



IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA AT ERNAKULAM

PRESENT

THE HONOURABLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE MR. NITIN JAMDAR

&

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE ZIYAD RAHMAN A.A.

THURSDAY, THE 21ST DAY OF AUGUST 2025 / 30TH SRAVANA, 1947

WP(C) NO. 7547 OF 2025

PETITIONER/S:

SUO MOTU

WRIT PETITION INITIATED BY THE HIGH COURT IN RE:
INFRASTRUCTURAL AND OTHER ISSUES RELATING TO
ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN THE LAKSHADWEEP
ISLANDS

RESPONDENT/S:

- 1 UNION OF INDIA,
MINISTRY OF LAW & JUSTICE REP BY ITS SECRETARY,
4TH FLOOR, A-WING, SHASTRI BHAVAN, NEW DELHI.,
PIN - 110001
- 2 THE ADMINISTRATOR,
UNION TERRITORY OF LAKSHADWEEP, SECRETARIAT
BUILDING, KAVARATTI, LAKSHADWEEP., PIN - 682555
- 3 THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR, UNION TERRITORY OF
LAKSHADWEEP
UNION TERRITORY OF LAKSHADWEEP, 1ST FLOOR,
COLLECTOR'S BLOCK, SECRETARIAT, KAVARATTI,
LAKSHADWEEP, PIN - 682555
- 4 THE ADDITIONAL DISTRICT MAGISTRATE
UNION TERRITORY OF LAKSHADWEEP, DISTRICT
COLLECTORATE, KAVARATTI, LAKSHADWEEP., PIN -
682555
- 5 THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA
REP BY ITS REGISTRAR GENERAL, HIGH COURT ROAD,
MARINE DRIVE, KOCHI, PIN - 682031



- 6 THE LAKSHADWEEP STATE LEGAL SERVICE AUTHORITY
LOCATED AT THE DISTRICT & SESSIONS COURT
BUILDING, KAVARATTI, LAKSHADWEEP., PIN - 682555
- 7 ADV.C.N.NOORUL HIDAYA
AGED 36 YEARS
D/O C.P.MULLAKOYA, CHERIYANANLLAL HOUSE, KALPENI
ISLAND, UNION TERRITORY OF LAKSHADWEEP, PIN -
682557
- 8 THE LAKSHADWEEP BAR ASSOCIATION
KAVARATTI ISLAND, UNION TERRITORY OF LAKSHADWEEP,
REPRESENTED BY ITS SECRETARY, PK SALEEM, S/O.
LATE KIDAVE, AGED 44 YEARS, KAVARATTI ISLAND,
LAKSHADWEEP - 682 555. ADDL.R8 IS IMPEADED AS
PER ORDER DATED 03/04/2025 IN IA 1/2025 IN WP(C)
7547/2025.

BY ADVS.

SAJITH KUMAR V., SC, LAKSHADWEEP ADMINISTRATION
R.V.SREEJITH, SC, U.T.ADMINISTRATION OF
LAKSHADWEEP

K. R. GANESH

ADARSH KUMAR

E.C.AHAMED FAZIL

ENOCH DAVID SIMON JOEL, AMICUS CURIAE

AASHIQUE AKTHAR HAJJIGOTHI, AMICUS CURIAE

T. V. VINU, CGC

ELVIN PETER P.J. (SR.)

SABU GEORGE

SIDHARTH SUDHEER

SHASHANK DEVAN

K.P.S.JALALUDDEEN MOHMMED

MINI GOPINATH

P.B.SUBRAMANYAN

B.ANUSREE

MANU VYASAN PETER

MEERA P.

AISWARYA MOHAN

CHITRA JOHNSON

THIS WRIT PETITION (CIVIL) HAVING BEEN FINALLY HEARD
ON 04.07.2025, THE COURT ON 21.08.2025 DELIVERED THE
FOLLOWING:



C. R.

JUDGMENTDated this the 21th day of August, 2025**Nitin Jamdar, C. J.***Introduction*

Lakshadweep, an archipelago of islands off the west coast of Kerala in the Arabian Sea, falls under the jurisdiction of the High Court of Kerala. The issues concerning the administration of justice in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep are the subject matter of this petition.

