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Title : Reported decision of Airport Authority of India to shift the location of International Airport from Dabolim to Mopa, Goa.

SHRI ALEMAO CHURCHILL (MARMUGAO): Mr. Speaker, Sir, Goa is a tourism revenue-led State and the sustenance of the State economy is dependent on tourism. Its population and skilled and semi-skilled people are entirely dependent on tourism. The tourism industry has been developed over at least two decades of sustained activity by the components of the industry and Goa is, therefore, on the international tourism map. However, despite its pre-eminence in the tourism scenario for the country, Goa is still being taken for granted and severely handicapped due to insensitive attention being given to it.

\* Not Recorded.

The first impression that the tourists get when they come to Goa is that India is shabby. Disastrous and the dilapidated airport terminal building makes the matter worse. Historically speaking, Dabolim Airport was handed over to the Navy to cover its maintenance cost. The volume of traffic into Goa, the status of Goa in the international context and the potential of Goa to increase its contribution to increase tourism revenue for India behoves Goa to have an exclusive international standard airport. Over the last few years, the Airports Authority of India, along with successive Governments of Goa have, in their wisdom, looked around and scouted for a suitable site to create this much-needed airport. It is amazing to see how logic has been set aside and the existing airport at Dabolim has not been given due consideration in terms of its location and proximity to Southern Goa, which is the preferred destination for international tourists.

Sir, it is natural to recommend the shifting of the Naval facilities at Dabolim to locations closer to the Western Naval Command/Sea Bird and in turn hand over the present facilities to the Airports Authority of India to create the desired international standard airport for Goa. Many points of view and many letters have been exchanged on this subject and many discussions have taken place on the merits and demerits of the case. At a lesser cost, an excellent facility can be created in the existing airport. Why, therefore, is the need for the present airport to move to Mopa and inconvenience the existing system of service that is being provided at Dabolim? The international tourists will be greatly inconvenienced if the developed Southern Goa, which has the main population of hotels, is put at a distance from the proposed site. Travel time from the airport to hotels will increase. Skilled and semi-skilled labour from the Southern part of Goa will be displaced and Dabolim, being in the centre of Goa, will become equi-distant from the North and South respectively. If we want to enhance the tourism facilities for Goa and provide tourism infrastructure for international tourists coming on vacation to Goa, then we must think of the people who are part of the service industry of Goa and not totally confuse this issue with possible personal interest.

MR. SPEAKER: Please cooperate and conclude now. You cannot read out a three-page statement.

SHRI ALEMAO CHURCHILL : Sir, I will conclude now by making the last point.

Dabolim is the most logical choice for the civilian international airport and not any other site. If an international airport comes up at Mopa or any other site, then Maharashtra will be serviced too, but Dabolim must continue as an International Airport for Goa with better facilities.

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded further.

*(Interruptions)\**

MR. SPEAKER: Some discipline has to be there.