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Title: Need to relax entry restriction for Indians having authentic identity proof to visit Lakshadweep.

MOHAMMED FAIZAL (LAKSHADWEEP): Madam Speaker, I thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to speak in this House on an important issue which is, tourism in Lakshadweep. While I meet my colleagues in Parliament and when I say that I am from Lakshadweep, they say आप इतनी अच्छी जगह से आते हैं, हमें वह देखनी चाहिए। लेकिन हालात ऐसे हैं कि आज भी वहां जाने में एंट्री रिसट्रिक्शन है। I am coming to it. I would like to place on record that our hon. MOS Shri Rudyji has already visited Lakshadweep and he has taken his Scuba Diving Course in Lakshadweep.

Madam, Lakshadweep is very much adjacent to Maldives. About 75 per cent of their income is generated from their tourism. Lakshadweep is a place which comes under the direct control of the Government of India. When we have a place like Maldives where we can generate employment and revenue, so far the Government of India has not opened up Lakshadweep as a tourism destination. I am very happy today that I am speaking on tourism because my election to this House is based on my assurance on developing tourism. Tourism is the only area by which people can get employment.

Taking that into consideration in 2008, the Department of Tourism had notified setting up of a Beach Resort in Agatti Island. There were total nine applicants. They were the local entrepreneurs. After putting crores of rupees, they constructed the resort. When they approached the administration for the final occupancy, the administration had denied that by saying it is falling under CRZ. It was not in the notification, in the initial stage. The matter reached before the hon. Supreme Court. Hon. Supreme Court appointed a Committee to study the CRZ issues. The Committee has given its Report that the entire Lakshadweep should be limited to 20 metres from the existing 50 metres of CRZ line. None of the resorts which is constructed now by the hard-earned money of the local people is falling under this because it is above 20 metres. Now the administration is not putting a proposal based on the recommendation of the Committee to the Ministry of Environment and Forests to get it notified in the Gazetteer which will settle all the issues of tourism. My final conclusion is this. There is an entry restriction to Lakshadweep, as of now. I feel that it is good because it is at strategic location. But this entry restriction should not be a ban for coming to Lakshadweep. I feel that the entire House would like to visit my Lakshadweep because it is the most beautiful island in the world. Yesterday I had a discussion with the hon. Minister also.

Madam, persons having valid travel documents or identity cards and persons having an accommodation confirmed in Lakshadweep may please be permitted to visit Lakshadweep. It is clear that seven employment opportunities are generated if one tourist visits a place. This is the only sustainable industry as far as Lakshadweep is concerned.

Madam, I urge upon the Government to open up Lakshadweep so that employment generation can be done, revenue can be generated, and Lakshadweep can become a global tourism destination. Thank you very much.

HON. SPEAKER: Hon. Members

*m02

Adv. Joice George,

*m03

P.K. Biju,

*m04

M.B. Rajesh, Arvind Sawant, and

*m05

Badruddin Ajmal are allowed to associate themselves on this issue.