

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS**

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1955**

**TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 20TH DECEMBER, 2023/ AGRAHAYANA 29, 1945
(SAKA)**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNION TERRITORY AREAS

1955 SHRI PABITRA MARGHERITA:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken by Government for the economic development of the Union Territory areas; and

(b) the details of steps taken by Government to promote fisheries and blue economy in the Island Union Territory areas?

ANSWER

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

(a): The Government has taken various steps for the economic development of UTs such as promoting tourism, augmentation of telecom & web connectivity, development of road, sea and air connectivity, development and promotion of clean and green energy, waste management including initiatives for waste to energy, commissioning of new power projects, boost to infrastructure, etc.

Tourism has been identified as a key sector due to its multiplier effect. The Government is actively promoting various kinds of tourism like eco-tourism, heritage tourism, adventure tourism, monsoon tourism,

promotion of niche tourism activities, tourist circuits, religious tourism, astro- tourism, cruise tourism, MICE tourism etc. In UT of J&K tourism sector has been accorded the status of industry, UT of DNH&DD have developed world class sea fronts and premier river fronts, in Island UTs eco-tourism resorts are being developed. In the UT of Ladakh first ever dark sky reserve of the country has been set up in Hanle to promote astro-tourism and livelihood of local communities. All these initiatives have resulted in a boost to tourism and other allied economic activities, improvement in civil aviation and other infrastructure, promotion of clean and green energy and “waste to wealth” in the UTs.

Internet/broadband and mobile/digital connectivity in the Island UTs have been considerably enhanced with the commissioning of the Chennai Andaman Nicobar Islands (CANI) Optical Fiber Cable Project at a cost of about ₹ 1,224 cr. This project has revolutionized internet connectivity and increased the bandwidth utilization in the UT of A&NI from 4.1 Gbps to 70.31 Gbps, internet speed has increased from 100 kbps to upto 300 Mbps, total mobile connections have increased to about 7 lakh from 4.7 lakh and Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) services, which provide high broadband speeds directly to home and offices, have increased to about 34,500. 5G services were also launched in the UT. As a result, the Islanders have benefitted

significantly through greater access to online Government to Citizen (G2C) services, tele-medicine, online education, development of tourism, e-commerce, enhanced participation in the digital economy (the number of digital transactions have increased from about 10 lakh to 2.2 crore) etc. Similarly, The Kochi Lakshadweep Islands Submarine Optical Fiber Cable Project (KLI Project), with a cost of about ₹1,072 Cr, has connected the mainland (Kochi) and all the inhabited Islands of the Union Territory of Lakshadweep through submarine cable. The KLI Project is designed to offer speeds upto 100 Gbps and support 4G as well as 5G networks. Trial traffic has been fed in the network. At present 3,972 FTTH connections have been provided through this network. The KLI Project is expected to benefit the public significantly through enhanced online access in the fields of education, tele-medicine, e-commerce, digital governance, tourism etc.

The Government has also been focusing on air, road and sea connectivity in the UTs. A new terminal building of Veer Savarkar International Airport at Port Blair has come up with a cost of about ₹710.00 crore with a capacity to handle 50 lakh passengers per year. 'Azad Hind Fauz Setu' on Humphrey Strait at a cost of ₹ 203.00 crore has significantly improved the road connectivity in the island UT of A&NI.

Several infrastructure projects to boost road connectivity have also been completed/under way in the other UTs like the construction of Zojila tunnel in UT of Ladakh.

Several steps have also been taken to promote ease of doing business and bring in governance reforms in UTs. To promote industry and business activities compliance burden has been significantly reduced. Single window clearance system has also led to faster clearance of proposals. UTs have implemented suitable policies to promote businesses and entrepreneurship including industrial policy, land allotment policy, logistics policy, policies to promote handicrafts, agriculture, MSMEs through suitable incentivisation etc. Investment promotion schemes have been formulated to encourage investment by way of providing capital and interest subsidy. The thrust sectors identified are tourism, manufacturing, production, IT and ITes, shipping, agriculture, fisheries etc. The Prime Minister's Employment Generation programme, PM VISHWAKARMA, Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PMFME) scheme, PM SVANidhi etc. are also being effectively implemented in the UTs with an aim to generate employment, provide financial support and skill development support. UTs have also identified certain priority economic sectors for accelerated economic growth of UTs,

based on their unique strengths and resources, such as developing a Blue Economy, transforming into regional knowledge/IT/medical hubs, promoting tourism etc.

The Government's policy of zero tolerance towards corruption and introduction of IT enabled initiatives have brought greater accountability, transparency and financial transformation resulting in a big push to businesses and economic development in the UTs and also promoting them as new drivers of economic prosperity (Aatmanirbhar Arthvyawastha) and Viksit Bharat.

Initiatives under Aatmanirbhar Bharat have been taken to provide better services to consumers & improvement in operational & financial efficiency in electricity distribution in certain UTs.

Further, a robust monitoring mechanism has been put in place to monitor the implementation of various flagship/development schemes and programmes of Government of India in the UTs.

It is the endeavour of Government of India to make UTs role models of good governance and development. Moreover, it is envisioned to holistically develop the island UTs as global hubs of tourism, raise the standard and quality of living of residents in UTs, create better infrastructure including social infrastructure, achieve saturation of health

and educational indicators, enhance health infrastructure to ensure universal access to quality healthcare, promote green energy by leveraging technology, etc. This is a continuous process.

(b): To promote fisheries and blue economy in the island union territories of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep, the Government has taken various initiatives. The focus is primarily on development of infrastructure & logistics, deep sea fishing, aquaculture, capacity building and fisheries management for overall development.

Assistance to fishermen/fish farmers is provided for modernization of existing fishing crafts and acquisition of new fishing vessels. Further, initiatives like creation and upgradation of post-harvest handling & processing infrastructure, export oriented processing units and use of technological advancements like Fish Aggregating Devices have also been taken.

The Government is also creating forward market linkages and promoting fisheries related co-operative societies and Self Help Groups (SHGs). Agencies like the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), Export Inspection Agency (EIA) and Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute are providing technical support and training to the fishermen and fish farmers for their capacity building.

The Government is also implementing various subsidy programme under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana to improve the post-harvest infrastructure, promote deep sea fishing, and aquaculture, mariculture activities, fish marketing and shore based infrastructure. Institutional credit is extended through Kisan Credit Card scheme.

Seaweed cultivation is also being promoted with the participation of Self Help Groups and fisheries co-operatives.
