

SECOND REPORT
COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS
(EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF TOURISM

(Presented to Lok Sabha on 19.08.2025)



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

August, 2025/Shravan, 1947 (Saka)

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COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

Shri Chandra Prakash Joshi - Chairperson

MEMBERS

2. Shri Anto Antony
3. Shri Manoj Tiwari
4. Shri Rajmohan Unnithan
5. Shri Mitesh Patel Bakabhai
6. Shri Vishnu Datt Sharma
7. Shri Raju Bista
8. Dr. Rajkumar Sangwan
9. Smt. Manju Sharma
10. Shri Sukhdeo Bhagat
11. Shri Abhay Kumar Sinha
12. Smt. Kamaljeet Sehrawat
13. Shri Bastipati Nagaraju
14. Shri Devesh Shakya
15. Shri Gurmeet Singh Meet Hayer

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri Rajesh Ranjan Kumar - Joint Secretary
2. Shri Sujay Kumar - Deputy Secretary
3. Shri Vivek Saini - Under Secretary

SECOND REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS (EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA)

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Committee on Petitions, having been authorised by the Committee to present on their behalf, this Second Report (Eighteenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee to the House on the Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations made by the Committee on Petitions (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) in their Forty-Third Report on the representation of Shri Praveen Kumar regarding Promotion and Development of Tourism in Lakshadweep and other important issues related therewith.

2. The Committee considered and adopted the draft Second Report at their sitting held on 12 August, 2025.

3. The observations/recommendations of the Committee on the above matters have been included in the Report.

NEW DELHI;

CHANDRA PRAKASH JOSHI
Chairperson,
Committee on Petitions

12 August, 2025

21 Shravan, 1947 (Saka)

REPORT

ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS (SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA) IN THEIR FORTY-THIRD REPORT ON THE REPRESENTATION OF SHRI PRAVEEN KUMAR REGARDING PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN LAKSHADWEEP AND OTHER IMPORTANT ISSUES RELATED THEREWITH

The Committee on Petitions (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) presented their Forty-third Report to Lok Sabha on 24 March, 2023 on the representation of Shri Praveen Kumar regarding Promotion and Development of Tourism in Lakshadweep and other important issues related therewith.

2. The Committee had made certain observations/recommendations in the matter and the Ministry of Tourism were asked to implement the recommendations and furnish their action taken replies thereon for further consideration of the Committee.

3. Action Taken Replies have since been received from the Ministry of Tourism in respect of the observations/recommendations contained in the aforesaid Report. The observations/recommendations made by the Committee and the replies furnished thereto by the Ministry of Tourism are detailed in the following paragraphs.

4. In paragraph 17 and 18 of the Report, the Committee had observed/recommended as follows:-

Tourism in Lakshadweep – An engine of growth

“The Committee, while examining the representation of Shri Praveen Kumar regarding promotion and development of Tourism in Lakshadweep in the light of comments received from the Ministry of Tourism, note that Tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world as it is closely inter-connected with a number of other sectors such as transport, hospitality, education, medical, entertainment, infrastructure, etc. This industry has gained immense importance in the growth of economies of the countries around the globe as tourism generates direct and indirect employment opportunities, strengthens the trade and commerce activities, contributes to local infrastructure development and reduce poverty and inequalities. Governments all over the world use tourism as a tool for fostering local

and regional economic development. Tourism sector has immense potential for job creation not only in the big cities but also in small towns and rural agglomerations. The Committee are of the opinion that development of tourism in the Lakshadweep region has immense potential to enhance cross-cultural exchange, enable the locals to learn new languages, development of soft skills, etc.

The Committee further note that on the one hand, there has been uncertain scenario of economic activities and on the other hand, there is heavy dependence on the Union Government support by way of grants, financial packages and various other economic interventions. Juxtaposition of the economic dependence with the development of tourism, the Committee are of the considered view that Lakshadweep Island have spectacular beauty of beaches, corals and lagoons, which could be used for promotion of tourism and generating huge revenue. Though the Committee acknowledge that Tourism has, of late, evolved into a major revenue earner in Lakshadweep, there is a need for an integrated formulation of a blue-print for the development of this sector without disturbing the natural assets of the Islands (Sea and its Environs) which are to be preserved and protected in such a manner that would bring about continuous economic advantages to the Islands on a long-term basis. The Committee, therefore, urge the Administration of Lakshadweep to formulate an integrated development blue-print for the Islands in general and Tourism sector in particular.

5. The Ministry of Tourism, in their action taken reply, have submitted as follows:-

“The UT Administration has conveyed that it has undertaken a detailed and careful examination of the observations and recommendations outlined in the Report and has initiated and implemented measures aimed at addressing the concerns and suggestions raised by the Committee. Accordingly, the actions undertaken by the UT Administration in response to these observations and recommendations are:-

Skill Development and Training Programmes: to equip residents of Lakshadweep with the necessary skills for the tourism industry, the UT Administration has collaborated with reputed institutions to provide training in hospitality, customer service and language proficiency. These programmes enhance the employability of locals in hotels, resorts and other tourism-related establishments. Additionally, workshops on entrepreneurship encourage residents to establish their own tourism ventures, further contributing to job creation.

