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Title: Need to improve air connectivity to Coimbatore International Airport particularly with the Middle East and South East Asia.

SHRI P. NAGARAJAN (COIMBATORE): Coimbatore the industrialised city and the surrounding towns like Erode, Tiruppur, Karur, Pollachi, Salem and Ooty have got manufacturing and export clusters contributing thousands of crores of rupees of foreign exchange. To meet the objective of 'Make in India' campaign, Coimbatore Airport conferred with international status in 2012 must get more air connectivity. When our country entered into bilateral agreement with ASEAN nations, may be by oversight, Coimbatore was missed out in the list of 18 Airports identified to operate without any restrictions on frequency and type of aircraft connecting countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and Sri Lanka. As of now only Silk Air and Air Arabia are operating five flights a week. The Textile and knitting industrial units and the farmers producing perishables like flowers, fruits and vegetables are now compelled to move their goods for export to far away airports like Chennai, Bengaluru and Cochin often resulting in huge loss. Considering the pending request from foreign airline operators to have Coimbatore as a destination, improved air connectivity with a special status to connect Middle East and South East Asia directly may be provided to Coimbatore Airport. (ends)