

(147)

tourists, and this should be possible without CRZ violations and without cutting trees. Future tourism development needed to be entirely private sector oriented.

25. Regarding the proposals on Civil Aviation, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation indicated that the airport expansion would be completed by July, 2003. Thereafter, they would be allowing charters to directly land at Port Blair. At this stage, it was not felt possible to declare Port Blair as an international airport; however, this could be considered at a later stage depending on growth of traffic and facilities.

26. On the proposals for development of Fisheries, Secretary, Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying felt that the proposal for mid-sea oil bunkering facilities for fishermen in Lakshadweep would not be feasible, since presently fishing boats in the Islands do not go out for long periods. There was instead a need to promote larger fishing vessels and encourage fishermen to go beyond one to two kms, develop expertise for Tuna fishing, and create adequate post-harvest infrastructure. The Department will be happy to depute personnel from Fishery Survey of India to train fishermen in Tuna fishing. It was felt that the proposed High Powered Task Force for fisheries would be premature at this stage. It was noted that EEZ guidelines presently allowed only Indian vessels, and Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying has the mandate to give necessary clearance under these guidelines.

27. Secretary, Department of Food Processing Industries felt that there was considerable value addition potential in fisheries. She indicated that the Department would like to be associated with development of the Master Plan on Fisheries, and would be happy to support infrastructure development for food processing activities.

28. Chief Secretary, A & N Administration also raised the issue of the need for augmentation of the Police Marine Force for A & N Islands. The proposal in this regard was agreed to.
(Action: Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs)

Agenda Item No. 6

Strengthening of Critical Infrastructure:

29. Issues relating to development of shipping, transport and ports as well as improving communications and connectivity and power supply in the Islands were considered. Member of Parliament, A & N Islands mentioned that it took three days to reach Campbell Bay by sea and that