Promotion of Local Culture and Products: the UT Administration encourages the promotion of local culture, crafts, and cuisine to provide tourists with authentic

experiences. This initiative supports artisans, performers and local businesses by creating markets for traditional products and cultural performances, thereby generating additional employment avenues.

Training programmes in water sports sector: the UT Administration has offered training programmes in various water sports activities and underwater scuba diving activities, equipment maintenance and life saving techniques etc to the local candidates of Lakshadweep enabling the island youth to find employment opportunities in the adventure water sports sector.

The UT Administration has always prioritized the infusion of soft skills into tourism/hospitality training programs. Workshops and seminars focusing on hospitality management are organized to equip candidates with essential soft skills such as communication skills, customer service excellence, adaptability and problem-solving. By promoting tourism, the UT Administration facilitates interactions between locals and visitors, fostering mutual appreciation of diverse cultures. Efforts include constructing additional accommodations and planning a significant airport expansion to improve accessibility. These developments are expected to boost the local economy and create opportunities for cultural exchange. The UT Administration has hosted events such as G20 summit -science 20 meeting at Bangaram Island during May 2023, providing platforms for experts to exchange ideas and share knowledge on global developments. Such conferences not only address critical issues but also promote cultural understanding among participants from various backgrounds."

The Ministry of Tourism has further submitted that the Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep conveyed that it has initiated several strategic actions to formulate an integrated development blue print for the islands, with a particular focus on enhancing the tourism sector with the following key initiatives:

Integrated Island Management Plan (IIMP); the UT Administration has introduced the Integrated Island Management Plan in July, 2018 aiming for sustainable development across the islands. This comprehensive framework addresses ecological preservation, socio-economic growth and infrastructural advancement, ensuring a balanced approach to development.

Infrastructure Development; a significant investment of 3,600 crore has been proposed to upgrade infrastructure in Lakshadweep. This plan encompasses the development of port facilities at Androth, Kalpeni, and Kadmat islands, along with the construction of peripheral roads and beachfront amenities on Kadmat, Agatti, and

Kavaratti islands. These enhancements aim to bolster tourism and generate employment opportunities.

Smart City Initiatives; Under the Smart City programme, plans are underway to establish a 90- room hotel, signaling a significant phase in Lakshadweep's tourism development. This initiative reflects the administration's commitment to modernizing infrastructure while catering to the growing influx of tourists. Through these concerted efforts, the UT Administration aims to create a sustainable and thriving tourism sector that balances economic development with ecological preservation, ensuring long-term benefits for both residents and visitors.

6. In paragraphs 19 of the Report, the Committee had observed/recommended as follows:-

Tourists visiting Lakshadweep Islands

The Committee note that the nature has bestowed Lakshadweep Archipelago - 36 Islands with 132 kilometers of coastline, whopping 42 square kilometers of turquoise lagoon area coupled with a territorial extent of 20,000 square kilometers which could be transformed as a major tourist attraction of the world. However, the Committee are concerned to note that despite being blessed with abundance of nature's bounty, the tourists footfall, both domestic as well as foreign, during last 10 years, i.e., from 2012-13 to 2021-22 has been a dismal 78,993. Keeping in view the unique scenic beauty of white sandy beaches, corals and diversified marine eco-system of the Island, the Committee could visualize that there remains huge potential for increasing the number of tourists visiting the Island on year-to-year basis. The Committee while expressing their concern over the unimpressive inflow of tourists in Lakshadweep strongly recommend that some practical solutions, devoid of cumbersome processes, should be found out for providing tourist friendly facilities such as connectivity, ease of accessibility, accommodation ranging from affordable to high-end, clean drinking water, electricity, internet connectivity, etc., so that more and more tourists visit the Island. The Committee would like to be apprised of the updated status in this regard."

7. The Ministry of Tourism, in their action taken reply, have submitted as follows:-

"The UT Administration has conveyed that it has initiated the following steps to increase the number of tourists visiting the islands on year-to-year basis.

Expansion of Infrastructure viz Newly established 50 Nos. Tent resorts Bangaram, Construction of 200 Nos. Tent Resorts at Thinnakara is underway, Augmentation of existing 64 rooms resort accommodation available at Bangaram under SD 2.0 scheme, New Resort, beachfront facilities, and improved airport connectivity are being planned, Development of eco-Tourism projects consisting of Beach Villa and Lagoon Villas at Kadmat and Suheli is underway and that of Minicoy is at tender stage.

Operation of 4 flights from mainland to Agatti on daily basis. Effective Marketing & Branding of Lakshadweep Tourism- Increased digital marketing campaigns and collaborations to promote Lakshadweep as a world-class Tourism destination. Augmentation of adventure water sports and scuba dive infrastructure -promoting more and more water sports and scuba dive centres offering wide choices of water sports activities and under water scuba diving activities. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)- Encouraging private investment to improve tourism infrastructure and services.

