

**COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES
(2016-2017)**

(SIXTEENTH LOK SABHA)

FIFTY-FOURTH REPORT

**REVIEW OF PENDING ASSURANCES
PERTAINING TO THE UNION TERRITORY OF
LAKSHADWEEP**

Presented to Lok Sabha on 11/04/2017



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**
April, 2017/ Chaitra, 1939 (Saka)

CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--|--------------|
| Composition of the Committee (2016-2017) | (ii) |
| Introduction | (iii) - (iv) |

Report

| | | |
|-----|---|------|
| I. | Introductory | 1-4 |
| II. | Review of Pending Assurances pertaining to the Union Territory of Lakshadweep | 4-32 |

Appendices

| | | |
|-------|---|-------|
| I. | USQ No.2516 dated 28.3.2012 regarding 'Airport Expansion Projects' | 33-36 |
| II. | USQ No.645 dated 26.11.2012 regarding 'Coast Guard Airport' | 37 |
| III. | USQ No.698 dated 10.12.2013 regarding ' Inter Island Connectivity in Lakshadweep' | 38 |
| IV. | USQ No.1011 dated 27.07.2015 regarding 'Development of Islands' | 39 |
| V. | USQ No.3207 dated 11.02.2014 regarding 'Proposal for Coastal Security' | 40 |
| VI. | USQ No.147 dated 05.12.2013 regarding 'Desalination Plants' | 41 |
| VII. | USQ No.4023 dated 17.12.2014 regarding 'Desalination Plants' | 42-43 |
| VIII. | USQ No.530 dated 27.4.2016 regarding 'Desalination Plants' | 44 |
| IX. | SQ No.22 dated 25.2.2015 regarding 'National Optical Fiber Network' | 45-49 |
| X. | USQ No.6213 dated 06.5.2013 regarding 'Static Sensors Project' | 50 |
| XI. | Extracts from Manual of Parliamentary Procedure in the Government of India, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, New Delhi. | 51-54 |
| XII. | List of Representatives of the Ministries /Departments /Institutes /Agencies who appeared before the Committee during the informal discussion on Assurances pertaining to Lakshadweep | 55-58 |

Annexures

| | | |
|----|--|-------|
| I. | Minutes of the sitting of the Committee (2016-17) held on 06 April, 2017 | 59-60 |
|----|--|-------|

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES*

(2016 - 2017)

Dr. Ramesh Pokhriyal "Nishank" - Chairperson

MEMBERS

2. Shri Rajendra Agrawal
- 3@. Vacant
4. Shri Anto Antony
5. Shri Tariq Anwar
6. Prof. (Dr.) Sugata Bose
7. Shri Naranbhai Bhikhabhai Kachhadiya
8. Shri Bahadur Singh Koli
9. Shri Prahlad Singh Patel
10. Shri A.T. Nana Patil
11. Shri C.R. Patil
12. Shri Sunil Kumar Singh
13. Shri Taslimuddin
14. Shri K.C. Venugopal
15. Shri S.R. Vijay Kumar

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri R.S. Kambo - Additional Secretary
2. Shri P. C. Tripathy - Director
3. Shri S.L. Singh - Deputy Secretary

* The Committee has been re-constituted w.e.f. 01 September, 2016 *vide* Para No. 4075 of Lok Sabha Bulletin Part-II dated. 05 September, 2016

@ Shri E. Ahamed passed away on 01 February, 2017

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson of the Committee on Government Assurances (2016-2017), having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Fifty-Fourth Report (16th Lok Sabha) of the Committee on Government Assurances.

2. The Committee (2016-2017) undertook a study visit to Kochi, Lakshadweep and Bengaluru from 13th to 18th October 2016 for an on-the-spot study of the implementation of some of the crucial pending Assurances. During the study visit to Lakshadweep, the Committee held informal discussions with the representatives of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Airports Authority of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Indian Coast Guard, Ministry of Tourism, Indian Tourism Development Corporation, Ministry of Earth Sciences, National Institute of Ocean Technology, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Department of Telecommunications, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited and the Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep on various issues arising from the delay in implementation of various Assurances pertaining to the Union Territory. The Committee also held in Bengaluru an informal discussion with the representatives of the Ministry of Defence, Bharat Electricals Limited and Indian Coast Guard on the implementation of a critical Assurance concerning the Union Territory of Lakshadweep. In view of the relative importance of these Assurances in accelerating the pace of development in the Union Territory and the significance of the discussions held, the Committee deemed it fit to present a Report on the review of the said pending Assurances to the House. This Fifty-Fourth Report is thus based on the Committee's review of pending Assurances pertaining to the Union Territory of Lakshadweep.

3. At their sitting held on 06 April, 2017 the Committee (2016-2017) considered and adopted their Fifty-Fourth Report.

4. The Minutes of the aforesaid sitting of the Committee form part of this Report.

5. For facility of reference and convenience, the Observations and Recommendations of the Committee have been printed in bold letters in the body of the Report.

6. The Committee place on record their deep appreciation to the above mentioned Central Ministries/PSUs and Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep in particular, for furnishing detailed replies and interacting with the Committee during their visit to Lakshadweep and Bengaluru.

DR. RAMESH POKHRIYAL "NISHANK"
CHAIRPERSON
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES

NEW DELHI;

07 April, 2017

17 Chaitra, 1939 (Saka)

REPORT

I. Introductory

The Committee on Government Assurances scrutinize the Assurances, promises, undertakings etc. given by the Ministers from time to time on the floor of the House and report to the extent to which such Assurances, promises, undertakings etc. have been implemented. Once an Assurance has been given on the floor of the House, the same is required to be implemented within three months. The Ministries/Departments of the Government of India are under obligation to seek extension of time, if they are unable to fulfill the Assurance within the prescribed periods of three months. Where a Ministry/Department are unable to implement an Assurance, that Ministry/Department are required to move the Committee for dropping it. The Committee consider such requests and approve dropping, if they are convinced that the grounds cited are justified. The Committee also examine whether the implementation of Assurances has taken place within the minimum time necessary for the purpose and the Committee also look into the extent to which the Assurances have been implemented.

2. The Committee on Government Assurances (2009-2010) took a policy decision to call the representatives of the various Ministries/Departments of the Government of India, in a phased manner, to review the pending Assurances, examine the reasons for pendency and analyze the operation of the system prescribed in the Ministries/Departments for dealing with Assurances. The Committee also decided to consider the quality of Assurances implemented by the Government.

3. The Committee on Government Assurances (2014-2015) decided to follow the well established and time tested procedure of calling the representatives of the Ministries/Departments of the Government of India, in a phased manner and review the pending Assurances. The Committee took a step further for expeditious implementation of pending Assurances and decided to call the representatives of the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs also as all the Assurances are implemented through them.

4. During the course of examination, if the Committee feel that it is necessary to undertake an on-the-spot study tour of the Department/ organizations, etc. concerned to have first hand knowledge about the reasons for delay in the implementation of an Assurance, it may do so with the approval of the Speaker. Subject to specific approval of the Speaker, the Committee may also undertake on-the-spot study tours in connection with implemented Assurances concerned with the subject under examination to find out whether the Assurances have been adequately and timely implemented.

5. While reviewing the delay in implementation of the pending Assurances pertaining to various Ministries/Departments over a period of time, the Committee observed that there have been inordinate delays in implementing some of the crucial Assurances pertaining to the Union Territory of Lakshadweep. Considering its geographical isolation and strategic location, the Committee deemed it fit to undertake an on-the-spot study tour to the Union Territory to assess the ground situation and interact directly with the representatives of the organisations/field units and the Union Territory Administration and acquaint themselves with the impediments being faced in implementing the said Assurances so as to help them in finding solutions. The Committee, accordingly, undertook an on-the-spot study visit to Kochi, Lakshadweep and Bengaluru from 13th to 18th October 2016.

