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Title : Need to introduce Helicopter services to promote tourism in Madurai.

SHRI P. MOHAN (MADURAI) : Hon'ble Chairman, Sir, Madurai city is one of the ancient historical cities in India which is also known as the Athens of South. It has a vast potential and resources to emerge as an important hub of commercial, pilgrimage, tourist and industrial activities. It has got important hill resorts and wild-life sanctuaries like Kodaikanal and Thekkady that will attract tourists towards nature. Kodaikanal is situated about 75 kms. from Madurai city. Thekkady is situated at about 150 kms. from this city. Palani, the important shrine of Lord Murugan among the famous six shrines of the deity attracts hundreds of pilgrims towards it. Thousands of pilgrims from all over the country throng Rameshvaram, the pilgrim town that is there from the puranic times. This town is situated 150 miles from Madurai city. Hence, Madurai city continues to remain an important centre attracting tourists of various hues from all over the world. Hence, I urge upon the Civil Aviation Ministry and the Tourism Ministry to provide enhanced infrastructural facility like Helicopter service to link all these tourist centres in and around Madurai city. In Jammu & Kashmir, we find Helicopter service taking pilgrims to Vaishnodevi Shrine. In the same pattern, Madurai must have Helicopter service to link all these places of tourism importance. This would greatly help those who can afford spending to save three to six hours in traveling to these places by road. Helicopter service would help the tourist both from across the country and from the different parts of the world to reach these destinations within an hour from Madurai city. This would greatly help the Madurai city to improve its economy thereby giving a pep to the foreign exchange earning to the country. Hence, I urge upon the Union Tourism Ministry and Civil Aviation Ministry to look into this aspect of promoting tourism making Madurai city an important tourist destination. Thank you.

* English translation of the speech originally delivered in Tamil