8. In paragraphs 20 of the Report, the Committee had observed/ recommended as follows:-

Connectivity constraints

The Committee take note of the fact that there is only one, narrow-body aircraft, flight connecting Lakshadweep to the mainland, i.e., from Kochi to Agatti. There is no connectivity from any International Airport abroad or from any other major cities in India such as Mumbai, Goa or Delhi, etc. The Committee have also been informed by the Ministry of Tourism/ UT Administration of Lakshadweep that the operation of wide-body aircraft and connectivity with other cities require a full-fledged runway and due to geographical complexities and damage-prone eco-system of Lakshadweep, it would be a challenging task to develop the desired level of aviation infrastructure. On this count, the Committee would like to draw a parallel with the Hulhule island in Maldives, which is having an area of around 4 square kilometers with fully operational International Airport, well connected with all the major Airports around the world and also serving as a main gateway for tourists into the Maldives. The Committee, therefore, attribute the non-availability of a big Airport in the Island as one of the reasons for diversion of foreign tourists from Lakshadweep to Maldives. The Committee are of considered opinion that without overcoming the connectivity constraints, development of Lakshadweep as a tourist destination would remain a pipedream. During the course of examination of the representation, the Committee were also informed that proposal for expansion of Agatti Airport and construction of

Defence Airport at Minicoy Island are under active consideration of the Government. In this regard, the Committee recommend the Ministry of Tourism to take up the matter with the Ministry of Civil Aviation and other Ministries concerned such as Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, etc. In this backdrop, the Committee would also like to recommend that the Ministry of Tourism should also begin result-oriented consultation process with the Ministry of Defence for construction of a Defence Airport at Minicoy Island.

9. The Ministry of Tourism, in their action taken reply, have submitted as follows:-

“The UT Administration has conveyed that the existing Airport and Port facilities in Lakshadweep Islands are functioning efficiently with sufficient capacity and a favourable load factor to support the growing demand from enhanced tourist activity. Further, it is to be mentioned that they are suitably placed to handle additional capacity. Agatti Airport, the air gateway of Lakshadweep, has seen steady improvements in operational capacity, tourist inflow and connectivity with the operation of four flights from mainland on daily basis, and upgraded facilities. Similarly, the Islands' ports are well-maintained and capable of accommodating passenger ferries and cruise vessels thereby ensuring smooth inter-island and mainland connectivity. Lakshadweep Administration is actively enhancing its air and maritime infrastructure to meet the growing demand from tourists. The UT of Lakshadweep Administration has undertaken the following initiatives to enhance the Infrastructure in the Islands. Development and expansion of Agatti Airport to make it suitable for operation of A-320 Aircrafts. Development of Port Infrastructure facilities in Kalpeni, Kadmat, Androth, Kiltan, Chetlat, Kavaratti, Agatti and Minicoy to make way for safe and efficient passenger and cargo handling in the Islands. Development of Water Aerodromes and Sea Plane operations in Agatti, Kavaratti, Minicoy, Bitra, Kiltan, Kadmat, Bangaram and Kalpeni Islands.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has conveyed the following:-

Agatti Airport:- Agatti Airport in UT of Lakshadweep is an AAI licensed airport, with runway suitable for operation of ATR- 42 type of aircraft. Airport is proposed to be developed for the operation of A-320 type of aircraft. The Airports Authority of India (AAI) shall operate Civil Enclave at Agatti with Apron catering for 4 nos A-320 type of aircraft and 2 nos. helicopter bays. The Terminal Building with an area of 6000 sqm shall cater for 300 peak hour passengers along with allied infrastructure such as Car park, fuel farm, service yard etc.

Minicoy Airport:- The proposed Minicoy Airport shall have a Runway at both ends suitable for A-321 type of aircraft. The Terminal Building with an area of 6000 sqm

shall cater for 300 peak hour passengers along with allied infrastructure such as Car park, fuel farm, service yard etc."

10. In paragraphs 21 of the Report, the Committee had observed/ recommended as follows:-

Development of Adventure Tourism and Water Sports

"Adventure Tourism leads to improved mental and physical health by imparting a sense of accomplishment amongst tourists. The Committee take note of various initiatives taken by the Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with UT Administration of Lakshadweep, for the development, easy availability and affordability of water sports activities at various Islands with a view to attracting the tourists for visiting Lakshadweep. It is learnt that the UT Administration have also been developing 'Scuba Diving Centres' in Kavaratti, Kalpeni, Minicoy, Kadmat and Bangaram Islands to promote adventure tourism. The Committee have also been informed that Lakshadweep Administration have taken various initiatives for development of all the major Islands through Public-Private Partnership model. In this regard, the Committee are of the opinion that there are various facets of adventure tourism and water sports activities other than scuba diving, viz., sailing, rafting, yachting, kayaking, sea walking, etc. The Committee, therefore, recommend the Ministry of Tourism to not only identify various water sports activities besides scuba diving which could be available to the tourists visiting Lakshadweep but also publicize them in a fullest possible manner. In this regard, it is a well-acknowledged fact that easy availability of Adventure Tourism and Water Sports encourage the tourists to visit these places more frequently, thereby, transforming the region as an ultimate tourist destination."