6. During their sojourn in Lakshadweep, the Committee held informal discussion with the representatives of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Airports Authority of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Indian Coast Guard, Ministry of Tourism, Indian Tourism Development Corporation, Ministry of Earth Sciences, National Institute of Ocean Technology, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Department of Telecommunications, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited and the Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep on various issues arising from the delay in implementation of the following nine Assurances pertaining to the Union Territory:

| S. No. | SQ/USQ No. dated | Subject |
|---------------|---|--|
| 1. | USQ No.2516 dated 28.3.2012 | Airport Expansion Projects (Appendix - I) |
| 2. | USQ No.645 dated 26.11.2012 | Coast Guard Airport (Appendix - II) |
| 3. | USQ No.698 dated 10.12.2013 (Partly Implemented) | Inter Island Connectivity in Lakshadweep (Appendix - III) |
| 4. | USQ No.1011 dated 27.07.2015 | Development of Islands (Appendix - IV) |
| 5. | USQ No.3207 dated 11.02.2014 | Proposal for Coastal Security (Appendix - V) |
| 6. | USQ No.147 dated 05.12.2013 | Desalination Plants (Appendix - VI) |
| 7. | USQ No.4023 dated 17.12.2014 | Desalination Plants (Appendix - VII) |
| 8. | USQ No.530 dated 27.4.2016 | Desalination Plants (Appendix - VIII) |
| 9. | SQ No.22 dated 25.2.2015 | National Optical Fiber Network (Appendix - IX) |

7. The Committee also held in Bengaluru an informal discussion with the representatives of the Ministry of Defence, Bharat Electricals Limited and Indian Coast Guard on the implementation of the Assurance given in reply to USQ No.6213 dated 06.05.2013 regarding 'Static Sensors Project' (Partly Implemented) [Appendix – X] concerning the Union Territory of Lakshadweep.

8. The Extracts from Manual of Practice and Procedure in the Government of India, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs laying guidelines on the definition of an Assurance, the time limit for its fulfillment, dropping/deletion and extension, the procedure for fulfillment etc., besides maintenance of Register of Assurances and periodical reviews to minimize delays in implementation of the Assurances are reproduced at Appendix-XI.

9. Subsequently, the Assurances mentioned at Sl. Nos. 1 and 5 in the above table have also been partly implemented on 07.12.2016.

II. Review of Pending Assurances

10. In the succeeding paragraphs, the Committee deal with the pending Assurances pertaining to the Union Territory of Lakshadweep.

A. Airport Expansion Projects

11. In reply to USQ No.2516 dated 28.3.2012 regarding 'Airport Expansion Projects' (Annexure - I), it was *inter-alia* stated that the Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep has given positive response to the request of the Airports Authority of India (AAI) to provide land for airport expansion project.

12. During informal discussion, the representatives of the AAI stated that modernization of existing Airports is being undertaken by the Airport operators based on the future traffic demand in terms of passenger, cargo and aircraft movement as well as for improvement of Service Level with modern technology. Modernization/upgradation of airports is a continuous process and is undertaken in a phased manner based on improvement in service levels, conveniences desired, operational requirement for safety of aircraft operation, viability, availability of land and traffic demand etc.

13. When queried about the latest status regarding the expansion of Agatti Airport, the representatives informed that AAI has 45.85 acres of land in the existing Agatti

Airport and has requested for providing 18.40 more acres of land on Agatti Island and +1 acre on Kalpitti Island from the U.T. Administration of Lakshadweep for extension of runway to meet the 300 m Basic Strip requirement, Isolation Bay, Apron, Terminal Building Complex, Car Park and Navigational aids (DVOR & NDB) etc. However, the proposal was dropped due to non-receipt of environmental clearance though a foreign consultant was appointed for the project of linking Agatti and Kalpeni. He further stated that the land issue pertaining to Agatti Airport has not yet been resolved.

14. However, the Director Port, Shipping and Aviation, U.T. of Lakshadweep intimated that the acquisition of land for the Airport at Agatti was under active consideration but the matter could not be completed due to promulgation of the new Act in regard to land acquisition. The matter for acquisition of land is now under active consideration and process by the U.T. Administration of Lakshadweep.

15. On being enquired about the reasons for non-fulfillment of the Assurance, the representative submitted that the reasons for the delay in fulfilling the Assurances is due to delay in acquisition of land by the States/UT and handing over the same to Airports Authority of India which is a time consuming process.

16. In this regard, the representative of the Department of Port, Shipping and Aviation, U.T. of Lakshadweep stated that the UT Administration of Lakshadweep has already accorded Administrative Approval for acquisition of 73,280 Sq.M. of land at Agatti and the Department had submitted requisition for acquisition of land in Agatti for extension of Airport as per letter dated 25.2.2014 along with all original Sub Division Sketches, Land Register Extract and Combine Sketch as obtained from the Deputy Collector, Agatti. The land cost will be paid by the Ministry of Home Affairs and an amount of Rs.19.75 crore has also been allotted/deposited with Land Acquisition Collector for this purpose.

17. He reiterated that the acquisition process was delayed due to the new Land Acquisition Act "Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Re-settlement Act, 2013 implemented with effect from 01.01.2014 which required Rules to be notified and putting in place new establishment for carrying

out various provisions of the Act. As per the new Act, it is required to submit the requisition for conducting Social Impact Assessment. The Survey Department has also informed that fresh Administrative Approval as per new Act is required to be obtained for processing the requisition for acquisition and also required to enclose fresh documents, such as sub-division sketches of proposed land, Land Register extract and combined sketches in original. Accordingly, Deputy Collector, Agatti has been requested to provide all the details in new proforma for processing for fresh administrative approval for acquisition of land.

18. The representatives further informed the Committee that fresh proposal for acquisition of land as per New Land Acquisition Land will be submitted immediately on receipt of requisite documents/details from Deputy Collector Agatti. The representatives of the Ministry of Civil Aviation also informed the Committee that Implementation Report has been sent on 05 September, 2016 to Lok Sabha Secretariat. Later, Part Implementation Report of the Assurance has been laid on the Table of the House on 07.12.2016.

Observations/Recommendations

19. The Committee are concerned that the Assurance given in reply to USQ No. 2516 dated 28.03.2012 regarding 'Airport Expansion Projects' which includes expansion of Agatti Airport in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep is yet to be fully implemented even after a lapse of five years against the prescribed period of 3 months for the purpose. The Committee have been informed that the project got delayed due to delay in land acquisition following promulgation of new land Act i.e. "Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Re-settlement Act, 2013 (implemented with effect from 01.01.2014) which necessitates Rules to be notified and putting in place new establishment for carrying out various provisions of the Act. As per the new Act, it is mandatory to submit the requisition for conducting Social Impact Assessment and fresh Administrative Approval as per new Act is required to be obtained for

processing the requisition for acquisition. The Committee do not see any justification or plausible reason for this inordinate delay considering that the project is in the overall interest of the Union Territory of Lakshadweep and the Administration of the Union Territory had responded positively to the project. During informal discussion in Lakshadweep, the representatives of the Union Territory Administration assured to continue to extend every possible cooperation to implement the project. It is rather lack of understanding and coordination between the Ministry of Civil Aviation, the Ministry of Home Affairs that the Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep had to suffer. The issues arising from the promulgation of the new land Act could have been taken care of and the delay avoided had these Ministries been a little more attentive to their duties, responsibilities and obligations towards Parliamentary matter. Agatti Airport as it exists today suffers from various limitations and inadequacies and can handle only small 32 seater aircraft thereby hampering the growth of, among other things, air traffic and tourism in the Union Territory. This needs to be addressed at the earliest. The Committee, therefore, urge upon the Ministry of Civil Aviation to expeditiously pursue the project of expansion of Agatti Airport in a coordinated manner with all the stake holders and fully implement the Assurance without further delay. The Committee would also like the Ministry to overhaul their mechanism for reviewing implementation of Assurances.

B. Coast Guard Airport

20. In reply to USQ No.645 dated 26.11.2012 regarding 'Coast Guard Airport' (Appendix - II), it was stated that that the Government have approved the setting up of Coast Guard Air Enclave at Minicoy on 30.09.2010. 20 acres of land has been identified for the said purpose and the proposal for acquisition of land is in progress. The Airport will be operationalised in due course after obtaining necessary clearances/approvals.

21. In their Status Report, the Ministry of Defence have stated that Airport Authority of India had inspected the Minicoy Island, Lakshadweep and it was found feasible to develop only an airstrip for small aircraft having seating capacity 6/8 in fair weather condition. Lakshadweep Administration had, further, not shown any interest to develop the airstrip. Further, Airport Authority of India has no future plans to develop an airport at Minicoy Island for civil operations. However, the Ministry of Defence also informed that the sanction for acquisition of 82,500 square meters of land for establishing Indian Coast Guard Air Enclave at Minicoy was accorded by them on 15.05.2016.

