

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS**

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 50**

**TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 7TH DECEMBER, 2022/ AGRAHAYANA 16, 1944
(SAKA)**

REDUCTION IN SHIPS OPERATING TO LAKSHADWEEP

50. SHRI ELAMARAM KAREEM:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the fact that the number of ships operating to Lakshadweep has been reduced recently and this has created difficulties for the island dwellers travelling to and fro the mainland;

(b) the reasons behind the reduction in number of ships operating between Lakshadweep and mainland;

(c) whether the Central Government has taken any action to address this issue, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the other measures taken by Government to increase and modernize the transportation facility to Lakshadweep?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS
(SHRI NITYANAND RAI)**

(a) to (c): Shipping is the mainstay of transportation in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep. The Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep owns a fleet comprising of all weather passenger-cum-cargo vessels and high speed crafts (fair weather vessels) to cater to the transportation needs of the Islanders. The number of vessels in service at

a particular time depends upon their scheduled/ un-scheduled repairs, statutory survey/certification requirements, slot availability in shipyards etc. Whenever a vessel goes out of service on account of requiring repairs, continuous efforts are made by the UT Administration of Lakshadweep in coordination with the Shipping Corporation of India to expedite the process of repair and bring the vessel back into service.

At present 08 vessels (02 all weather passenger-cum-cargo vessels and 06 High Speed Crafts) are operational in Lakshadweep. Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep has also informed that it has been able to schedule the program of available vessels for transportation of passengers and cargo in a manner which has resulted in mitigation of any difficulties to passengers. Further, in order to improve efficiency and provide more professional services, the operation and management of shipping vessels has been handed over to the Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) by the UT Administration.

(d): Besides shipping, air transportation facilities have also been developed in the Islands. Flight service is available between Kochi and Agatti Island, for which Viability Gap Funding is provided by the Government. In addition, three helicopters are also available in the

Islands for emergency inter-island as well as mainland-island medical evacuations. To improve air connectivity, feasibility study for the expansion of Agatti Airport and pre feasibility study for the development of a green field airstrip in Minicoy have also been completed recently. An agreement has also been signed between the UT Administration of Lakshadweep and the Cochin Port Authority for Operation, Management, Development and Maintenance of port facilities in Lakshadweep with the objective of strengthening port infrastructure in the Union Territory.