11. The Ministry of Tourism, in their action taken reply, have submitted as follows:-

"Development and promotion of tourist destinations and products, including adventure tourism is undertaken by the respective State Government/Union Territory (UT) Administration. The Ministry complements the efforts of States/UTs by developing and promoting various tourism products of the country, including adventure tourism and water sports through various schemes and initiatives. The Ministry of Tourism through its central sector schemes of 'Swadesh Darshan (SD)', 'Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD)' and 'Assistance to Central Agencies for Tourism Infrastructure Development' complements the efforts of tourism infrastructure development in the country by

extending financial assistance to the State Governments/UT Administrations. The CFA is being extended according to relevant guidelines and based on proposals received from the State and UT governments.

The National Institute of Water Sports (NIWS) has conducted various watersports courses at Lakshadweep and have trained many local youths for the same. NIWS has informed that apart from Scuba Diving activity, the Lakshadweep Islands have potential for many other underwater, motorised and non-motorised watersports activities mentioned below, which can be developed after conduct of feasibility study and risk assessment:

On Water Activities		Underwater Activities
Motorised	Non-Motorised	
Pleasure Boat Operations	Windsurfing/Dingy Sailing	Snorkelling
Personal Water Craft (PWC)/Jet ski Operations	Kayaking/ Canoeing	Free Diving
Parasailing	Stand Up Paddle	Sea Walk/Helmet Dive
Sea Kart	Kite Suring	Submersible Scooter
Water Skiing/ Towable Fun Rides		
Wake Boarding and Knee Boarding		
Fly Boarding		
Jet-o-vator		

The UT administration has conveyed as follows:-

The Department of Tourism, UT of Lakshadweep has been operating water sports centres and PADI certified dive centres offering underwater scuba diving activities and wide choices of adventure water sports activities such as kayaking, boat rides, yachting, glass bottom boat rides, jet ski rides etc. in the tourist focal islands of Lakshadweep such as Kavaratti, Kadmat, Bangaram, Minicoy and Kalpeni. The Lakshadweep Diving Academy operated under the aegis of Department of Tourism, UTLA offers various levels of PADI certified scuba diving courses as well as fun

diving activities. Kadmat Beach has been awarded the prestigious Blue Flag certification, meeting stringent environmental and safety standards. This recognition underscores the commitment to sustainable tourism and the preservation of the island's natural beauty. The UTL Administration is actively promoting the availability of adventure water sports activities in Lakshadweep through following platforms such as Digital Marketing Campaigns, Partnership with Travel Agencies/Tour operators, Promotion of Lakshadweep islands in the national and International travel fairs, Collaborations with online Booking/Tourism.'

12. In paragraphs 22 of the Report, the Committee had observed/ recommended as follows:-

Cruise Ship Tourism

The Committee were informed that Cruise-Liners started operating in Lakshadweep from 2004 onwards including the Cruise Liners like Superstar Libra, Europa, Ocean Odyssey, Amet, Majesty, Ameda, etc. Besides, foreign Yatch like Indian Prince, India Empress, Queen K, Palilon, etc., are also being operated since 2005. In this context, the Committee would like to highlight that Cruise Tourism is a luxurious form of travelling, involving an all inclusive holiday on a Cruise Ship. Modern Cruise encompasses a variety of facilities and amenities, in line with the preferences of the tourists making sea travel a life time memorable experience. Cruise Tourism has come to be associated with marine resorts, offering tourists an alternative form of holiday. However, the Committee note that the frequency of Cruise Ships as a part of Adventure Tourism has been limited due to which the tourists are apprehensive of availing this mode of transport to Lakshadweep. Considering the fact that the Cruise Tourism has become a point of attraction amongst the tourists, the Committee recommend that the Ministry of Tourism/UT administration of Lakshadweep to work out modalities for increasing the frequency of Cruise ferrying between designated Islands for which they should liaise with the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways for urgent tangible outcomes. The Committee would like to be apprised of the steps initiated on the above-mentioned aspects within three months of the presentation of this report.

13. The Ministry of Tourism, in their action taken reply, have submitted as follows:-

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways has conveyed that the cruise ship MV EMPRESS by Cordelia Cruises operates a domestic cruise service connecting the Mumbai-Kochi-Lakshadweep-Mumbai cruise circuit with an average one call per month. Lakshadweep received eight (08) ship calls during the current FY2024-25

(upto Dec) with 20,809 passengers and more calls are expected in 2025. New Cruise line, Resorts World Cruises are planning to deploy their cruise ship (M.V. Resorts World One, LOA 260m/2500 passenger capacity) on Mumbai-Lakshadweep circuit.