22. During informal discussion, the representatives of the Indian Coast Guard stated that AAI carried out feasibility survey/study for constructing an airstrip and allied infrastructure for 6/8 seater aircraft at Minicoy. In September, 2010, the Ministry of Defence accorded approval for setting up of Coast Guard Air Enclave (CGAE) at Minicoy for developing infrastructure for ICG flying operations. In this regard 20 acres of land was identified by ICG in consultation with the Lakshadweep Administration for setting up of CGAE at Minicoy. ICG considered staging and operation of Dornier aircraft for extended surveillance from the proposed airfield at Minicoy. However, AAI has intimated CGHQ that it has no future plans to establish civil airport at Minicoy, necessitating a rethink on the part of ICG with respect to use of air assets for surveillance.

23. The representatives also informed that the land identified for the air enclave measuring 20 acres, being private land, is to be acquired as per the new Land Act, 2013, which is bound to cause further delay pending formulation of procedures for compensations to private owners under the said Act. However, with AAI withdrawing their plans for civil airport at Minicoy and considering the complexities involved in construction of an airstrip at remote location from main land with respect to cost and time, the Ministry of Defence viewed that the expenditure for infrastructure development independently by ICG will be huge and therefore the proposal needs further examination. A joint visit by Joint Secretary (O/N), Director (Navy-II) and Principal Director (P&P) for on site assessment of available options was carried out in April, 2015. Post on site visit, considering the huge infrastructural cost, environmental

issues and feasibility of ICG surveillance requirement being met with various alternate means including twin engine helicopters, the Ministry of Defence approved acquisition of 20 acres of land at Minicoy to set up of Coast Guard Air Enclave for operation of twin engine helicopters only.

24. The representatives of the Department of Revenue, U.T. of Lakshadweep elucidated that due to implementation of the new Land Acquisition Act, 2013 with effect from 01.01.2014, notification was not issued. The ICG, Kavaratti submitted its requisition on 20.09.2016 for the acquisition of 82,500 sq mtrs of land at Minicoy for setting up of an Indian Coast Guard Air Enclave which will be processed separately.

Observations/Recommendations

25. The Committee find that the Assurance given in reply to USQ No. 645 dated 26.11.2012 regarding 'Coast Guard Airport' has been pending for more than four years without much progress. The Ministry had stated that the setting up of a Coast Guard Airport at Minicoy was approved in September 2010 and the acquisition of 20 acres of land for the purpose was in progress. The Ministry also submitted that the airport would be operationalised in due course after obtaining necessary clearances/approvals. However, after inspecting the island, the Airports Authority of India withdrew the proposal because they found it unviable to construct airstrip there and moreover bigger aircraft cannot land there. According to the Ministry, the Indian Coast Guard has to restrict its operations to Twin Engine Heavy Helicopter (TEHH) by constructing helipad, hanger and associated infrastructure only. After a delay of more than 4 years, the Ministry accorded the sanction for acquisition of 82, 500 sq mtrs of land for establishing Indian Coast Guard Air Enclave at Minicoy Island on 15.05.2015. But the necessary notification for acquisition of land was yet to be issued due to implementation of new Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 and the Indian Coast Guard could

submit its requisition for the acquisition of land only on 20.09.2016. The Committee have been informed that it may take 4 to 5 years, i.e. upto 2019 or 2020 for establishing the air enclave. The Committee realize the geographical limitation of Minicoy Island for operating civil aircraft for boosting tourism prospects. However, Lakshadweep Islands are strategically important for the country and have lots of potential for development of tourism but have not been provided with proper air connectivity so far. In particular, there is no airstrip/air base at such strategic island as Minicoy which does not auger well for the country's coastal security and development of coastal tourism. The Committee feel that the matter should be pursued vigorously as it plays a crucial role in development of the Island's economy through tourism and enhancing the country's defence preparedness. The Committee, therefore, urge the Ministry to do some concrete action to take up the matter with the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep so as to finalise a clear time limit for starting and completing the air enclave project for Coast Guard and implement the Assurance at the earliest. In the meantime, the Ministry may lay a Part Implementation Report detailing the efforts taken by them till date to fulfill the pending Assurance in the House.

C. Inter Island Connectivity in Lakshadweep

26. In reply to USQ No.698 dated 10.12.2013 regarding ' Inter Island Connectivity in Lakshadweep' (Appendix - III), it was stated that a request has been made to the Ministry of Civil Aviation by Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep seeking advice/guidance for finalization of expression of interest to constitute a Committee for evaluation of Expression of Interest (EoI) offers and to formulate further course of action for inviting commercial bids.

27. In their Part Implementation Report, the Ministry of Home Affairs stated that the Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep published a fresh EoI on 15.06.2015 for

operation of seaplane for tourists in Lakshadweep. Out of three firms participated in the EoI, two firms have submitted their financial bids.

28. During informal discussion, the representatives of the Department of Tourism, Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep further elucidated that the Lakshadweep Administration is planning to introduce seaplane service between mainland to Islands as well as for inter Island connectivity for the purpose of tourist transportation. The DPR cum Feasibility report for operation of seaplane services in Lakshadweep was submitted to the Ministry of Tourism for examination. EoI has also been published for operation of the service and in response to this notice, three firms have submitted EoI. However, only two firms have qualified in the EoI. Afterwards, another firm has also submitted a proposal for operation of seaplane service. Subsequently, the Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep has written to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) requesting them to intimate infrastructural and other mandatory requirements to establish Seaplane Base and Water dome that Lakshadweep Administrations needs to fulfill and any other clearances that the Administration needs to obtain from DGCA. However, no reply has so far been received. During the visit of the Director (Tourism), Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep to New Delhi, a meeting was arranged with DGCA officials and they have assured that a reply would be sent.

29. The Committee desired to know about the plan to improve inter-island connectivity and boost tourism in the Union Territory. The representatives informed that a perspective plan for the period 2015-2030 has been proposed considering all the requirements for development of shipping, port and aviation facilities for better connectivity and boost tourism with a view to ensure faster development of the Union Territory. It is also proposed to use seaplanes for connecting tourist resort destinations thus increasing occupancy rates without placing pressure on existing subsidized infrastructure for connectivity.

30. The Committee also enquired about the reasons for undue delay in fulfilling the Assurance and present status of the implementation of the Assurance. The

representatives informed that the Assurance is still pending because the aforesaid reply from DGCA is still awaited. They further informed that Ministry have been monitoring the Assurance but the operation of seaplane involves complex technical issues and the Union Territory Administration does not have expertise on such matters which necessitates consultation with various agencies/departments.

Observations/Recommendations

31. The Committee are unhappy to note that the Assurance given in reply to USQ No.698 dated 10.12.2013 regarding 'Inter Island Connectivity in Lakshadweep' could not be fully implemented despite a lapse of more than three years due to lackadaisical approach and indifferent attitude of the Ministry of Civil Aviation which failed to provide the much needed guidance and support to the project. Even the relevant information sought by the Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep was not provided by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation and the Ministry of Home Affairs failed to pursue the matter. This jeopardized the proposal for enhancing inter-island connectivity in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep with consequential delay in development of tourism in the islands and failure to improve socio-economic conditions of the people living in the islands. The Committee feel that for tapping the immensely rich tourism potential of the Union Territory of Lakshadweep, it is imperative to implement a multipronged and comprehensive scheme for inter-island connectivity in the Union Territory with the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Civil Aviation, the Ministry of Shipping and the Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep as stakeholders. The Ministry of Home Affairs also need to study in coordination with Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep how accessibility and smooth movement of tourists in Lakshadweep can be improved over a period of time. The Committee desire that the Ministry of Home Affairs and U.T. Administration of Lakshadweep to make earnest efforts and enhance the

level of coordination with other Ministries /Departments concerned including the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Ministry of Shipping by taking up the matter at the highest level so that the Assurance could be fulfilled at the earliest.

32. The Committee also note that a perspective plan for the period 2015-30 has been prepared considering development of shipping, port and aviation facilities for better connectivity and boost tourism. Use of sea plane has also been envisaged. The Committee would like to be apprised of perspective plan and recommend that result oriented steps should be taken to implement the plan for overall growth and development of Islands, whose economy thrives on tourism only.

