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Title: Need to expedite the Defence Airport project at Minicoy in Lakshadweep Parliamentary Constituency.

SHRI HAMDULLAH SAYEED (LAKSHADWEEP):The geography and location of the Lakshadweep Islands has contributed considerably towards its vulnerability. The Lakshadweep Islands have been witnessing acts of piracy and trespassing within its vicinity for quite some time. The susceptibility of the Lakshadweep Islands to the activities of non-state actors was correctly highlighted following the Mumbai attack in November, 2008. The increasing incidents of piracy in and around the Islands have added a whole new dimension to threat perceptions.

Piracy has become a major cause of concern for the Indian security establishment. Keeping this in mind, the Government of India is augmenting the security of the Island territory. Hon'ble Defence Minister had agreed for an Air Strip (Defence Airport) at Minicoy to meet any emergency. But the implementation seems to be extremely slow in regard to land acquisition for the project, compensation to the land owners and commencement of construction by the Defence personnel.

Therefore, I request and urge the Government following a spurt in piracy attempts and in view of the threat to the Sea Lines of Communications in general and to the Lakshadweep Islands in particular, the project of Defence Airport at Minicoy be given to most priority.