

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS**

**RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2787**

TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 12TH AUGUST, 2026/ SHRAVANA 21, 1948 (SAKA)

STEPS FOR THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE ISLAND UNION TERRITORIES

2787 # SHRI NEERAJ SHEKHAR:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

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

(b) the steps Government has taken to promote fisheries and the Blue Economy in the island Union Territories; and

(c) the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c): Sir, the Government has taken various steps for the economic development of Island Union Territories (UTs) through strategic interventions across various sectors, including tourism, digital/telecom connectivity, road/air/sea connectivity, infrastructural development, governance reforms, etc.

Tourism has been identified as a key sector due to its multiplier effect in the island UTs. UT of Andaman and Nicobar Islands (UT of ANI) has given the industry status to tourism and variety of tourism activities/initiatives, such

as, eco-tourism, cruise tourism, cultural, heritage, adventure tourism and tourist circuits are being promoted in the islands. The UT Administration has made innovative policies for Bird Watching, Caravan Tourism, Luxury Tents, Astro Tourism and Houseboat Tourism. Further, to fulfil present and future requirement of hotel accommodation, eco-tourism projects at Shaheed Dweep, Aves, Long and Smith Islands and brownfield project of Megapode resort at Sri Vijaya Puram are being developed on PPP mode. To attract domestic and international tourists, Radhanagar beach at Swaraj Dweep has been certified as Blue Flag Beach, while infrastructure at five additional beaches has been upgraded.

Similarly, UT of Lakshadweep has taken a lead to develop first of its kind lagoon villas at Minicoy, Kadmat and Suheli islands on PPP mode. To address the long standing demand of tourists for accommodation at Bangaram island and Thinnakara, 50 luxury tented stays at Bangaram and 100 tents at Thinnakara have now been made operational. Thundi Beach at Minicoy and Kadmat Beach have been certified as Blue Flag beaches and two more beaches have also been identified for similar certification.

To leverage the Information and Communication Technology potential and provide its benefits to the citizens, significant steps have been taken for enhancing digital/telecom connectivity in UT of ANI by commissioning of the

Chennai Andaman Nicobar Islands (CANI) Optical Fiber Cable Project. Under BharatNet, all blocks, Gram Panchayats, and Tribal Councils have been connected. Similarly, the Kochi Lakshadweep Islands (KLI) Submarine Optical Fibre Cable Project (KLI-SOFC Project) has connected the mainland (Kochi) and all the inhabited Islands of the UT of Lakshadweep through submarine cable. Redundancy through satellite transponders is also maintained for internet services in both the island UTs.

In view of the importance of air connectivity for the islands, UT of ANI has operationalised a newly constructed modern terminal building of Veer Savarkar International Airport at Sri Vijaya Puram, with a capacity to handle 50 lakh passengers per year. Helicopter services have been made operational from Sri Vijaya Puram to Car Nicobar, Diglipur, Mayabunder, Rangat, Kamorta, Katchal, Chowra, Teressa, Shaheed Dweep, Swaraj Dweep and Campbell Bay to strengthen the inter-island connectivity. Extending the benefits of UDAN scheme to the people of ANI, UT has planned for connecting Diglipur, Car Nicobar and Campbell Bay with 19-seater fixed wing aircraft. Maritime connectivity has been strengthened through induction of MV Sindu, MV Nalanda, four 150-passenger harbour craft and three 50-passenger vessels, complemented by improved jetty infrastructure and digital passenger services through the STARS e-Ticketing Portal. On similar

lines, UT of Lakshadweep has ensured regular connectivity by flights from mainland (Kochi, Goa and Bengaluru) to Agatti Island. For inter-island connectivity, regular ferry services are operational and successful trial of seaplane landings have been conducted at Kavaratti, Agatti, Kadmat, Kalpeni, and Kiltan.

Since, infrastructure lays the foundation for economic development, several infrastructural projects, such as roads, ports, jetties, shipping services, health services, renewable energy, digital governance, etc. have also been undertaken in the island UTs.

In both the island UTs, the Government has ensured effective and outcome-oriented implementation of flagship schemes with robust monitoring mechanism to advance inclusive growth, livelihood generation, infrastructure creation and improved quality of life. These schemes are being leveraged to strengthen connectivity, drinking water and sanitation coverage, healthcare access, housing, fisheries and MSME livelihoods, women's empowerment and digital service delivery. This convergence-based approach has improved last-mile service delivery, expanded employment opportunities and enhanced social welfare outcomes, particularly in remote island habitations.

To promote industry and business activities, compliance burden has been significantly reduced with strong focus on Ease of Doing Business, de-regulation, which has also catalysed investment confidence and broadened economic activities. Investment promotion schemes have been formulated to encourage investment by way of providing capital and interest subsidy.

For the promotion of fisheries and the Blue Economy in the Island Union Territories, various initiatives in the UT of Andaman & Nicobar Islands have been undertaken, such as; Financial assistance to 268 beneficiaries under PMMSY for fish transport vehicles, aquaculture farms, hatcheries, feed mills, kiosks and value-added enterprises, which has generated employment for about 500 persons; development of Smart Integrated Fishing Harbour at Mayabunder, Wholesale-cum-Retail Fish Market at Bathubasti, installation of Artificial Reefs, establishment of five Climate Resilient Coastal Fishermen Villages at Junglighat, Hopetown, Durgapur, Chidiyatapu and Shoal Bay; promotion of open sea cage culture, seaweed cultivation and pearl farming; organisation of Fisheries Investor Meet and Reverse Buyer-Seller Meet to promote investments, exports and market linkages; sanction of Sagar Mitras for fisheries extension, fish landing data collection; and strengthening of fisheries infrastructure through Fish Landing Centres, HDPE Floating Jetties, Ice Plants and Cold Storages; approvals for establishment of modern fish

markets, upgradation of mechanized fishing vessels, procurement of deep freezers, establishment of a seafood transport clearance facility, and provision of freight subsidy support under Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) programme.

Further, for UT of Lakshadweep, various initiatives have been taken, such as, completion of 388 beneficiary-oriented projects under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY); establishment of Seaweed Cluster, with a seaweed hatchery at Chetlat and a seed bank at Kadmat; granting permission to 42 fish collection vessels for direct procurement from fishermen and issuance of 2,368 Kisan Credit Cards (KCC) alongside the operationalization of 74 fisheries cooperative societies to encourage entrepreneurship.

These initiatives of the Government have led to sustainable economic growth in the island UTs. It is the endeavour of Government of India to make UTs role models of good governance and development.
