

available, which often gets scaled down because resources are limited. He desired to know if there is enough infrastructure to attract tourists. This would need requisite staff and infrastructure upgradation. He further emphasized the need for posting immigration and custom officials at the international airport. According to him, mere construction of a big building for the airport will not solve all the issues. According to him, international flights are not going to halt at Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

The CS, A&N Administration mentioned that necessary infrastructure to attract tourists will also come up once the new international airport is built. A new class of tourists will emerge once they come to know about the new international airport. J.S. M/o Civil Aviation mentioned that all the necessary officers would be posted there if flights start coming.

MP (A&N) pointed out that the main problem is of limited watch hours, Andaman traffic control is with Navy which works only for two hours whereas international flights need 24 hours.

The J.S M/o Civil Aviation said that in October, 2011 they have sanctioned 17 posts taking the total number officers to 16, 203 sailors, 42 civilians and one extra DSC Platoon. These officials will be put in place by September/October, 2013, and after that the airport will become functional. According to him the airport is not operational for 2 hours, it is operational from morning 05:45 to 16:50 hrs. About 1.5 acres of land has been identified and AAI has asked the A&N Administration to acquire this land. Notification under Section 5 has also been issued and instrument landing system will be in place on completion of the same. It will be fully functional by 2013.

[Action to be taken by Ministry of Civil Aviation]

Reduction in air fare & increased connectivity:

According to LG (A&N), Route Dispersal Guidelines (RDG) were expected to improve connectivity in the remote regions such as North-East, J&K and A&N and Lakshadweep Islands. At present 10% quota is earmarked under RDG for these sectors. Most of the airlines prefer to meet this criterion by touching Jammu and other short duration destinations and avoid Port Blair. On 29.06.2011, M/o Civil Aviation, was requested to keep A&N Islands in an exclusive category under Route Dispersal Guidelines, followed up by a letter dated 25-08-2011 from LG (A&N) to the Union Minister of Civil Aviation. This will increase connectivity as well as reduce air fares.

The LG, A&N said that it is beyond the capacity of the people to pay exorbitant fares being charged by the airlines for journeys to A&N. The air fares need to be rationalized and brought down.