the Government of Kerala can start functioning of the proposed new Kerala airlines.

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN : Sir, please allow me to associate with him.