

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO- 2386
ANSWERED ON 21/03/2023

SHIPPING VESSELS CONNECTING LAKSHADWEEP AND A&N ISLANDS WITH MAINLAND

2386. SHRI ABDUL WAHAB:

Will the Minister of PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware of the fact that the number of ships operating to Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar islands has been reduced recently and this has created difficulties for the island dwellers travelling to and from the mainland;
- (b) the reasons behind the reduction in the number of ships operating between these islands and mainland;
- (c) whether the Central Government has taken any action to address this issue; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF PORTS, SHIPPING AND WATERWAYS
(SHRI SARBANANDA SONOWAL)

(a) & (b) Presently, five all weather passenger ships are operational between Lakshadweep islands and mainland. In the context of Andaman & Nicobar Islands, in the year 2019, 03 Mainland Island vessels with 1200 passenger capacity were available with the A & N Administration to operate between Island and Mainland. Traffic in ships to & from mainland has reduced in last few years due to more attraction towards air route.

Vessels have to be withdrawn from service for about 45-60 days for dry-dock, repairs/ annual survey to comply with the statutory requirements of Marine Authorities, such as Indian Register of Shipping (IRS), Mercantile Marine Department (MMD) and Director General of Shipping (DGS). Accordingly, the vessels in service keep going for scheduled/ un-scheduled repairs as per requirements, statutory survey requirements, certificates renewal and docking slot availability at Shipyards.

(c) & (d) The following steps were taken to ensure efficient utilization of ships for the travel of islanders:-

- (i) The Union Territory of Lakshadweep Administration (UTLA) has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with M/s Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) for Operation and Maintenance (O&M) of vessels owned by UTLA on 02.02.2022.
- (ii) Introduced registration of passengers from mainland to islands on 11th June, 2022 onwards.
- (iii) Voyage schedules were revised for efficiently transporting the passengers.
- (iv) The tickets were issued on the registration on production of ID cards, by allocating proportionate percentage of seats for each islands, this has resulted in easing the public for confirming their travel without standing in queue for each and every ship.
- (v) While issuing tickets, it was ensured that genuine passengers like patients, students and workers were given first priority.
- (vi) For Lakshadweep the demands of the Mainland sector are being met by 01 Mainland Island vessel and 01 Inter Island vessel.