D. Development of Islands

33. In reply to USQ No. 1011 dated 27.07.2015 regarding 'Development of Islands' (Appendix - IV), it was stated in the above Assurance that under the directions of the Ministry of Home Affairs, a Sub-Group of Task Force headed by the Ministry of Tourism comprising representatives from the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting; the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change; the Ministry of Shipping; Archaeological Survey of India; Coastal India Development Council; Indian Coast Guard and Maritime Board of Government of Gujarat has been constituted to provide inputs for identifying islands for holistic development. The Sub- Group of Task Force will indicate islands with historic places and with tourism potential for holistic development.

34. During informal discussion, the representatives of the Ministry of Tourism informed that promotion and development of tourism including tourism related infrastructure in the States/UTs including the island territories is primarily the responsibility of the respective State Government/Union Territory Administration. The Ministry only provide financial assistance for the development of tourism; the State/UT specific challenges are to be dealt with at the level of the State Government/Union Territory Administration. Development of tourism infrastructure is an ongoing task for which timelines cannot be specified. However, specific timelines given for implementing

individual project based on the Detailed Project Reports submitted by the State Government/Union Territory Administration/Implementing Agency are monitored and funds released on submission of Utilization Certificates.

35. The representatives further stated that under the directions of the Ministry of Home Affairs, a Sub-Group of Task Force was formed under the Chairmanship of the Ministry of Tourism to provide inputs for identifying islands for holistic development, indicate islands with historic places and with tourism potential for holistic development. The Task Force submitted its report on 15 February, 2016. The representatives requested that since the Sub-Group of the Task Force has submitted its report, the Assurance may kindly be treated as implemented.

36. The Committee desired to know whether any survey has been done by the Ministry to assess the tourism potential of Lakshadweep Islands. The representatives submitted that the Ministry of Tourism had conducted a study on Identification of Tourism Circuits in India in the year 2012 through the ex-National Level Consultant, M/s IL&FS Pvt. Ltd. The priority circuit identified for Lakshadweep comprised of the following Islands:-

- (i) Agatti, Kavaratti, Kalpeni, Bangaram, Thinakara and Suheli of Laccadive group
- (ii) Kadmat of Amindvi Group
- (iii) Minicoy of Minicoy Group

37. About the present status of the Assurance, the representatives of the Department of Tourism, Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep stated that they have submitted the following five proposals under Swadesh Darshan Scheme:-

- (a) Proposal for development of a Resort with support facilities and water sports centre at Kalpeni.
- (b) Proposal for development of transit accommodation facilities at Androth Island.
- (c) Proposal for development of wayside amenities at Minicoy Island.

(d) Proposal for development of wayside amenities at Bangaram Island.

(e) Proposal for development of wayside amenities at Kadmat Island.

38. The representatives further stated that the Ministry of Tourism communicated that the proposals do not adhere to the focus mentioned in the scheme. Therefore, three of these proposals (c, d and e) were submitted under PIDDC scheme but no approval has been received so far.

39. The Committee expressed their displeasure over the fact that no one has attended the discussion on behalf of the Coastal India Development Council (CIDC) and directed the Secretariat to write a letter in this regard to CIDC. The Chairman, CIDC *vide* his letter No. CIDC/2016/CGA-LSS/277 dated 11.11.2016 while expressing regret stated that he could not attend the discussion due to non-availability of flight ticket. He assured the Committee that CIDC will attend in such informal discussion to be held in the future.

Observations/Recommendations

40. As for the implementation of the Assurance given in reply to USQ No. 1011 dated 27.07.2015 regarding 'Development of Islands', the Committee have been informed that under the directions of the Ministry of Home Affairs, a Sub-Group of Task Force was formed under the Chairmanship of the Ministry of Tourism to provide inputs for identifying islands for holistic development and indicate islands with historic places and with tourism potential for holistic development. The Task Force submitted its report on 15 February, 2016. The Ministry of Tourism had also conducted a study on Identification of Tourism Circuits in India in the year 2012 through the ex-National Level Consultant, M/s IL&FS Pvt. Ltd. The priority circuit identified for Lakshadweep comprised of these Islands - (i) Agatti, Kavaratti,

Kalpeni, Bangaram, Thinakara and Suheli of Laccadive group ; (ii) Kadmat of Amindvi Group; and (iii) Minicoy of Minicoy Group. Subsequently, the Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep submitted five proposals under Swadesh Darshan Scheme - (a) Proposal for development of a Resort with support facilities and water sports centre at Kalpeni; (b) Proposal for development of transit accommodation facilities at Androth Island; (c) Proposal for development of wayside amenities at Minicoy Island; (d) Proposal for development of wayside amenities at Bangaram Island; and (e) Proposal for development of wayside amenities at Kadmat Island. However, the Ministry of Tourism communicated that the proposals do not adhere to the focus mentioned in the scheme and accordingly, three of these proposals [(c), (d) and (e)] were submitted under Project/Infrastructure Development for Destination and Circuits (PIDDC) scheme but no approval has been received so far. The failure to achieve progress in this direction despite making all these efforts exposes lack of understanding and cooperation amongst the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Tourism and the Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep. Needless to mention, it is in the overall interest of the country to develop tourism infrastructure in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep and the Ministry of Home Affairs ought to have taken keen interest in the matter and the Ministry of Tourism should have led from the front. The Committee, therefore, urge upon both the Ministries to work in tandem and expeditiously finalise a comprehensive workable plan for development of islands with tourism potential for holistic development of the Union Territory of Lakshadweep. Further, the Committee take strong exception to the absence of representative(s) of the Coastal India Development Council (CIDC) at the informal discussion and desire that CIDC should give due importance and respect to Parliament and its Committee.

E. Proposal for Coastal Security

41. In reply to USQ 3207 dated 11.02.2014 regarding 'Proposal for Coastal Security' (Appendix - V), it was stated that the Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep has requested for supply of 3 Nos. of 10-12 Meters Rigid Inflatable Boats (RIBs), and 9 Nos. of 7 Meters RIBs, which is in the process of procurement.

42. In their advance Implementation Report, the Ministry have stated that the Ministry of Home Affairs is in the process of placing the order and supply of Boats to Union Territory of Lakshadweep which would be completed in a period of 2 years.

43. During informal discussion, the representatives of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep apprised the Committee that a total number of 225 boats are to be procured under Coastal Security Scheme (CSS) (Phase-II) out of which, 150 boats are of 12 Ton and 75 boats are of special category boats which includes 12 Rigid Inflated Boats (RIBs) for Lakshadweep. Initially, delay occurred in finalization of specifications of various types of special category boats to be procured including that of Union Territory of Lakshadweep and that was the reason for non-fulfillment of the Assurance.

44. In the meantime, the National Committee on Strengthening Maritime and Coastal Security Against Threats from the Sea (NCSMCS) held its 12th Meeting under the Chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary on 16.10.2015. In the said meeting, implementation of CSS (Phase-II), including procurement of boats, was discussed. After noting the position, the NCSMCS held that all coastal States/UTs should ensure that milestones in the implementation of CSS (Phase-II) be adhered to strictly and the Ministry of Home Affairs should put up a note for extension of CSS (Phase-II) for a period of two years. After finalization of specifications of all types of boats, the process was started for procurement of 150 boats of 12-Ton through Global Tender Enquiry (GTE) and procurement of 75 special category boats on nomination basis. But it did not work.

45. Later, the Competent Authority decided to scrap the GTE for procurement of boats and procure all the 225 boats through Limited Tender Enquiry (LTE) from PSU Shipyards and to float a LTE amongst PSU shipyards, which are capable of manufacturing the boats so as to avoid further delay in procurement of these boats which are critical for coastal security. In this connection, a Committee under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Director General (Procurement), PM Division, Ministry of Home Affairs has been constituted to prepare LTE. The process of procurement would take around 3 and 1/2 years.

46. The Committee desired to know the reasons for scrapping the GTE and the level at which this decision was taken. The Ministry could not give proper reply and the Committee directed the representatives to furnish written reply and lay a Part Implementation Report of the Assurance.

47. The Committee also visited the Coastal Police Station at Kavaratti for an on the spot assessment of the Station and interaction with the officers/staff of the police station .

48. Subsequently, the Ministry of Home Affairs have submitted Part Implementation Report to the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and the same was laid on the Table of the House on 07.12.2016. The Ministry of Home Affairs have stated in the Implementation Report that it has been decided by the competent authority that all the 225 boats (*i.e.* 150 Nos. of 12-Ton boats + 75 Nos. of special category boats) would be procured through Limited Tender Enquiry (LTE) from PSUs and to float a LTE amongst PSUs, which are capable of manufacturing the boats so as to avoid further delay in procurement of these boats which are critical for coastal security. The procurement process of 225 boats through LTE has been initiated and a Committee has been constituted for preparation of LTE on 15.9.2016. The process of procurement would take around four years.

