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Title: Need to expand and upgrade the Silsuan airport in Keonjhar district, Orissa and Tonto airport in West Singhbhum district of Jharkhand-Laid.

SHRI ANANTA NAYAK (KEONJHAR): Keonjhar district in Orissa has a prominent place on the mineral map of India. It is known in the International market for its high grade Iron ore, Bauxite, Manganese and several other minerals. These minerals are being procured from the mineral belt of Keonjhar and exported to countries like China, Japan and South Korea through Paradip and Haldia ports. Thousands of workers are deployed in the mining areas in Keonjhar and these ports for loading, unloading and transport of these minerals for export purpose.

Keeping in view the prospect of mineral trade, a large number of companies have set up Sponge Iron plants and proposed to set up steel plants in that district. The officials working in these companies need to go by plane to Delhi, Kolkata, Bhubaneswar and other cities in connection with their business. Further, the growth of trade, industry, tourism and cultural activities will be practically not possible due to lack of Air connectivity. There exist two minor airports at Silsuan in Keonjhar district of Orissa and another at Tonto in West Singhbhum district of Jharkhand. There is a scope for expansion of these two airports.

As such, I demand that the airports at Silsuan and Tonto be expanded and upgraded as full-fledged domestic airports and facilitate the people of Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj districts in Orissa and West Singhbhum district in Jharkhand to make use of the air connectivity to these airports without any further delay.