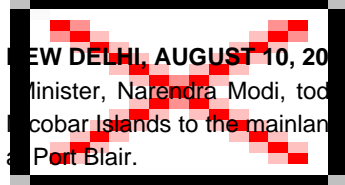


Andaman Islands to be major port hub for international maritime trade: PM

By TIOL News Service



NEW DELHI, AUGUST 10, 2020: Prime

Minister, Narendra Modi, today launched and dedicated to the nation, the submarine Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) connecting Andaman & Nicobar Islands to the mainland through video conferencing. The foundation stone for this project was laid by the PM on 30th December 2018 at Port Blair.

Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi said the connectivity would now enable endless opportunities in the islands. He said the laying of the 2300 Kms submarine cable and completing it before the set target is very praise worthy.

The Prime Minister said that the service had begun today on a major chunk of the islands from Chennai to Port Blair, Port Blair to Little Andaman and Port Blair to Swaraj Island.

The Prime Minister admired the laying of cables for about 2300 kilometers under the sea as surveying in the deep sea, maintaining the quality of the cable and laying of the cable with specialised vessels is not an easy task. The project also had to overcome challenges such as high waves, storms and monsoons and the tough times owing to Corona Pandemic.

The Prime Minister said the Andaman & Nicobar Islands felt the need for years but no steps were taken to fulfil it. Mr Modi expressed his happiness for being able to deliver the project notwithstanding such major challenges.

The Prime Minister said providing better and cheap connectivity to the people of Andaman & Nicobar Islands is the responsibility of the country. He congratulated all those who were associated with the project. Mr Modi said the Submarine Cable is one such effort to prove that A & N Islands are not far away from Delhi and from the Hearts of the Mainland.

Ease of Living to every Citizen

Mr Modi said that the Government is committed to provide modern facilities to every citizen and every sector so that there can be a better ease of living. He said this Optical Fibre Project which links A&N Islands with the rest of the country is an example of the commitment of the Government towards ease of living. He said the Government is committed to the speedy development of national security linked border areas and island states.

Increase Opportunities through Digital India

The Prime Minister said the Submarine Cable will help A&N in getting cheaper & better connectivity and all the benefits of Digital India, especially in improving online education, tele-medicine, banking system, online trading and in boosting tourism.

PM said that the Indian Ocean has been the center of India's trade and strategic prowess for thousands of years and that Andaman & Nicobar is an important centre for India's Economic-Strategic Cooperation.

He said all the Islands of India would be playing an important role under India's new trade strategy for Indo-Pacific region.

Mr Modi said under the Act-East policy, the role of Andaman and Nicobar in India's strong relations with East Asian countries and other countries connected to the sea is very high and is going to increase.

He said that the Island Development Agency was formed 3 years ago to strengthen its role. He said that the projects which were not completed in Andaman and Nicobar for years, are now rapidly getting completed.

High Impact Projects & Better Land, Air and Water Ways

PM said that High Impact Projects are being expanded in 12 islands of Andaman and Nicobar. Apart from providing for better internet & mobile connectivity, he said the effort is to further improve physical connectivity through road, air and water.

The Prime Minister referred to the work on two major bridges and the NH-4 in order to improve the road connectivity of North and Middle Andaman.

He said the Port Blair Airport is being enhanced to handle a Capacity of 1200 passengers. Along with this the airports are ready for operations in Diglipur, Car Nicobar and Campbell - Bay.

Mr Modi said the Passenger Terminal in Swaraj Dweep, Shaheed Dweep and Long Island along with Water Aerodrom Infrastructure like Floating Jetty will be ready in the coming months.

He said that the 4 Ships being built at Kochi Shipyard shall be delivered soon to improve the Water connectivity between the islands and the mainland.

Port Led Development

He said Andaman & Nicobar will be developed as an hub of Port Led Development as it is at a Competitive Distance from many ports of the World.

Prime Minister said a country which has better network of ports and their connectivity will be able to provide a boost to trade in the 21st Century.

He said that today, when India is moving forward with the resolve of self-sufficiency and is establishing itself as an important player in the Global Supply and Value Chain, it is very important to strengthen our network of Waterways and our Ports. Mr Modi said that the legal bottlenecks in the development of Port Infrastructure are also being removed continuously.

International Maritime Trade

PM said that the Government's focus is also on promoting Ease of Business in the sea and simplifying Maritime Logistics. He referred to the speedy construction of the deep draft inner harbor and the proposal to construct TransShipment Port in Great Nicobar at an estimated cost of about Rs 10 thousand crores. Mr Modi said this would enable big ships to anchor and would increase India's share in maritime trade, along with new employment opportunities.

He said that the blue economy like Fisheries, Aquaculture and SeaWeed farming in the island will accelerate in commensurate with the modern infrastructure being developed in Andaman and Nicobar. He wished that the efforts of the Government will give Andaman and Nicobar, not only new facilities but also as a prominent place on the World Tourist Map.