Observations/Recommendations

49. The Committee are concerned that the Assurance given in reply to USQ 3207 dated 11.02.2014 regarding 'Proposal for Coastal Security' which primarily involves procurement of three 10-12 Meters Rigid Inflatable Boats (RIBs) and nine 7 Meters RIBs for coastal security is yet to be implemented despite a lapse of more than three years. During informal discussion, the Committee have been informed that a total number of 225 boats are to be procured under Coastal Security Scheme (CSS) (Phase-II) out of which, 150 boats are of 12 Ton and 75 boats are of special category boats which includes 12 Rigid Inflated Boats (RIBs) for Lakshadweep. Initially, delay occurred in finalization of specifications of various types of special category boats to be procured including that of Union Territory of Lakshadweep and that was the reason for non-fulfillment of the Assurance. In October 2015, the National Committee on Strengthening Maritime and Coastal Security Against Threats from the Sea (NCSMCS) held that all coastal States/UTs should ensure that milestones in the implementation of CSS (Phase-II) be adhered to strictly. After finalization of specifications of all types of boats, the process was started for procurement of 150 boats of 12-Ton through Global Tender Enquiry (GTE) and procurement of 75 special category boats on nomination basis. Subsequently, the Competent Authority decided to scrap the GTE for procurement of boats and procure all the 225 boats through Limited Tender Enquiry (LTE) from PSU Shipyards and to float a LTE amongst PSU shipyards, which are capable of manufacturing the boats so as to avoid further delay in procurement of these boats which are critical for coastal security. The process of procurement would take about four more years. This sequence of events unfolds deeply pervading malaise in the entire spectrum of country's security related procurement process and it is not correct on the part of the Ministry to claim that the delay in finalization of specifications of various types of special category boats to be procured was the reason for non-fulfillment of the Assurance. Rather, it is symptomatic of lack of proper groundwork/insight, lackadaisical approach, indifferent attitude, absence of

the spirit of team work and lack of concern for coastal security in the Ministry. Consequently, the matter was messed up and further delays are imminent. Even the Ministry could not give proper reply for scrapping the GTE and the level at which this decision was taken. Any delay in rectifying this trend will compromise the country's coastal security. This is evident from the fact that the existing multi-layered surveillance system for maritime and coastal security wherein the Indian Coast Guard plays a prominent role by conducting patrols/surveillance will not be foolproof in the absence of the aforesaid RIBs. While the Committee would like to fix the responsibility in the matter, they direct the Ministry to make earnest efforts in a much more pragmatic manner to avoid further delays in fully implementing the Assurance and also revisit their procurement procedure in order to obviate recurrence of such lapses. The Committee would also like the Ministry to constantly review threat perceptions on coastal front and ensure necessary upgradations/overhauls.

F. Desalination Plants

50. In reply to (i) USQ No. 147 dated 05.12.2013, (ii) USQ No.4023 dated 17.12.2014 and (iii) USQ No.530 dated 27.4.2016 regarding 'Desalination Plants' (Appendices VI, VII and VIII), it was stated that the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) prepared a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for establishing desalination plants in six islands of Lakshadweep (Androth, Amini, Kadamat, Chetlat, Kiltan and Kalpeni) at an estimated cost of Rs. 190.67 crore. The DPR was submitted to Lakshadweep Administration for approval of the project by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MoDW & S). The proposal has not been approved so far.

51. It was further stated that work has been initiated to set up a prototype LTTD plant with a capacity of generating 2 million litres of portable water per day (MLD) at the Tuticorin Thermal Power station, Tamil Nadu by the end of XII plan period. The cost estimates for LTTD technology is 65 Paise per litre for desalinated portable water. The Lakshadweep Administration requested ESSO-NIOT for setting up similar plants in

remaining six islands viz., Amini, Chetlat, Kadamath, Kalpeni, Kiltan and Androth. ESS)-NIOT has sent a detailed project report to the Lakshadweep Administration in this regard. The proposal has not been approved so far.

52. In their Status Note submitted in January 2016, the Ministry stated that NIOT has sent a detailed project report to the Lakshadweep Administration for establishing desalination plants in six islands of Lakshadweep (Androth, Amini, Kadmat, Chetlat, Kiltan and Kalpeni). It may be noted that the Ministry conveyed the factual position in respect of setting up of six LTTD plants in the islands of Lakshadweep and there was no promise made, that constitutes the 'Assurance'. Detailed Project Report (DPR) was submitted to Lakshadweep Administration and there is no action pending from the Ministry of Earth Sciences. Accordingly, the Assurance may be dropped.

53. During informal discussion, the representatives apprised the Committee that the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) developed Low Temperature Thermal Desalination (LTTD) Technology, which converts saline water into potable water. The first demonstration plant with the capacity of 1 lakh litre per day was established in May, 2005 at Kavaratti. The water borne diseases in the Islands are considerably reduced after establishment of the desalination plant. Though various technologies like Reverse Osmosis (R.O.) were attempted for generation of fresh water, these technologies could not sustain due to difficulty in operation and maintenance. Considering the success of the technology, the erstwhile Planning Commission (now NITI Aayog) gave in principle approval for establishment of such desalination plants.

54. The Committee desired to know the reasons for delay in according approval for the six destination plants in Lakshadweep Islands. In response, the representatives informed that the procedural aspects involved among three Ministries viz. the Ministry of Drinking Water Supply, Ministry of Home Affairs and Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep and Ministry of Earth Sciences/NIOT is the major reason for delay in according approval. The proposal for according approval for establishment of six desalination plants in six Islands of the Union Territory of Lakshadweep was submitted by the Ministry of Earth Sciences/NIOT during January, 2013 to the Union Territory

Administration of Lakshadweep and their cost has considerably increased in a period of three years.

55. The representatives of Public Works Department, Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep stated that Revised Cost Estimate proposal for Rs.280.01 crore for the establishment of LTTD Plants in the six Islands (Androth, Kadmat, Amini, Kalpeni, Kiltan and Chetlat) was submitted to the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation on 03.03.2016. The Standing Finance Committee (SFC) in its meeting held on 13.07.2016 recommended for establishment of LTTD plants of one lakh litre capacity in the Islands having a population of more than 5,000 (Androth, Amini and Kadmat), subject to proper justification and submission of item-wise cost escalation between 2010, 2013 and 2015 proposals and taking all statutory clearances required from the Central Government. The SFC also advised the Union Territory Administration to relook into the issue for alternate technologies including possibility of more rain water harvesting. The matter is being pursued by the Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep. The Committee also visited the Desalination Plant at Kavaratti for on the spot assessment of the Plant.

56. Subsequently, the Project Director of NIOT *vide* their letter No. NIOT/OS/PA/2016-17 dated 08.11.2016 also apprised the Committee that every effort will be made to fulfill the Assurances of establishing Desalination Plants in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep on approval of project by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.

Observations/Recommendations

57. The Committee are perturbed that no proper attention has been paid by both the Ministry Earth Sciences and the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation to fulfill the three Assurances given in reply to USQ No. 147 dated 05.12.2013, USQ No.4023 dated 17.12.2014 and USQ No.530 dated 27.4.2016 regarding 'Desalination Plants'. Instead of making earnest efforts to fulfill the Assurances, the Ministry of Earth

Sciences have abdicated the responsibility by categorically stating that there was no promise made since the Detailed Project Report (DPR) was submitted to Lakshadweep Administration and hence no action is pending from them. The Committee are not inclined to accept this contention as mere submission of DPR does not construe establishment of the proposed desalination plants mentioned in the Assurances. The Ministry are required to pursue the matter with the Lakshadweep Administration and the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation for getting the DPR approved so as to set up the proposed desalination plants. Even the DPR submitted by the Ministry proved futile as the Lakshadweep Administration has subsequently submitted a revised cost estimate of ₹ 280 crore for EFC approval against the original cost estimate of ₹ 190 crore. The Committee's scrutiny has revealed that this lapse is the culmination of the failure of the nodal Ministry, the Ministry of Earth Sciences to coordinate with other Ministries concerned i.e. the Ministry of Home Affairs which controls the Lakshadweep Administration, the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation and the Ministry of Water Resources which have now taken over the project. The Committee are not satisfied with the half hearted action taken in the matter by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Committee have been informed that the standing Finance (SFC) has since recommended for establishment of LTTD plants of one lakh capacity in the Islands having a population of more than 5,000 i.e.