2. Lakshadweep consists of 36 islands, 12 atolls, three reefs, and five submerged banks. Inhabited islands are Agatti, Amini, Andrott, Bitra, Chetlat, Kadmat, Kalpeni, Kavaratti, Kiltan, and Minicoy. The uninhabited islands are Viringili, Cheriya, Kodithala, Tilakkam-I, Tilakkam-II, Tilakkam-III, Pitti-I, Pitti-II, Bangaram, Tinnakara, Parali-I, Parali-II, Parali-III, Kalpitti, Suheli Valiyakara, Suheli Cheriya, and Pitti-Bird Island.

3. The District Court for Lakshadweep is at Kavaratti. The Court of Munsiff at Andrott exercises jurisdiction over Kavaratti, Andrott, Minicoy, and Kalpeni. A Sub Judge Court at Amini has jurisdiction over Amini, Agatti, Kadmat, Kiltan, Chetlat, and Bitra. Air connection to the mainland is through the airstrip at Agatti. Travel from the mainland to the islands by ship takes considerable time, particularly during inclement weather. The monsoon prevails in the region from around 15 May to 15 September, during which inter-island



transportation is severely affected by turbulent seas. The islands are scattered and separated from each other, with courts functioning on only three of the thirty-six islands. The distances between them are considerable, with ship as the only available means of transport. This unique topography and isolation of Lakshadweep islands present significant challenges to the effective administration of justice, which this judgment seeks to address.

4. In July 2020, an advocate and resident of Kalpeni Island filed this petition, W. P. (C) No. 7547 of 2025, for the appointment of Public Prosecutors, the setting up of family courts, and for other directions. A counter affidavit was filed by the Administration of the Union Territory (UT Administration). The Division Bench directed the UT Administration and the High Court Administration to provide details of the courts functioning in the Union Territory, the number of cases filed and disposed of, the stage of cases over the last two years, and the details of family court cases. The petition thereafter remained pending.

5. When the petition came up for hearing in January 2025, it was pointed out that though the issue of Public Prosecutors and related matters may have been substantially addressed, several other issues pertaining to judicial infrastructure and other aspects persist. The High Court Administration brought to our attention the need to address several key areas, including the construction and maintenance of court buildings, allocation of funds for repairs, procurement of hardware, filling of staff vacancies, facilities for the Lakshadweep State Legal Services Authority, and Mediation Centres, as well as appointments of



authorities under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 and other enactments. Considering that these infrastructural and administrative issues require resolution and long-term monitoring, by order dated 24 January 2025, the writ petition was converted into a *suo motu* writ petition titled “*Re: Infrastructural and Other Issues Relating to Administration of Justice in the Lakshadweep Islands*”.

6. Special emphasis on judicial infrastructure in Lakshadweep is necessary due to its unique topography and legal history. For effective intervention, the local issues have to be understood in the backdrop of their history, geographical location, and the manner in which the judicial system has evolved under the influence of different rules and ancient cultural practices. We propose to narrate these aspects in brief to provide context.

7. The official information made available by the Union Territory Administration in public domain give details of the geographical location and administration of the Island. A detailed account of the history pertaining to the administration of justice is in the *Gazetteer of India on Lakshadweep* by N. S. Mannadiar issued by the UT Administration. Other authoritative resources are, the books – *A short account of the Laccadive Islands and Minicoy* by R. H. Ellis; *Report on the Laccadive Islands* by W. Robinson. The decision of the Division Bench of the High Court of Kerala in the case of *Puthiyapura Sheikh Koya Thangal and Another v. P. P. Koyammakoya and Others*¹ refers to these authoritative works and gives outline of history and customary

1 2012 (3) KHC 192



laws. Our narration of topography and history is from these resources.

