

## **Promoting cruise Tourism in the Country**

In order to promote cruise tourism in the country the Government has exempted cruise tourists arriving with e-visa from the requirement of biometric enrolment for the major ports of Mumbai, Cochin, Chennai, Mormugao and New Mangalore for a period of three years till 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2020.

The Government has also taken steps for customer-friendly and hassle-free immigration regime for cruise passengers such as implementation of e-visa and e-Landing cards at the five ports.

The Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to handle cruise vessels and cruise passengers have been revised in November, 2017 in consultation with the stakeholders and have been implemented at the five major ports which receive cruise vessels. The revised SOPs inter alia provide for submission of documents/data electronically, seamless entry and exit processes with Access Control & RFID for vehicles and persons and simplified Port Health Organization clearance procedure. It further provides for e-Landing card for shore excursion, doing away with face to face checks except at the first of entry and last port of exit and allowing carrying of valid photo I-card for Indian cruise passengers on domestic leg instead of the passport.

The Government also proposes to upgrade the Cruise Terminal at Mumbai Port and construct a new terminal at Cochin Port at cost of Rs. 197 crore and Rs 25.72 crore respectively. The proposed projects are slated to be completed by August, 2019 and February, 2020 respectively.

This information was given by Union Minister of State for Shipping and Finance Shri Pon. Radhakrishnan in a written reply in Lok Sabha today.

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(Release ID :176382)