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Title: Regarding opening up of international commercial operations-laid.

SHRI T. N. PRATHAPAN (THRISSUR): Currently all international flights are operated under the Air Bubble program set by Indian Aviation Ministry and agreements signed with foreign countries in this regard.

The Air Bubble agreement is based on the number of seats allotted weekly and is currently slated at average 50 Percent seat occupancy rather than number of flights as per commercial agreements done earlier.

Because of Air Bubble seat agreements, the demand currently to visit abroad such as US, UK, Gulf and Saudi Arabia is very high and flight capacity is low resulting in higher fares.

For, example, one-way fare to DXB is currently sold at an average fare of INR18000- to INR20000- which in normal course would be INR8500; Return fare of DXB which would be in the range of INR20000- is sold at more than double the fare at INR45000. Similarly fares to US, UK and Europe are currently sold by Airlines at double the average cost. Our expatriates suffer a lot due to this in this time of crisis.

The government should consider opening up of international commercial operations from India immediately as this would help normal flight operations and overall fares would come back to pre Covid days which would bring in more relief to passengers.