Topography

8. The Lakshadweep islands, previously known as Laccadive, Amindivi, and Minicoy, are at a distance from each other. Though many islands are small in size, they are scattered by large shallow lagoons. Agatti is the westernmost inhabited island and has the only airstrip in the region for air connectivity. Agatti is located 459 kilometres west of Kochi and lies to the west of Kavaratti, the District Headquarters. Agatti covers an area of 3.84 square kilometres and its surrounding lagoon covers 17.50 square kilometres. Amini is situated 407 kilometres from Kochi, between Kavaratti to the south and Kadmat to the north. Amini has a land area of 2.60 square kilometres and a lagoon area of 1.50 square kilometres. Historically, Amini was the principal island in the group. Andrott is the largest island in Lakshadweep, with a land area of 4.90 square kilometres. Andrott is located 119 kilometres from Kavaratti and 293 kilometres from Kochi and is the nearest to the mainland. The island has a small lagoon area. Bangaram Island has a tourist resort. Bitra is the smallest inhabited island, with a land area of just 0.105 square kilometres. Despite its size, Bitra has a lagoon area of 45.61 square kilometres. Bitra is located 483 km from Kochi. Chetlat, the northernmost inhabited island, is located 56 kilometres north of Amini and 432 kilometres from Kochi. Chetlat has a land area of 1.40 square kilometres and a wide belt of coral delta. In the early 20th century, Chetlat was a major centre for boat building. Kadmat has a land area of 3.20 square kilometres and a lagoon area of 37.00 square kilometres. Kadmat is located between Amini to the



south and Chetlat to the north, and lies 407 kilometres from Kochi. Kalpeni is located 287 kilometres from Kochi, south-east of Kavaratti, and midway between Andrott and Minicoy. Kalpeni has a land area of 2.79 square kilometres and a lagoon approximately 2.8 kilometres at its widest point. Several small islets lie within its lagoon. Kavaratti, the administrative headquarters of Lakshadweep, is located 404 kilometres from Kochi, between Agatti to the west and Andrott to the east. Kalpeni covers 4.22 square kilometres, with a lagoon 6 kilometres long and covering 4.96 square kilometres. Kiltan is located 51 kilometres north-east of Amini and lies on an international trade route between the Persian Gulf and Sri Lanka. Kiltan is 394 kilometres from Kochi, with a land area of 2.20 square kilometres and a lagoon area of 1.76 square kilometres. Minicoy, the southernmost island of Lakshadweep, situated away from the other Islands, and is closer to the northernmost island of the Maldives, lies 398 kilometres south-west of Kochi. Minicoy has a land area of 4.80 square kilometres and a lagoon area of 30.60 square kilometres. Minicoy is situated near the Nine Degree Channel, a busy shipping route. The lighthouse of Minicoy, built in 1885, is one of the oldest in the region.

Legal History

9. The inhabitants of Lakshadweep are classified as scheduled tribes and profess the religion of Islam. According to the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes Lists (Modification) Order, 1956, the inhabitants of Lakshadweep who themselves, or whose both parents, have been residents of the islands are declared to be Scheduled Tribes.



10. The customary laws of Lakshadweep Marumakkathayam govern joint families. This form of Marumakkathayam is distinct from the Marumakkathayam prevalent in Kerala².

11. The legal history of the administration of the islands can broadly be divided into four phases: the ancient period, the period under the rule of kings, the British period, and the post-independence period.

12. Formerly, the Lakshadweep Islands were grouped and referred to as Laccadive, Minicoy, and Amindivi Islands. Amini, Kiltan, Chetlat, Kadmat, and Bitra formed the Amindivi group. The Laccadive consisted of Andrott, Agatti, Kavaratti, and Kalpeni. Minicoy was separate. Much of the ancient history is unknown having been lost over time. The early historical records are not documented, and what remains are merely legends. The Islands were under the rule of kings from the mainland for a considerable period. With the arrival of the Portuguese, the Islands gained importance for maritime activities.

13. Following a battle in 1799, some islands were annexed by the British East India Company. In 1854, the remaining islands were transferred to the Company for administrative purposes. Amindivi group came under British control in 1799. The traditional system of justice, administered by local elders known as Karanavans, remained in practice till 1846. Karanavans held assemblies to resolve minor civil disputes. Lesser criminal matters were handled by a local official known as 'Monegar'. In 1867, the Monegar was formally given the authority of

² Customary Laws of Lakshadweep Islands, V. Vijayakumar, 1999, School of Legal Studies, Cochin University.



Village Magistrate and Village Munsiff, as outlined in Regulations XI of 1816, IV of 1821, and IV and V of 1816. His powers in criminal cases were limited; he could only hear minor offences and was allowed to impose imprisonment for limited duration. In 1872, the Monegar's status was elevated to that of a second-class Sub-Magistrate, with authority over the Amindivi islands. Although the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (IPC) and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (CrPC) were extended to Islands, it was specified that the Monegar, while investigating, trying, or committing cases, would be guided by the procedures prescribed in those Codes. However, for all cognizable offences beyond his jurisdiction and as per Madras Regulation XI of 1816, Monegar was required to involve at least three Karanavans as assessors during proceedings.

