

118

purposes. Hence this Administration would need to look at alternative arrangements only with a view to providing the backup rather than the preferred system of communication in this area. This view can be further examined by the National Disaster Management Authority. Moreover this matter is sub-judice and under review with the Hon'ble Supreme Court, since A&N Administration has appealed against the closure of ATR.

In so far as recommendations 2 - 5 are concerned, while studies can certainly be undertaken, it is apparent that the cost of the sea route will always be on higher side than that of the land route. Moreover, subsidies would necessarily have to be given for use of such transportation by boat and it may be pointed out that such a mode of transport will either be suspended or become infrequent during the monsoon period, which lasts from May to October. Otherwise there could be mishaps.

As regards the use of luxury cruise boats and helicopter services for tourists are concerned, it would depend upon the extent to which the fares are attractive enough for tourists and others. It may also be pointed out that the existing policy does not ban the use of private vehicles, which would cause undue hardship if they were not permitted to move on the ATR. Moreover, tourists approaching northern group of islands would necessarily have to use this mode of communication also.

Health & Food Security:

(6) **Intervention:** The presumptions of the recommendations are that there should be limited intervention. In other words it does not rule out the need for contact. It has been stated that this should be 'demand driven' and attempt should be made to