

**Regarding withdrawal of Government Notification issued by the Revenue Department of Lakshadweep to acquire Bitra Island on the pretext of national security**

**SHRI HAMDULLAH SAYEED (LAKSHADWEEP):** Thank you Chairman, Sir, for giving me an opportunity to raise a matter of urgent public importance with regard to my constituency Lakshadweep, which is a Scheduled Tribe area. It is a socially and economically backward area. A notification has been issued by the Revenue Department of Lakshadweep which talks about acquiring Bitra Island which is the smallest island in Lakshadweep. Its stretch is less than a kilometre and it has not more than 500 people living there. Despite that, it hosts a significant economic zone, as the lagoon of Bitra Island is the largest in area, bigger than those of any other island in Lakshadweep. Fishermen from all the islands go, camp and fish there. It is a big economic opportunity for them.

In the pretext of national security, the Revenue Department is acquiring this land. After Independence, we have never had any national security issue for the last many decades. A Coast Guard unit and a Navy unit are already there on this island for national security purposes. Through you, my humble suggestion to the Government is to withdraw this notification immediately. This is an ill-conceived idea which does not have any compensation or rehabilitation plan for those who are already living there. Thank you, Sir.