Andrott, Amini and Kadmat and has also advised the Union Territory Administration to relook into the issue for alternate technologies including possibility of more rain water harvesting. Since it is the foremost responsibility of any Government to provide clean and safe drinking water to the public, the Committee desire that desalination plants or alternative systems for providing drinking water supply should be set up in all the inhabited islands of Lakshadweep irrespective of population limit/criteria. The Committee, therefore, urge upon the Ministry of Earth Sciences to enhance the level of coordination and take up the matter at all levels especially at Secretarial and Ministerial levels to prevail upon the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation to not only approve the pending project but also sanction similar or alternative drinking water projects for remaining inhabited Islands of Lakshadweep. The Ministry of Home Affairs and the Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep which have since submitted the revised cost be asked to expedite the implementation of these projects. The Committee would also like the Ministry to furnish a Part Implementation Report in this regard.

G. National Optical Fiber Network

58. In reply to SQ No. 22 dated 25.2.2015 regarding 'National Optical Fiber Network' and Supplementary thereto (Appendix IX), it was stated that the project of Government

User Network (GUN) overlay over National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) aims, *inter-alia*, to provide community Wi-Fi infrastructure at one location in each Gram Panchayat is presently under consideration of the Government.

59. During informal discussion, the representatives of the Ministry apprised the Committee that based on TRAI recommendations dated 22.07.2014 on Improving Telecom Services in Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep Islands, Telecom Commission has approved in principle a Comprehensive Telecom Development for Lakshadweep Islands. Lakshadweep has not been included in BharatNet Phase-I since the Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep has not signed the tripartite MoU for free Right of Way (RoW). Lakshadweep will be taken up in Phase-II after signing of the MoU.

60. The representative of the Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep apprised the Committee that even though the tender for laying of Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) in nine Blocks of Lakshadweep had been finalized, no work orders were issued due to non availability of Bandwidth from Lakshadweep Islands to mainland and since almost all Blocks/GPs are working in rented buildings, laying of cable without bandwidth will cause a wastage of money.

61. The Committee have also been informed that National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) aims to connect all Gram Panchayats (GPs) through Optical Fibre for enhanced internet connectivity at speed of 10 Mbps. In an Island territory like Lakshadweep, this is very difficult to ensure and amounts to laying of submarine OFC to connect all Islands, the anticipated cost for which would be to the tune of Rs.500 crore. The U.T. Administration of Lakshadweep had requested the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to approve and fund the "Submarine OFC Network for Lakshadweep" through NOFN but DoT informed that the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) may not be in a position to fund the submarine cable under NOFN project. The Department of IT, UT of Lakshadweep have also taken up the work of providing Intra-Island OFC connectivity through a project called Island Wide Area FTTN Network to connect all the Government offices with SWAN connection using OFC connectivity. This project has

already been implemented successfully at Kavaratti, and will be considered for the remaining nine Islands.

62. The Committee desired to know about the status and quality of telecom services provided by BSNL in Lakshadweep Islands. The representative apprised the Committee that landline services of BSNL is available in 10 Islands, mobile services are available in 11 Islands including Bangaram Island, broadband services are available in 8 Islands and 3G services are available only in Kavaratti. He further stated that BSNL services are quite satisfactorily in Lakshadweep Islands; there are no call drop problems though congestion issues are there. However, net services are pathetically slow. In this regard, the representative of the UT Administration of Lakshadweep submitted that until and unless sea cable is laid and operationalised, there would be no improvement in the telecom services in Lakshadweep. The representatives of DoT, however, assured that enhancement of bandwidth by March 2017 will augment broadband speeds and improve other related services.

63. The Committee specifically enquired about the reasons for delay in implementing the Assurance and the present status of its implementation. The representatives informed that the Capex of Government User Network (GUN) was envisaged to be funded from USOF while Opex for the project was to be provided by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD). The MoRD showed their inability to provide funding of Opex for the project. Therefore, the project did not take off. On 30.04.2016, the Telecom Commission approved setting up of Public Wi-Fi Hotspots under BharatNet Phase-II and conduct of pilot projects for last mile connectivity to test technology and/or commercial models utilizing the infrastructure created under the project. All the three CPSUs implementing BharatNet project namely Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited, RailTel and Powergrid have been requested to submit proposals for pilots with innovative technology and business models. Impact Assessment Study will be conducted to ascertain the efficiency of the pilot projects. Roll-out of last mile connectivity replicating the technical and commercial model employed under the pilot would be considered based on the outcome of the pilot. BharatNet Phase-II is targeted to be completed by December, 2018.

Observations/Recommendations

64. The Committee are dismayed to note that in Lakshadweep not much progress has been made in fulfilling the Assurance given in reply to SQ No. 22 dated 25.02.2015 regarding 'National Optical Fiber Network' and Supplementary thereto which primarily aims, *inter-alia*, to provide community Wi-Fi infrastructure at one location in each Gram Panchayat. The Committee have been informed that even though the tender for laying of Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) in nine Blocks of Lakshadweep had been finalized, no work orders could be issued due to non availability of Bandwidth from Lakshadweep Islands to mainland and since almost all Blocks/GPs are working in rented buildings, laying of cable without bandwidth will cause a wastage of money. The Committee have also been informed that National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) aims to connect all Gram Panchayats (GPs) through Optical Fibre for enhanced internet connectivity at speed of 10 Mbps. In an Island territory like Lakshadweep, this is very difficult to ensure and amounts to laying of submarine OFC to connect all Islands, the anticipated cost for which would be to the tune of Rs.500 crore. The Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep had requested the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to approve and fund the "Submarine OFC Network for Lakshadweep" through NOFN but DoT informed that the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) may not be in a position to fund the submarine cable under NOFN project. In these circumstances, the Ministry of Home Affairs need to play the role of facilitator and coordinate with all the stakeholders to find best possible solution. During their study visit, the Committee experienced that only BSNL and Airtel networks were available in the Union Territory and net services were pathetically slow thereby inconveniencing the visitors/tourists. This does not augur well for the growth of tourism in the Union Territory. Moreover, provision of secure, reliable, robust and affordable telecom facilities in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep is of utmost importance for people living in this area and from a strategic point of view to the whole country. In this regard, the

representative of the UT Administration of Lakshadweep submitted that until and unless sea cable is laid and operationalised, there would be no improvement in the telecom services in Lakshadweep and the representatives of DoT assured that enhancement of bandwidth by March 2017 will augment broadband speeds and improve other related services. The Committee hope that the Department would be able to achieve the target. The Committee also urge upon the DoT to prioritize their efforts and scale up coordination with all concerned including the Ministry of Rural Development to complete BharatNet Phase-II by December, 2018 as targeted and fulfill the Assurance at the earliest. At the same time, the Committee desire that DoT should explore the possibilities of laying submarine optical fiber connectivity between main land and Lakshadweep group of Islands on the lines of Andaman and Nicobar Islands Project. The Committee also recommend that funds accumulated in USOF be utilised to fund submarine OFC for Lakshadweep.

...

H. Static Sensors Project

65. In reply to USQ No. 6213 dated 06.5.2013 regarding 'Static Sensors Project' (Appendix - X), it was stated that ten Radar stations in various islands including in Lakshadweep and Minicoy Islands are planned to be set up as a part of the Static Sensor Project. 36 mainland sites are being set up at the cost of Rs. 601.75 crore. The 10 radar stations in the islands are likely to be operational by the end of 2013.

66. In their Part Implementation Report, the Ministry have stated that out of 10 radar stations, the work for establishing radar stations on 09 sites (i.e. all 06 radar stations in Lakshadweep and Minicoy Islands and 03 radar stations at Andaman and Nicobar Islands) have been completed and they are operational. Due to the denial of permission for establishing radar station at Narcondam Island by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, alternate site was identified at Army land at Brichgunj (Port Blair) and approval of Army Headquarters for the same site has been obtained. The site for establishing of 10th radar station at Army land in Brichgunj has been finalized and

the task of installing the radar has been given to M/s Bharat Electronics Limited, Bangalore.

