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out that Ministry of Tribal Affairs is of the view that a person should get tribal status on grounds of geographical isolation and ST status should not be provided to a person if he/ she is born on the mainland. (82)

45. Deputy Chairman requested Ministry of Tribal Affairs to quickly examine the issue and take necessary action.

(Action : Ministry of Tribal Affairs)

e) Ship Connectivity:

46. Administrator, Lakshadweep, pointed out that in terms of procurement of ships, the position has improved as Ministry of Shipping has accorded approval for 9 vessels and these will be available from June 2006 to February 2007. As regards 700-passenger vessel which has been delayed by HSL Vishakapatnam, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Shipping and Ministry of Home Affairs, have agreed to sanction an assistance of Rs. 34 crores to enable HSL and to deliver the vessel by May 2007.

47. On the proposal seeking in- principle approval for 250 passenger vessels and Landing Barges, Ministry of Shipping, is expected to refer the case shortly to the Planning Commission. Thereafter an EFC has to be held and by June end the ship building contract will be finalized. Next year it is proposed to procure 400-passenger vessel. These vessels will take care of the immediate requirements.

48. Member Secretary directed that EFC for the 250-passenger vessel and Landing Barges should be completed before the IDA meeting.

(Action : Ministry of Shipping and Planning Commission)

f) Air Connectivity:

49. Administrator, Lakshadweep indicated that Ministry of Civil Aviation has conducted a study for extension of airstrip at Agatti. The small waterfront ahead of the airstrip has to be bridged with the uninhabited island. Environmental clearance will be requested after the proposal is agreed by Ministry of Civil Aviation.

50. Administrator informed that at present the air service is through a 12 seater Dornier Aircraft, which is stationed at Cochin Airport paying the highest ground handling charges in India, because of which the air fares are very high. The flight can only be sustained in fair weather. Invariably passengers seeking reservation on this flight get a wait listed ticket. As regards Helicopter service, Administrator, Lakshadweep informed that Ministry of Civil Aviation has agreed to provide another helicopter through Pawan Hans by September 2006. He indicated that the possibility of amphibian aircraft may be examined for inter-island transportation.

(Action: Ministry of Civil Aviation)