14. The Laccadives were declared a Scheduled District under the Scheduled Districts Act, 1874. The combined effect of the Scheduled Districts Act, 1874 (Act XIV of 1874) and the Laws Local Extent Act, 1874 (Act XV of 1874) was that many of the laws in force were not applicable to the Scheduled Districts unless they were extended by special orders. The then government, however, directed that most of the statutes were *de jure* in force in the islands, and it was unnecessary to put them formally in force. The Monegar continued to exercise both civil and criminal jurisdictions. Sections 36 to 43 of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (CPC), were made applicable to the islands by a notification of 1909. Monegar became a regular Third Class Magistrate under the CrPC. Appeals, both in civil and criminal decisions, were



filed before the Revenue Divisional Officer, and revisions to the Collector. The High Court of Madras, in CMP No. 715 of 42, took note of the practice of appeals to the Revenue Divisional Officer and revisions to the Collector in several matters.

15. Even after Independence, for some time the existing legal system continued. In 1948, the post of Monegar was upgraded to that of a Deputy Tahsildar with the powers of a Second Class Magistrate under the CrPC. The Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Mangalore and the District Magistrate of South Kanara exercised appellate and revisional powers in criminal matters. The Deputy Tahsildars continued to try civil cases without limit as to monetary jurisdiction. First appeals were taken to the Revenue Divisional Officer, Mangalore, and second appeals or revisions were made before the Collector of South Kanara. In certain civil matters, revision petitions were filed before the Board of Revenue and the Government of Madras.

16. The Laccadive, Amindivi, and Minicoy Islands were declared as a Union Territory of Lakshadweep on 1 November 1956 with an Administrator appointed by the President of India under Article 239(1) of the Constitution of India to administer this Union Territory. In the plebiscite held in 1956 to decide whether the people of Minicoy wished to join the Indian Union, 100% of its residents voted to be a part of India. Prior to the formation of the Union Territory, the Amindivi group of islands was under the jurisdiction of the erstwhile South Kanara District, and the Laccadive and Minicoy groups of islands were part of the then Malabar District of the erstwhile Madras



State.

17. The first Police Station in Lakshadweep was opened at Minicoy in 1958. Three more stations were opened in 1964 at Kavaratti, Amini, and Andrott, and the posts of Deputy Superintendent of Police and Circle Inspector of Police were sanctioned in that year. In 1966, one more Police Station at Chetlat and Police outposts in the remaining inhabited islands, except Bitra, were opened. Till 1967, the Police had no investigation powers and their duties were mainly to maintain law and order.

18. The Laccadive, Minicoy, and Amindivi Islands (Civil Courts) Regulation, 1965 was promulgated by the President of India in exercise of the powers under Article 240 of the Constitution of India, and was brought into force with effect from 1 November 1967. By a notification dated 24 October 1967, the C.P.C, the Cr.P.C, the I.P.C, the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, the Court Fees Act, 1870, the Indian Stamp Act, 1899, and some other pre-constitution enactments were made applicable from 1 November 1967.

19. According to the scheme of Regulation of 1965, regular courts of the Munsiff, Sub Judge, and District Judge were envisaged. Initially, a Sub Court at Kavartti, which is later upgraded as the District and Sessions Court, Kavaratti and a Munsiff Magistrate Court at Amini which is also upgraded as Sub Court Cum Chief Judicial Magistrate Court on 2014 and another Munsiff Court at Andrott were established, marking the institution of regular courts for the Union Territory.



20. At present, for administrative purposes, the entire Union Territory of Lakshadweep is considered as one district. Matters coming under the District Administration, such as revenue, land settlement, and law and order, are under the purview of the Collector-cum-Development Commissioner, who is also the District Magistrate. The District Magistrate is assisted by one Additional District Magistrate and ten Executive Magistrates in respect of enforcement of law and order. The Lakshadweep Police is under the command and control of the Administrator in his capacity as the Inspector General of Lakshadweep Police. The Superintendent of Police is the head of the force. Eight Sub-Divisional Officers and two Deputy Collectors are posted on all inhabited islands. They also function as Block Development Officers / Additional Block Development Officers. The Sub Court of Kavaratti was upgraded to a District and Sessions Court with effect from April 1997. The High Court of Kerala is the High Court for the Union Territory of Lakshadweep, and the presiding officers of the courts are ordinarily appointed from the Kerala Judicial Service on deputation.