67. During informal discussion, the representatives of the Indian Coast Guard informed that 10 Radar Stations were sanctioned for Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep Islands. As part of Chain of Static Sensors Phase-I, ICG has established six Radar Stations for remote surveillance of sea areas of Lakshadweep Islands. Three more Radar Stations are planned during Phase-II of the Chain of Static Sensors. The Chain of Static Sensors Project was conceived and configured to ensure electronic and optical surveillance upto 25 nm and 15 nm respectively around areas of high sensitivity and high traffic density. The surveillance data generated by the network is dovetailed in the overall coastal security matrix of the Indian Coast Guard. The data is also shared with Indian Navy through National Command Control Communication and Intelligence network for enhancing the Maritime Domain Awareness. All the six Radar Stations in Lakshadweep and Minicoy Islands are operational as on date. The Chain of Static Sensors was first project of its kind. The enormity of the scope and geographical expanse of the project slowed the implementation process. While attempt was made to address most of the issues, which could be foreseen at the pre-project planning stage, few aspects, which contributed to the ultimate delay could not be factored in. The representative also informed the Committee that some of the reasons contributing to the overall delay in implementation of the 10 Island Radar Stations are as under:-

- (i) Being remote Island sites, commencement of civil works was delayed due to limited availability of willing contractors to undertake the civil works.
- (ii) Transportation of the necessary building material, hardware and engineers was dictated by availability of ships and aircraft. Moreover, availability of this mode of transport from mainland to the Islands and from Island to Island was also dependent on fair weather conditions.
- (iii) The inter-island ships were withdrawn from operations during the monsoons from May-October.
- (iv) Transfer of land at Suhelipar and subsequent clearing of the earmarked site from vegetation could be possible only by March, 2013.

(v) Procedural delays in obtaining VSAT operating license.

68. The Committee desired to know whether the delay in the installation of the six Radar Stations in Lakshadweep Islands (out of the 10 Radar Stations sanctioned for Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep Islands) has resulted in prevention of security lapses especially piracy and trespassing activities. The representatives of Indian Coast Guard informed that the six Radar Stations planned as part of the Chain of Static Sensors would augment the conventional means of surveillance by ships and aircraft. While the project implementation in Lakshadweep Islands was delayed, surveillance was bolstered by planned deployment of ICG ships and aircrafts to preclude any chance of piracy and trespassing.

69. The representatives further stated that the purpose and benefits of installing the Radar Stations in the Islands especially in Lakshadweep and Minicoy Islands are (a) 24 x7 electronic surveillance upto 25 nm radius around the Radar Stations located in the Islands without any manual interface. In the absence of adequate logistics facility like berthing, refueling and rations, sustained surveillance around the Islands territories by ships was a difficult proposition; (b) Continuous monitoring of the Sea Lanes of Communications (SLOCs) passing within the detection range of Radar Stations (25 nm) in the Island Territory; (c) Monitoring of trespassing/piracy activities; if any, around Lakshadweep Islands and (d) Surveillance upto 25 nm radius around the Radar Stations located in the during monsoon, when sustained surface surveillance by ships is difficult.

70. The representatives of BEL apprised the Committee that nine out of the above 10 Radar Stations have been completed and the 10th Radar Station at Brichgunj in Andaman and Nicobar Islands will be completed by 30th October, 2016.

Observations/Recommendations

71. The Committee note that the Assurance given in reply to USQ No. 6213 dated 06.5.2013 regarding 'Static Sensors Project' *inter-alia* stipulates that ten radar stations in various islands including six in Lakshadweep and Minicoy Islands are planned to be setup as a part of the Static Sensor Project

by the end of 2013. Out of these, all the six radar stations in Lakshadweep and Minicoy Islands and three out of four radar stations at Andaman and Nicobar Islands) have subsequently been completed and made operational. Regarding the tenth radar station, the Committee have been informed that due to the denial of permission for establishing the radar station at the original site i.e. Narcondam Island in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, an alternate site was finalized at Brichgunj (Port Blair) and the task of installing the radar has been given to M/s Bharat Electronics Limited, Bangalore. During informal discussion, the Committee have been informed that the Chain of Static Sensors was the first project of its kind and the enormity of the scope and geographical expanse of the project slowed the implementation process. While attempt was made to address most of the issues, which could be foreseen at the pre-project planning stage, few aspects, which contributed to the ultimate delay could not be factored in. Some of the reasons contributing to the overall delay in implementation of the 10 Island Radar Stations are - limited availability of willing contractors to undertake the civil works in remote Island sites; dependence of transportation of the necessary building material, hardware and engineers on the availability of ships/aircraft and fair weather conditions; withdrawal of the inter-island ships from operations during the monsoons from May-October; and procedural delays in obtaining VSAT operating licence. The Committee feel that all these factors could have been factored into at DPR stage itself and the Ministry erred to that extent. The importance of these radar stations has grown manifold especially in prevention of smuggling, piracy and trespassing activities and these are intended to augment the conventional means of surveillance by ships and aircraft which face certain limitations such as lack of adequate logistics facility like berthing, refueling and rations. While the project implementation in Lakshadweep Islands was delayed, surveillance was reportedly bolstered by planned deployment of the Indian Coast Guard ships and aircraft to preclude any chance of piracy and trespassing. The Committee would like the

Ministry to take stock of these circumstances and step up their efforts to complete the project at the earliest. As for the 10th Radar Station at Brichgunj in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, it was informed that same would be completed by 30th October, 2016. Expressing the hope this revised target would have been achieved, the Committee direct the Ministry to implement the Assurance without further delay.

DR. RAMESH POKHRIYAL "NISHANK"

CHAIRPERSON

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES

NEW DELHI;

07 April, 2017

17 Chaitra, 1939 (Saka)

(Vide Para 8 of the Report)

Extracts from Manual of Practice & Procedure in the Government of India, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, New Delhi

Definition

8.1 During the course of reply given to a question or a discussion, if a Minister gives an undertaking which involves further action on the part of the Government in reporting back to the House, it is called an 'assurance'. Standard list of such expressions which normally constitute assurances and as approved by the Committees on Government Assurances of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, is given at [Annex 3](#). As assurances are required to be implemented within a specified time limit, care should be taken by all concerned while drafting replies to the questions to restrict the use of these expressions only to those occasions when it is clearly intended to give an assurance in these terms.

8.2 When an assurance is given by a Minister or when the Presiding Officer directs the Government to furnish information to the House, it is extracted by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs from the relevant proceedings and communicated to the department concerned normally within 10 working days of the date on which it is given.

**Deletion from
the list of
assurances**

8.3.1 If the administrative department has any objection to treating such a statement as an assurance or finds that it would not be in the public interest to fulfil it, it may write to the Lok/Rajya Sabha Secretariat direct with a copy to the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs within a week of the receipt of such communication for getting it deleted from the list of assurances. Such action will require prior approval of the Minister.

8.3.2 Departments should make request for dropping of assurances immediately on receipt of statement of assurances from the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and only in rare cases where they are fully convinced that the assurances could not be implemented under any circumstances and there is no option left with them but to make a request for dropping. Such requests should have the approval of their Minister and this fact should be indicated in their communication containing the request. If such a request is made towards the end of the stipulated period of three months, then it should invariably be accompanied with a request for extension of time. The department should

| | |
|---|--|
| Time limit for fulfilling an assurance | <p>continue to seek extension of time till a decision of the Committee on Government Assurances is received by them. Copy of the above communications should be simultaneously endorsed to the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.</p> <p>8.4.1 An assurance given in either House is required to be fulfilled within a period of three months from the date of the assurance. This time limit has to be strictly observed.</p> |
| Extension of time for fulfilling an assurance | <p>8.4.2 If the department finds that it is not possible to fulfil the assurance within the stipulated period of three months or within the period of extension already granted, it may seek further extension of time direct from the respective Committee on Government Assurances under intimation to the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs as soon as the need for such extension becomes apparent, indicating the reasons for delay and the probable additional time required. Such a communication should be issued with the approval of the Minister.</p> |
| Registers of assurances | <p>8.5.1 The particulars of every assurance will be entered by the Parliament Unit of the department concerned in a register as at Annex 4 after which the assurance will be passed on to the concerned section.</p> <p>8.5.2 Even ahead of the receipt of communication from the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, the section concerned should take prompt action to fulfil such assurances and keep a watch thereon in a register as at Annex 5.</p> <p>8.5.3 The registers referred to in paras 8.5.1 and 8.5.2 will be maintained separately for the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha assurances, entries therein being made session wise.</p> |
| Role of Section Officer and Branch Officer | <p>8.6.1 The Section Officer in charge of the concerned section will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) scrutinise the registers once a week; (b) ensure that necessary follow-up action is taken without any delay whatsoever; (c) submit the registers to the branch officer every fortnight if the House concerned is in session and once a month otherwise, drawing his special attention to assurances which are not likely to be implemented within the period of three months; and |

(d) review of pending assurances should be undertaken periodically at the highest level in order to minimise the delay in implementing the assurances.