Besides the cruise ships, domestic tourists also avail the Lakshadweep Samudram which is a Five-days cruise package to visit the islands of Kavaratti, Kalpeni and Minicoy by ship- M.V Kavaratti. It also merits mention that the Union Territory of Lakshadweep Authority (UTLA) is in the process for developing berth-side infrastructure and cruise terminal at various islands of Lakshadweep Islands. This will facilitate increased ship calls by cruise ships.

Observations/Recommendations

Tourism in Lakshadweep – An engine of growth

14. The Committee after carrying out thorough examination of various issues/points raised in the representation of Shri Praveen Kumar regarding Promotion and Development of Tourism in Lakshadweep and other important issues related therewith in light of the comments furnished by the Ministry of Tourism, had observed that Tourism being one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world is closely inter-connected with a number of other sectors such as transport, hospitality, education, medical, entertainment, infrastructure, etc. This industry has gained immense importance in the growth of economies of the countries around the globe as tourism generates direct and indirect employment opportunities, strengthens the trade and commerce activities, contributes to local infrastructure development and reduce poverty and inequalities. The Committee therefore opined that development of tourism in the Lakshadweep region has immense potential to enhance cross-cultural exchange, enable the locals to learn new languages and development of soft skills etc.

15. The Committee, while noting the uncertain scenario of economic activities on one hand and heavy dependence on the Union Government support by way of grants, financial packages and various other economic interventions on the other hand, viewed that Lakshadweep Islands have spectacular beauty of beaches, corals and lagoons, which could be used for promotion of tourism and generating huge revenue, the Committee underlined the need for an integrated formulation of a blue-print for the development of this sector without disturbing the natural assets of the Islands (Sea and its Environs) which are to be preserved and protected in such a manner that

would bring about continuous economic advantages to the Islands on a long-term basis and urged the Administration of Lakshadweep to formulate an integrated development blue-print for the Islands in general and Tourism sector in particular.

16. In response to the above observation/recommendation of the Committee, the Ministry of Tourism in their action taken reply, have submitted that UT Administration has undertaken a detailed and careful examination of the observations and recommendations outlined in the Report and has initiated and implemented measures aimed at addressing the concerns and suggestions raised by the Committee such as Skill Development and Training Programmes, Promotion of Local Culture and Products, Training Programmes in Water Sports sector etc. Further, the Ministry of Tourism submitted that UT Administration of Lakshadweep has initiated several strategic actions to formulate an integrated development blue print for the islands, with a particular focus on enhancing the tourism sector with the key initiatives such as Integrated-Island Management Plan (IIMP) in July, 2018 aiming for sustainable development across the islands. This comprehensive framework addresses ecological preservation, socio- economic growth and infrastructural advancement, ensuring a balanced approach to development. The Ministry of Tourism further submitted that a significant investment of 3,600 crore has been proposed to upgrade infrastructure in Lakshadweep. This plan encompasses the development of port facilities at Androth, Kalpeni, and Kadmat islands, along with the construction of peripheral roads and beachfront amenities on Kadmat, Agatti, and Kavaratti islands, aiming to bolster tourism and generate employment opportunities. Similarly, under the Smart City programme, plans are underway to establish a 90-room hotel, signaling a significant phase in Lakshadweep's tourism development. This initiative reflects the administration's commitment to modernizing infrastructure while catering to the growing influx of tourists. Through these concerted efforts, the

UT Administration aims to create a sustainable and thriving tourism sector that balances economic development with ecological preservation, ensuring long-term benefits for both residents and visitors.

17. Upon perusal of the action taken reply furnished by the Ministry of Tourism, the Committee are satisfied to note that the UT Administration of Lakshadweep has initiated several actions to formulate an integrated development blue print for the islands, with a particular focus on enhancing the tourism sector with the key initiatives such as Integrated Island Management Plan (IIMP) introduced in July, 2018 aiming for sustainable development across the islands along with focus on Infrastructure Development with proposed investment of 3,600 crore to upgrade infrastructure in Lakshadweep focusing on the development of port facilities at Androth, Kalpeni, and Kadmat islands along with the construction of peripheral roads and beachfront amenities on Kadmat, Agatti, and Kavaratti islands. Further, under Smart City Initiatives, plans are underway to establish a 90- room hotel, signaling a significant phase in Lakshadweep's tourism development. The Committee expect that the initiatives such as Integrated Island Management Plan (IIMP) would lead to job creation, bring out continuous economic advantages and modernized infrastructure development without disturbing the ecological balance and unique natural assets of the island.

