

>

Title: Need to restore flights between Lakshadweep and Kerala.

SHRI HAMDULLAH SAYEED (LAKSHADWEEP): Respected Madam, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the discontinuation of Air India flight which flies between Lakshadweep and Kerala. It has caused a great inconvenience to the local islanders. This flight service to Lakshadweep was started way back in 1987. Since then, it has been 23 years of the inception of the erstwhile Indian Airlines service between Kerala and Lakshadweep. But it has now been discontinued. When enquired from the competent authority, they said that Air India has incurred a loss of Rs.4000 crore. But the loss that has been incurred by Air India in Lakshadweep-Kerala sector is hardly Rs.7 crore which is not even one per cent of the total losses that have been incurred by Air India. The flight between Lakshadweep and Kerala which has been provided by Air India was only a 16-seater beach craft. It can accommodate only 16 passengers at a time. But in the case of a private airline, the Kingfisher Airlines which is flying in the same sector, it has a craft with carrying capacity of 72 passengers at a time. When Kingfisher Airlines which is a private airlines even after incurring losses has not discontinued or stopped the flight, I fail to understand why on earth the Air India which is the sole national carrier has discontinued and stopped the flight service in this sector. Not only that, Lakshadweep has been granted the status of Scheduled Tribe under Schedule V of the Constitution on account of its geographical isolation from the mainland.

Therefore, I would request that taking all these circumstances into account, the Government should immediately re-start the flight service between Lakshadweep and Kerala.