

Shri Rajnath Singh chairs second meeting of Island Development Agency**Shri Rajnath Singh chairs second meeting of Island Development Agency****IDA approves holistic development of 9 islands****Shibpur Naval Air station to be converted into Joint User Airport**

The Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh chaired the second meeting of Island Development Agency (IDA) here today. The Island Development Agency reviewed the concept development plans and detailed master plans for holistic development of 09 islands (four in A&N Islands i.e. Smith, Ross, Long, Avis) and (five in Lakshadweep i.e. Minicoy, Bangaram, Thinnakara, Cheriya, Suheli). The project being steered by NITI Aayog aims at promoting and implementing development based on sustainable approach to building a thriving maritime economy of the project islands.

The Union Home Minister expressed satisfaction at the progress made since its last meeting held on July 24, 2017, when directions were given to identify and execute infrastructure and connectivity projects together with provisioning of water and electricity. It was noted that site development potential reports have clearly mapped and delineated environmentally sensitive zones in the project islands and considering the unique maritime and territorial bio-diversity of the islands, enhanced connectivity has been recommended as one of the key priorities. Accordingly, it was decided that the Naval air station at Shibpur near Diglipur in northern Andaman & Nicobar Islands would be co-used as Joint User Airport.

During the meeting, it was also decided to develop a PPP package including a airport (Joint User Airport) at Minicoy Island, to unlock the tourism potential. It was agreed to promote tuna fishing industry for improving livelihoods in Lakshadweep. Union Home Minister directed all concerned to expedite implementation of ongoing key infrastructure projects in the islands and develop community based tourism in consultation with local stakeholders.

NITI Aayog was also asked to drive the formulation of PPP projects and proposed detailed guidelines to boost private sector participation.

The IDA was set up on June 01, 2017 following the Prime Minister's review meeting for the holistic development of islands.

The meeting was attended by Lt. Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Admiral D.K. Joshi, Former Navy Chief (Vice Chairman of IDA), Cabinet Secretary Shri P. K. Sinha, CEO, NITI Aayog Shri Amitabh Kant, Union Home Secretary Shri Rajiv Gauba, Secretary, Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Shri C. K. Mishra and representatives of Ministries of Tourism, Power, Defence, Health, Telecommunications and Civil Aviation.

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