8.6.2 The branch officer will likewise keep his higher officer and Minister informed of the progress made in the implementation of assurances, drawing their special attention to the causes of delay.

Procedure for
fulfilment of an
assurance

8.7.1 Every effort should be made to fulfil the assurance within the prescribed period. In case only part of the information is available and collection of the remaining information would involve considerable time, an implementation report containing the available information should be supplied to the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs in part scrutinize of the assurance, within the prescribed time limit. However, efforts should continue to be made for expeditious collection of the remaining information for complete implementation of the assurance at the earliest.

8.7.2 Information to be supplied in partial or complete fulfilment of an assurance should be approved by the Minister concerned and 15 copies thereof (bilingual) in the prescribed proforma as at Annex 6, together with its enclosures, along with one copy each in Hindi and English duly authenticated by the officer forwarding the implementation report, should be sent to the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs. If, however, the information being furnished is in response to an assurance given in reply to a question etc., asked for by more than one member, an additional copy of the completed proforma (both in Hindi and English) should be furnished in respect of each additional member. A copy of this communication should be endorsed to the Parliament Unit for completing column 7 of its register.

8.7.3 The implementation reports should be sent to the Ministry of the Parliamentary Affairs and not to the Lok/Rajya Sabha Secretariat. No advance copies of the implementation reports are to be endorsed to the Lok/Rajya Sabha Secretariat either.

Laying of the
implementation
report on the
Table of the
House

8.8 The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, after a scrutiny of the implementation report, will arrange to lay it on the Table of the House concerned. A copy of the statement, as laid on the Table, will be forwarded by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs to the member as well as the department concerned. The Parliament Unit of the department concerned and the concerned section will, on the basis of this statement, make

| | |
|---|---|
| Obligation to lay a paper on the Table of the House vis-à-vis assurance on the same subject | a suitable entry in their registers. |
| Committees on Government Assurances LSR 323,324 RSR 211-A | <p>8.9 Where there is an obligation to lay any paper (rule/order/notification, etc.) on the Table of the House and for which an assurance has also been given, it will be laid on the Table, in the first instance, in fulfilment of the obligation, independent of the assurance given. After this is done, a report in formal implementation of the assurance indicating the date on which the paper was laid on the Table will be sent to the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs in the prescribed proforma (Annex 6) in the manner already described in Para 8.7.2.</p> <p>8.10 Each House of Parliament has a Committee on Government assurances nominated by the Speaker/Chairman. It scrutinized the implementation reports and the time taken in the scrutinized of Government assurances and focuses attention on the delays and other significant aspects, if any, pertaining to them. Instructions issued by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs from time to time are to be followed strictly.</p> |
| Reports of the Committees on Government Assurances | <p>8.11 The department will, in consultation with the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, scrutinize the reports of these two committees for remedial action wherever called for.</p> |
| Effect on assurances on dissolution of the Lok Sabha | <p>8.12 On dissolution of the Lok Sabha, all assurances, promises or undertakings pending implementation are scrutinized by the new Committee on Government assurances for selection of such of them as are of considerable public importance. The Committee then submits a report to the Lok Sabha with a specific recommendation regarding the assurances to be dropped or retained for implementation by the Government.</p> |

List of Representatives of the Ministries / Departments / Institutes / Agencies who appeared before the Committee during the informal discussion on Assurances pertaining to Lakshadweep

(i) Date: 14/10/2016, Place: Lakshadweep, Time: 16:30 hours, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Ministry of Defence (Department of Defence), Ministry of Home Affairs

Ministry of Civil Aviation

1. Shri Arun Kumar, Joint Secretary
2. Shri Shubhankar Ghosh, Director (PSA) D/o Port, Shipping and Aviation

Airports Authority of India

1. Shri Sudhir Raheja, Member - Planning
2. Shri Muthu, General Manager (ATM - South Region)
3. Shri I. Sridhar, Airport Director
4. Shri K. Sabjan, Sr. Supdt. (HR)

Ministry of Home Affairs

1. Shri Pankaj Goyal, Director
2. Shri Manas Mondal, Under Secretary
3. Shri Sanjay Kumar, Under Secretary (ANL)

Indian Coast Guard

1. Shri V.S. Pathania, Inspector-General
2. Shri M.V. Pathank, Deputy Inspector-General
3. Shri K.C. Singh, Commandant
4. Shri Dushyant Kumar, Commandant

Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep

1. Shri Farooq Khan, Administrator
2. Shri J. Ashok Kumar, Collector and Development Commissioner
3. Dr. Tariq Thomas, Secretary (Health)
4. Shri Saumyaketu Mishra, Director (GAP), Additional District Magistrate

(ii) Date: 14/10/2016, Place: Lakshadweep, Time: 17:45 hours, Ministry of Tourism

Ministry of Tourism

1. Shri R.K. Bhatnagar, Additional Director General
2. Shri Vikas Rustagi, Regional Director
3. Shri Mohammad Farouk, Assistant Director General
4. Shri S. Seetharaman, Assistant Director
5. Shri M. Narendran, Tourist Information Officer

Indian Tourism Development Corporation

1. Shri Uman Narula, Chairman and Managing Director

Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep

1. Shri Farooq Khan, Administrator
2. Shri J. Ashok Kumar, Collector & Development Commissioner
3. Dr. Tariq Thomas, Secretary (Health)
4. Shri Saumyaketu Mishra, Director (GAP), Additional District Magistrate
5. Shri Jatin Goyal , Director (Tourism Development-Kavaratti)

(iii) Date: 15/10/2016, Place: Lakshadweep, Time: 09:30 hours, Ministry of Home Affairs

Ministry of Home Affairs

1. Shri Pankaj Goyal, Director
2. Shri Manas Mondal, Under Secretary
3. Shri Sanjay Kumar, Under Secretary (ANL)

Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep

1. Shri Farooq Khan, Administrator
2. Shri J. Ashok Kumar, Collector & Development Commissioner
3. Dr. Tariq Thomas, Secretary (Health)
4. Shri Saumyaketu Mishra, Director (GAP), Additional District Magistrate

Office of Superintendent of Police, U.T. of Lakshadweep, Kavaratti

1. Ms. Benita Mary Jaiker, Superintendent of Police, Kavaratti

(iv) Date: 15/10/2016, Place: Lakshadweep, Time: 10:45 hours, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation

Ministry of Earth Sciences

1. Shri Rajaneesh, Scientist

National Institute of Ocean Technology

1. Shri Ramanamurthy, Project Director
2. Shri Phani Kumar, Scientist F

Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation

1. Shri Samir Kumar, Economic Adviser

LPWD, Union Territory Administration of Lakshadweep

1. Shri Arun Jadhav. Superintendent Engineer, Lakshadweep Public Works Department

(v) Date: 15/10/2016, Place: Lakshadweep, Time: 17:00 hours, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, (Department of Telecommunications)

Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (D/o Telecommunications)

1. Shri Ashwani Salwan, DDG (BB) USOF

BSNL

1. Shri R. Mani, ITS, CGMT
2. Shri P.K. Shrivastava, Senior G.M.
3. Shri G. Muraleedharan, PGMT
4. Shri Kunhikoya N., TDM, Kavarati
5. Shri B.K. Badola, Chief General Manager (PM)

U.T. Lakshadweep Administration

1. Shri Jatin Goyal, Director (IT)

(vi) Date: 18/10/2016, Place: Bengaluru, Time: 09:30 hours, Ministry of Defence, (D/o Defence Production), (D/o Defence), (D/o Defence Research and Development)

Ministry of Defence

1. Shri K.K. Pant, Joint Secretary (Aero)

Bharat Electronics Limited

1. Shri Girish Kumar, D(BGCX)
2. Shri R.L. Sekhar, AGM - CSSNS
3. Shri M. V. Srivathsa, G.M.

Indian Coast Guard

1. Shri V.S. Pathania, Inspector General
2. Shri M.V. Pathak, Deputy Inspector General
3. Shri K.C. Singh, Commandant
4. Shri Dushyant Kumar, Commandant

