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Title: Need to expedite the settlement of insurance claim of victims of plane crash which occurred at Mangalore Airport last year.

SHRI P. KARUNAKARAN (KASARGOD): Madam Speaker, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak. I would like to place before this House an important issue with regard to the flight accident in Bangalore.

17.48 hrs.

(Dr. M. Thambidurai *in the Chair*)

The nation was witnessed by shock and it was unfortunate that last year, the flight which was flying from Dubai to Mangalore happened to meet with an accident. It was due to the negligence of the pilot and the Government has formed a Committee to know the details but the report has not been submitted yet. Within no time, the then Minister for Civil Aviation had come to the spot as also the Chief Ministers of Karnataka and Kerala. All the leaders of political parties came there.

164 passengers have died in that accident. It was said by Shri Praful Patel himself that according to the Montreal Convention decision, each passenger is eligible to get at least Rs. 75 to Rs. 80 lakh. He also said that monetary compensation is sufficient to meet the big damage. I am sorry to say that out of these 164 passengers, 56 passengers are from my constituency because Kasargod is very near to the Mangalore airport.

I appreciate the fact that hon. Prime Minister, hon. Chief Minister of Karnataka, hon. Chief Minister of Kerala have given some financial assistance. I am sorry to say that till this day their insurance claims have not been settled. I took up the issue with the Prime Minister, with the Civil Aviation Minister and also with the Standing Committee.

There are four major public insurance companies in our country. But the Air India and the Indian Airlines have entrusted these insurance claims with the Reliance. It is said that it has been done for speedy action and for better performance. But in our experience, even after one year, these claims have not been settled. I am sorry to say that three or four persons from the same family have died. There were children and women, who were returning from Dubai. They went there for jobs and some of them were coming to participate in some functions in their families. 164 persons have died, but our government is not able to settle the issue. Reliance Company is bargaining with them though there are clear directions under the Montreal Convention decision. India is a signatory to this Convention. On this basis alone, the Company has to give this full compensation of Rs. 75 or Rs. 80 lakh. But this Company is bargaining with the families saying that they are ready to give Rs. 30 lakh or Rs.40 lakh or Rs. 50 lakh. As it happened with the Bhopal gas tragedy victims, these people are also not able to go to Mumbai, they are also not able to go to the International Court though they want to go for a court case.

So, I would request the Government to give direction to this Insurance Company to settle the matter as early as possible.