Tourists visiting Lakshadweep Islands

18. Keeping in view, the low tourist footfall both domestic as well as foreign, during last 10 years i.e. from 2012-13 to 2021-22 totalling to 78,993, the Committee, while expressing the concern over unimpressive inflow of tourists in Lakshadweep, recommended that some practical solutions, devoid of cumbersome processes,

should be found for providing tourist friendly facilities such as connectivity, ease of accessibility, ensuring accommodation catering to people belonging to different income groups, clean drinking water, electricity, internet connectivity, etc., so that more and more tourists are able to visit the Island.

19. Pursuant to the above recommendation of the Committee, the Ministry of Tourism, in their action taken reply, have apprised the Committee of steps taken to increase the number of tourists visiting the island on year-to-year basis. It includes expansion of Infrastructure that encompasses newly established 50 Nos. Tent resorts at Bangaram, construction of 200 Nos. Tent Resorts at Thinnakara, augmentation of existing 64 rooms resort accommodation available at Bangaram under SD 2.0 scheme. In addition, new resorts, beachfront facilities, and improved airport connectivity are being planned and development of eco-Tourism projects consisting of Beach Villa and Lagoon Villas at Kadmat and Suheli is underway while that of Minicoy is at tendering stage. The Ministry have further informed the Committee of other steps taken in this direction, such as operation of 4 flights from mainland to Agatti on daily basis, effective marketing & branding of Lakshadweep Tourism, increased digital marketing campaigns and collaborations to promote Lakshadweep as a world-class Tourism destination, augmentation of adventure water sports and scuba dive infrastructure, promoting more and more water sports and scuba dive centres offering wide choices of water sports activities and under water scuba diving activities, and resorting to Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) for encouraging private investment to improve tourism infrastructure and services.

20. The Committee acknowledge that the initiatives/steps taken by the Ministry of Tourism/ UT administration of Lakshadweep to increase the number of tourists visiting the island on year-to-year basis are broadly in accordance with the

recommendation made by the Committee. The Committee would, however like to reiterate their earlier recommendation that the Ministry of Tourism should make concerted efforts for boosting tourism and at the same time practical solutions should be explored for increasing tourist facilities such as connectivity, ease of accessibility, in order to increase the number of tourists visiting the island. The Committee may be apprised of the necessary action taken or proposed to be taken by the Ministry in this regard.

Connectivity constraints

21. The Committee, while examining the representation of Shri Praveen Kumar, noted that there is only one, narrow-body aircraft, flight connecting Lakshadweep to the mainland, i.e., from Kochi to Agatti. There is no connectivity from any International Airport abroad or from any other major cities in India such as Mumbai, Goa or Delhi, etc. The Committee were informed that the operation of wide-body aircraft and connectivity with other cities require a full-fledged runway and due to geographical complexities and damage-prone eco-system of Lakshadweep, it would be a challenging task to develop the desired level of aviation infrastructure. The Committee also drew a parallel with the Hulhule island in Maldives, having an area of around 4 square kilometers wherein well connected International Airport is operational. The Committee, therefore, attributed the non-availability of a big Airport in the Island as one of the reasons for diversion of foreign tourists from Lakshadweep to other nearby destinations such as Maldives. The Committee opined that without overcoming the connectivity constraints, development of Lakshadweep as a tourist destination would remain elusive.

22. During the course of examination of the representation, the Committee were also informed that proposal for expansion of Agatti Airport and construction of Defence Airport at Minicoy Island are under active consideration of the Government. The Committee, therefore, recommended the Ministry of Tourism to take up the matter with the Ministry of Civil Aviation and other Ministries concerned such as Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, etc., so that expansion of Agatti Airport could be initiated at the earliest. The Committee further recommended that the Ministry of Tourism should begin result-oriented consultation process with the Ministry of Defence for construction of a Defence Airport at Minicoy Island.

23. In response to the above recommendation of the Committee, the Ministry of Tourism, in their action taken reply, submitted that that the existing Airport and Port facilities in Lakshadweep Islands are functioning efficiently with sufficient capacity and a favourable load factor to support the growing demand from enhanced tourist activity and are suitably placed to handle additional capacity. Agatti Airport, which is the air gateway of Lakshadweep, has seen steady improvements in operational capacity, tourist inflow and connectivity with the operation of four flights from mainland on daily basis. Similarly, the Islands' ports are well-maintained and capable of accommodating passenger ferries and cruise vessels thereby ensuring smooth inter-island and mainland connectivity. The UT of Lakshadweep Administration has undertaken various initiatives to enhance the infrastructure in the Islands, viz. development and expansion of Agatti Airport to make it suitable for operation of A-320 Aircrafts, development of port infrastructure facilities in Kalpeni, Kadmat, Androth, Kiltan, Chetlat, Kavaratti, Agatti and Minicoy to make way for safe and efficient passenger and cargo handling in the Islands and development of water aerodromes and sea plane operations in Agatti, Kavaratti, Minicoy, Bitra, Kiltan, Kadmat, Bangaram and Kalpeni Islands.

