

Title: Need to provide air connectivity linking Madurai with Kuala Lumpur and Singapore.

SHRI N.S.V. CHITTHAN (DINDIGUL): The Temple city of Madurai which had got ancient cultural heritage has now developed world class hospitals at par with any international standard.

Government of Tami Nadu is developing an IT Park in Madurai and a special Economic Zone near Tirunelveli.

Sethusamundram Project work is expected to be completed shortly. Once the project is completed, ships from all over the world are expected to arrive in Tuticorin and the Port will become busy with passenger and Cargo traffic.

It has been observed that total efforts is underway to develop Madurai-Tuticorin belt as an industrial hub and growing industries in this belt is expected to give impetus to the air traffic.

Tuticorin Port Trust is developing cruise Tourism at Tuticorin.

Madurai and Chettinad are having ethnic affinity with Malaysia. People from these areas are either settled and doing business or working in Malaysia. There are lot of family and labour traffic travelling between Madurai and Kuala Lumpur via Chennai. There is possibility of shifting of traffic to other carriers due to non- availability of seats for Kuala Lumpur and Singapore and other Gulf countries from Chennai.

* Treated as laid on the Table.

At present average of 30 to 35 international passengers are travelling from Madurai and the growth rate in the international traffic is 11 % to 15%.

As per the analysis Madurai Airport has carried a total international traffic of 77138 pax during 2005 which is higher than international traffic in Coimbatore (13143 pax), Jaipur (48252 pax) and Varanasi (35569 pax) during the same period.

I am very confident that there is a potential for thrice a week flights to South East Asia, Middle East and Gulf countries. Delay in operation will give opportunity for other Airlines. It will be difficult for Indian Airlines to penetrate in the market at a latest stage because of the mindset of the Agents and passengers.

Hence connectivity between Madurai-Bangalore-Kuala Lumpur, Madurai-Bangalore-Singapore and Chennai-Tuticorin-Madurai-Chennai will facilitate tourism, trade relations, employment opportunities.

I urge upon the Government to take early steps to cater the above needs by providing international air connectivity at Madurai airport.