GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3602

TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 02ND APRIL, 2025/ CHAITRA 12, 1947 (SAKA)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF UNION TERRITORIES

3602 # DR. DINESH SHARMA:

Will the Minister of Home Affairs be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken by Government for the economic development of Union Territories;

(b) whether Government has taken any positive initiative to promote renewable energy and green energy in Union Territories;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the benefits of these initiatives availed by the people there?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

(SHRI NITYANAND RAI)

(a): Sir, the Government has taken various steps for the economic development of Union Territories (UTs) through strategic interventions across various sectors including tourism, digital/telecom connectivity, road/air/sea connectivity, governance reforms, industry, employment, etc. This has led to sustainable economic growth, attracted investments and improved living standards.

Tourism has been identified as a key sector due to its multiplier effect. The Government is actively promoting various kinds of traditional and experimental forms of tourism like eco-tourism, wildlife tourism, adventure tourism, spiritual and wellness tourism, heritage tourism, tourist circuits, astro-tourism, cruise tourism, Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) tourism etc. For example, the first-ever dark sky reserve of the country has been set up in Hanle in the UT of Ladakh; the UT of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (DNH&DD) has developed world-class sea fronts and premier river fronts; eco-tourism resorts are being developed in the island UTs. All these initiatives have resulted in a boost to tourism and other allied economic activities in the UTs.

Internet/broadband and mobile/digital connectivity in all the UTs, including the Island UTs, have been considerably enhanced. Connectivity has been revolutionised in the island UTs through the commissioning of the Chennai Andaman Nicobar Islands (CANI) Optical Fiber Cable Project at a cost of about ₹ 1,224 crore in A&NI and the Kochi Lakshadweep Islands Submarine Optical Fiber Cable Project (KLI Project), with a cost of about ₹1,072 crore in Lakshadweep. In the UT of A&NI, bandwidth utilization (including inter-island) has increased from 4.1 Gbps to 233 Gbps, internet speed has increased from 100 kbps to up to 300 Mbps, total mobile connections have increased to about 7.5 lakh and Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH)

services have increased to more than 37,365. 5G services were also launched in the UT. Similarly, with the commissioning of the KLI Project, bandwidth utilization (including inter-island) has increased to 149 Gbps, internet speed availability is up to 1 Gbps, total mobile connections have increased to about 87,000 and FTTH services have increased to 7,500. These projects have benefitted the public significantly through enhanced online access in the fields of education, tele-medicine, e-commerce, digital governance, tourism etc.

The various initiatives of the Government have led to reduced cost of data, increased mobile and internet/broadband penetration, increase in internet teledensity, and higher internet/broadband speeds directly to home and offices across the UTs.

The Government has also been focusing on development of air, road and sea connectivity in the UTs. Strategic infrastructure like roads, expressways, construction of new tunnels/bridges, development of ports, expansion of airports, development of helipads etc. has been created in the recent years. A new terminal building of Veer Savarkar International Airport at Sri Vijaya Puram has come up with a capacity to handle 50 lakh passengers per year; 'Azad Hind Fauj Setu' on Humphrey Strait has significantly improved the road connectivity in the island UT of A&NI.

Several infrastructure projects to boost road connectivity have also been completed/underway in other UTs, like the construction of the Z-Morh tunnel in Jammu & Kashmir and the construction of the Zojila tunnel in the UT of Ladakh.

Several steps have been taken to bring in governance reforms in the UTs and to promote ease of doing business. To promote industry and business activities, steps have been taken to significantly reduce compliance burden. Single window clearance systems have been put in place to enable faster clearance of proposals. UTs have implemented suitable policies to promote businesses and entrepreneurship including industrial policy, land allotment policy, start-up policy, logistics policy, policies to promote handicrafts, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through suitable incentivisation etc. Investment promotion schemes have been formulated which provide for capital and interest subsidy. The thrust sectors identified are tourism, manufacturing, production, IT and ITes, shipping, agriculture, fisheries etc.

The Government is also focused on employment generation and skill development. The Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme, PM Vishwakarma, Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PMFME) scheme, PM SVANidhi etc. are being effectively

implemented in the UTs with an aim to generate employment, and to provide financial 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 in the UTs and also promoting them as new drivers of economic prosperity (Aatmanirbhar Arthavyavastha) and Viksit Bharat.

Initiatives under Aatmanirbhar Bharat have been taken to provide better services to consumers and improvement in operational and 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 etc. This is a continuous process.

(b) to (d): Yes Sir. The Government has taken various positive initiatives to promote renewable and green energy in Union Territories through various schemes i.e. National Solar Mission, PM-KUSUM, PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, the National Green Hydrogen Mission etc.

Under the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, the UTs are providing additional subsidy in addition to the central subsidy for installation of rooftop solar in residential and government buildings. Grid-connected Rooftop Solar Plants are being promoted and installed in the UTs. The UT of Jammu & Kashmir has installed a 100kW solar power project in Dal Lake. Further, Pilot Green Hydrogen Plant are also being set up in UT of Ladakh. In addition, initiatives for waste-to-energy have been undertaken for the promotion of clean and green energy.

To promote green energy generation and consumption, the Government of India has notified the Electricity (Promoting Renewable Energy through Green Energy Open Access) Rules, 2022. In line with the

above, the UTs of Puducherry and Delhi have implemented Green Energy Open Access (GEOA). In the UT of Puducherry, Green Energy Tariff has been notified. The UTs have notified various policies, including renewable energy policy, solar policy, EV policy etc. Further, in some of the UTs, generation-based incentive is given to the consumers for generation of solar energy.

These initiatives have resulted in reduced carbon emissions and reduced the electricity cost for the consumers.

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