24. The Ministry of Tourism, in their action taken reply, further submitted that the Ministry of Civil Aviation has conveyed that Agatti Airport in UT of Lakshadweep is an AAI licensed airport, with runway suitable for operation of ATR- 42 type of aircraft. Airport is proposed to be developed for the operation of A-320 type of aircraft. It has been informed that the Airports Authority of India (AAI) shall operate Civil Enclave at Agatti with Apron catering for 4 nos. A-320 type of aircraft and 2 nos. helicopter bays. It has also been informed that the Terminal Building with an area of 6000 sqm shall cater for 300 peak hour passengers along with allied infrastructure such as car park, fuel farm, service yard etc. and the proposed Minicoy Airport shall have a runway at both ends suitable for A-321 type of aircraft. It was further informed that the Terminal Building with an area of 6000 sqm shall cater for 300 peak hour passengers along with allied infrastructure such as car park, fuel farm, service yard etc."

25. The Committee express satisfaction with various steps taken for steady improvements in operational capacity of Agatti Airport to make it suitable for A-320 type of aircraft and proposal of constructing runway at both ends suitable for A-321 type of aircraft at Minicoy Airport. The Committee also appreciate the steps being taken for development of port infrastructure facilities in Kalpeni, Kadmat, Androth, Kiltan, Chetlat, Kavaratti, Agatti and Minicoy to make way for safe and efficient passenger and cargo handling in the Islands alongside development of Water Aerodromes and Sea Plane operations in Agatti, Kavaratti, Minicoy, Bitra, Kiltan, Kadmat, Bangaram and Kalpeni Islands. The Committee feel that such steps would not only check the flow of domestic tourists to other nearby destinations such as Maldives but also attract foreign tourists to the scenic islands of Lakshadweep resulting in boosting the economy and employment opportunities in the islands.

Development of Adventure Tourism and Water Sports

26. The Committee were informed about the development of 'Scuba Diving Centres' in Kavaratti, Kalpeni, Minicoy, Kadmat and Bangaram Islands to promote adventure tourism by UT Administration. The Committee had noted the initiatives taken by the Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with UT Administration of Lakshadweep, for the development, easy availability and affordability of water sports activities at various Islands with a view to attracting the tourists for visiting Lakshadweep. The Committee had opined that there are various other forms of adventure tourism and water sports activities other than scuba diving, viz., sailing, rafting, yachting, kayaking, sea walking, etc. The Committee, therefore, recommended the Ministry of Tourism to not only identify various water sports activities besides scuba diving which could be available to the tourists visiting Lakshadweep but also publicize them in the best possible manner thereby, facilitating the transformation of the region as an ultimate tourist destination.

27. Pursuant to the above recommendation of the Committee, the Ministry of Tourism, in their action taken reply, have submitted that "development and promotion of tourist destinations and products, including adventure tourism is undertaken by the respective State Government/Union Territory (UT) Administration. Also that the Ministry complements the efforts of States/UTs by developing and promoting various tourism products of the Country, including adventure tourism and water sports through various schemes and initiatives. It was also informed that the Ministry of Tourism, through its central sector schemes of 'Swadesh Darshan (SD)', 'Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD)' and 'Assistance to Central Agencies for Tourism Infrastructure Development', complements the efforts of tourism infrastructure development in the Country by

extending financial assistance to the State Governments/UT Administrations. The financial assistance is being extended according to relevant guidelines and based on proposals received from the State and UT governments. The National Institute of Water Sports (NIWS) has conducted various watersports courses at Lakshadweep and have trained many local youths for the same. NIWS has informed that apart from scuba diving activity, the Lakshadweep Islands have potential for many other underwater, motorised and non-motorised watersports activities which can be developed after conduct of feasibility study and risk assessment.

28. The Ministry of Tourism further informed that the Department of Tourism, UT of Lakshadweep has been operating water sports centres and PADI certified dive centres offering underwater scuba diving activities and wide choices of adventure water sports activities such as kayaking, boat rides, yachting, glass bottom boat rides, jet ski rides etc. in the tourist focal islands of Lakshadweep such as Kavaratti, Kadmat, Bangaram, Minicoy and Kalpeni. It was also informed that the Lakshadweep Diving Academy, operated under the aegis of Department of Tourism of Lakshadweep, offers various levels of PADI certified scuba diving courses as well as fun diving activities. As informed, Kadmat Beach has been awarded the prestigious Blue Flag certification, meeting stringent environmental and safety standards, which underscores the commitment of the Lakshadweep administration to sustainable tourism and the preservation of the island's natural beauty. The local administration is actively promoting the availability of adventure water sports activities in Lakshadweep through digital platforms and other platforms such as partnership with Travel Agencies/Tour operators, promotion of Lakshadweep islands in the national and international travel fairs and collaborations with online Booking/Tourist portals.'

