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The M.P, A&N said that their problem is concerning sea sand compared to the problem of river sand in case of Lakshadweep. The sand has blocked the roads in A&N and should be allowed to be used for construction purpose.

The Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission mentioned that this issue is very important and asked the Secretary, Planning Commission to follow up the matter.

[Action to be taken by Ministry of Environment & Forests]

Up-gradation of Port Blair airport & starting International flights via Port Blair

The LG A&N mentioned that Port Blair was declared an International airport in 2007. M/o Civil Aviation was requested to introduce International Flights on 2nd May 2012. Presently, watch hours have been increased up to sunset and are proposed to be increased further to 24 Hrs by June 2013. CMD, AAI have also discussed these issues during the visit of Member, Planning Commission Dr. Syeda Hameed to the A&N Islands on 24th July 2012. The layout plan for airport up-gradation & expansion has been finalised. The LG (A&N) requested for an expeditious action for early up-gradation of the Airport, and International flights re-routing to touch Port Blair, in line with the vision of world-class tourism in the islands.

J.S M/o Civil Aviation mentioned that no airlines can be forced to come to the island. It is open for any airlines to start as per Asian bilateral rights and as such there is absolutely no restriction in this regard. Any of the foreign airlines or Air India can start the flights if they wished to. However, according to Air India, there is no confirmed traffic potential in the UT of A&N.

Chief Secretary, A&N mentioned that Chairman AAI has said that they have plans to build a new airport and they have also received the funds for the purpose. The A&N Administration has also given land for this purpose.

Secretary, Planning Commission observed that two issues need to be addressed in this regard. One issue concerns the introduction of international flights, concerning this, the view of the Ministry of Civil Aviation is that there is no traffic potential. This issue need to be suitably looked into. The other issue is regarding building a new airport.

Member (SH) asked the A&N Administration to explain precisely what needed to be done in this connection. The CS, A & N Administration said that the airport at Port Blair should be built as the plan for this purpose has already been approved.

The Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission mentioned that these plans are made on certain assumptions on how much gross budgetary support will be made