

**Regarding need to set up an airport at Melchengam near Tiruvannamalai
in Tamil Nadu under UDAN-RCS Scheme-Laid**

SHRI C. N. ANNADURAI (TIRUVANNAMALAI): Tiruvannamalai in Tamil Nadu is a religious place of national and international importance and prominent pilgrimage destination, which is famous for Arunachaleshwar (Lord Shiva) Temple and Ramana Maharishi Ashram. Around 1 -1.5 lakh pilgrims visit the said temple every day. Further 15 to 20 lakh pilgrims from India and abroad congregate in Tiruvannamalai for Parikrama (Girivallam-14.5 Kms) around holy hill of Arunachaleshwar every full moon day. The Annual Kartikeyei Deepam Festival attracts more than 35 lakhs of pilgrims including NRIs and foreigners to this place. Tourists from abroad and other parts of the country who prefer to fly to Tiruvannamalai, the nearest airport happens to be 200 km away at Chennai or Bangalore. This place has huge potential for revenue generation from religious tourism which is yet to be tapped due to absence of nearby airport. Therefore, I request Hon?ble Minister of Civil Aviation, to kindly instruct the concerned authorities to take viable steps to build an airport under UDAN-RCS scheme, at Melchengam which is nearby Tiruvannamalai, for benefit of visitors to this place.