29. The Committee appreciate that the Government is taking effective steps for the development and promotion of adventure tourism and water sports through its central sector schemes such as Swadesh Darshan (SD)', 'Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD)' and 'Assistance to Central Agencies for Tourism Infrastructure Development' complements the efforts of tourism infrastructure development in the Country by extending financial assistance to the State Governments/UT Administrations according to applicable guidelines and based on proposals received from the State and UT governments. The Committee are happy to note that the National Institute of Water Sports (NIWS) has conducted various watersports courses at Lakshadweep and have trained many local youths for the same. Apart from Scuba Diving activity, the Lakshadweep Islands have potential for many other underwater, motorised and non-motorised watersports activities. The Committee also express its appreciation for the efforts of the Ministry in actively promoting the availability of adventure water sports activities in Lakshadweep through Digital Marketing Campaigns, Partnership with Travel Agencies/Tour operators, Promotion of Lakshadweep islands in the national and international travel fairs and Collaborations with online Booking/Tourism portals.

Cruise Ship Tourism

30. During the course of examination of the representation, the Committee note that the Cruise Tourism has become an attraction amongst the tourists after the start of operations of Cruise-Liners in Lakshadweep from the year 2004 onwards. The Committee further note that the frequency of Cruise Ships as a part of Adventure Tourism has been limited due to which the tourists feel restricted in availing this mode of transport to Lakshadweep. In this backdrop, the Committee recommended that the Ministry of Tourism/UT administration of Lakshadweep to work out modalities for increasing the frequency of Cruise ferrying between designated

Islands for which they should liaise with the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways for tangible outcomes.

31. The Ministry of Tourism, in their action taken reply, submitted that the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways has conveyed that the cruise ship MV EMPRESS by Cordelia Cruises operates a domestic cruise service connecting the Mumbai-Kochi-Lakshadweep-Mumbai cruise circuit with an average one call per month. The Committee was informed that Lakshadweep received eight (08) ship calls during the current FY 2024-25 (upto December, 2024) with 20,809 passengers and more calls are expected in 2025. It was further submitted that New Cruise liners such as Resorts World Cruises are planning to deploy their cruise ship (M.V. Resorts World One, LOA 260m/2500 passenger capacity) on Mumbai-Lakshadweep circuit. It was informed that in addition to the cruise ships, domestic tourists also avail the Lakshadweep Samudram which is a Five-days cruise package to visit the islands of Kavaratti, Kalpeni and Minicoy operated by ship- M.V Kavaratti. It also merits mention that the Union Territory of Lakshadweep Authority (UTLA) is in the process of developing berth-side infrastructure and cruise terminal at various islands of Lakshadweep Islands. This will facilitate increased ship calls by cruise ships.

32. The perusal of action taken reply furnished by the Ministry of Tourism indicates significant progress in this regard, with cruise ships already operating in the region and new cruise lines planning to start operations. To further build on this momentum, the Committee recommend that the Ministry of Tourism and the UT Administration of Lakshadweep continue to work closely with the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways to complete the ongoing development of infrastructure at various islands to facilitate increased ship calls and improve the overall tourist experience. The Committee further recommend the Ministry of Tourism to expedite

the work relating to enhancing berth-side infrastructure and cruise terminals, encourage and facilitate more frequent cruise ship visits, including exploring possibilities for more cruise lines and ships to operate in the region so that islands of Lakshadweep could be promoted as attractive destination of Cruise tourism highlighting its unique attractions and experiences.

NEW DELHI;

CHANDRA PRAKASH JOSHI
Chairperson,
Committee on Petitions

12 August, 2025

21 Shravan, 1947 (Saka)

**MINUTES OF THE SIXTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS
(EIGHTEENTH LOK SABHA)**

The Committee met on Tuesday, 12 August, 2025 from 1000 hrs. to 1030 hrs. in 'Samanvay 3', Parliament House, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Chandra Prakash Joshi - Chairperson

MEMBERS

02. Shri Manoj Tiwari
03. Shri Rajmohan Unnithan,
04. Shri Mitesh Patel Bakabhai
05. Shri Raju Bista
06. Dr. Rajkumar Sangwan
07. Smt. Manju Sharma
08. Smt. Kamaljeet Sehwat
09. Shri Bastipati Nagaraju
10. Shri Devesh Shakya
11. Shri Gurmeet Singh Meet Hayer

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri Rajesh Ranjan Kumar - Joint Secretary
2. Shri Sujay Kumar - Deputy Secretary

3. The Hon'ble Chairperson welcomed the members of the Committee to the sitting of the Committee. The Chairperson also welcomed Shri Manoj Tiwari on his nomination to the Committee on Petitions. The Committee then took up for consideration the following Draft Reports: -

- (i) Draft Action Taken Report on the action taken by the Government on the recommendations made by the Committee on Petitions (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) in their Forty-Third Report on the representation of Shri Praveen Kumar regarding Promotion and Development of Tourism in Lakshadweep and other important issues related therewith.

(ii) XXX XXX XXX XXX

4. The Committee adopted both of the Draft Action Taken Reports without any modification. The Committee also authorised the Chairperson to finalise the draft Reports and present the same to the House.

5. XXX XXX XXX XXX

The Committee, then, adjourned.