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title: Need to expedite operation of cargo services and upgrade the Madurai Airport, Tamil Nadu.

SHRI R. GOPALAKRISHNAN (MADURAI): Development of Madurai Airport will be a great boon to the City.

All clearances for Cargo operations at Madurai were given but the cargo operations are yet to be started. Presently, the growers of vegetable, flowers and fruits in Madurai region depend on Tiruchirappalli, Coimbatore and Thiruvananthapuram Airports involving road journeys to export their produce. Road journeys cause increase in expenditure and damage to the perishable produce. Bilateral agreements are to be made with Malaysia, Singapore and Dubai specifically meant for Madurai Airport.

The existing runway should be expanded from 7500 Feet to 10000 Feet. Central Government should undertake acquisition of land for the purpose. The State Government of Tamil Nadu is willing to extend all necessary support in this regard.

Therefore, I urge upon the Union Government to expedite starting of cargo services and to take up necessary steps for further development of Madurai Airport.