21. This narration of the judicial system as it evolved with the geospatial distribution of the islands underscores the need for a separate and focused approach to their location and topography, distinct from that of the mainland. The needs of administration of justice in Lakshadweep are, therefore, not the same as those of the mainland. The infrastructure and administrative support is limited. It is for this reason that the issues relating to the administration of justice in Lakshadweep merit detailed consideration, require long-term



monitoring, and have led to the initiation of the *suo motu* petition.

Present proceedings

22. By order dated 24 January 2025, after hearing the learned counsel for the parties and the input of the High Court Administration the following areas were crystallized. Those were the facility of e-filing in the islands; procurement and provision of video conferencing in courts, including issues of power supply and connectivity; the vacancy position of court staff at Kavaratti, Amini, and Andrott; infrastructural facilities for the Lakshadweep State Legal Services Authority; the status of the Mediation Centre and training of Mediators, including the feasibility of involving Mukhtiyars as mediators; the status of the Juvenile Justice Board; the status and functionality of Child Welfare Committees on the islands and any other issues affecting justice delivery along with suggestions for improvement.

23. Both the UT Administration and the High Court Administration were directed to file reports before the next hearing on the above topic. The paper book of the original petition was directed to continue and the reports were to be in addition to the existing pleadings. Copies of the report were directed to be furnished in advance to the learned counsel for the parties and the learned *Amici Curiae*.

24. In compliance of the order dated 24 January 2025, the Registrar General of the High Court submitted a report based on the inputs received from the District Judge, Kavaratti, and the Kerala State Mediation and Conciliation Centre. On 14 March 2025, a detailed order was passed directing to formulate a Plan of Action to address the



issues, establish a timeline for their resolution, and to convene a joint meeting comprising the Registrar General, the District Judge, Kavaratti, a representative of the National Informatics Centre (NIC), the District Collector, a nominee of the Administrator, the Superintendent of Police, and an officer from the Public Works Department. It was also directed that the Registrar General and the District Collector may include any other officers whose presence is deemed necessary for the effective deliberation.

25. The topics for the Plan of Action include matters, such as the transportation of video conferencing and e-filing equipment to the islands and the establishment of e-filing Kiosk/e-Sewa Kendra on each island with essential equipment, such as computer terminals, cameras and peripherals. The setting up of necessary infrastructure to implement the e-Filing system, e-Sewa Kendra, on each inhabited island. Training the Advocates, court staff and Government officials at Lakshadweep islands regarding e-filing and other ICT initiatives. Solutions to provide uninterrupted power supply to all court establishments in the islands, including its technical viability, estimated costs, and timeline for implementation of the same. Measures to enhance the bandwidth availability for the Case Information System (CIS) local servers connected through the Lakshadweep SWAN network. Also, steps to be taken up for filling all vacant posts of staff in the District and Sessions Court, Kavaratti, Sub Court-cum-Chief Judicial Magistrate Court, Amini, and Munsiff-Magistrate Court, Andrott, including the posts of Sheristadar and Deputy Nazir. Further,



the creation of a separate cadre and service for the judiciary, and till that time, the protocol of consultation with the District Judge, Kavaratti, in respect of the posting and transfer of court staff to be followed. Also, the creation of permanent posts of Public Prosecutor and Assistant Public Prosecutor, and the establishment of District Directorate of Prosecution. As regards the Lakshadweep State Legal Services Authority and the Taluk Legal Services Committee at Amini and Andrott, infrastructure and manpower issue. Feasibility of formulating a Welfare Fund for the Advocates and Mukhtyars practising in the Courts at the Union Territory of Lakshadweep. The constitution of Child Welfare Committees, a panel of legal-aid counsels, and support persons for the victims under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, establishment of Childline services, Special Homes, Shelter Homes, Observation Homes, and Places of Safety, setting up of the office of the Child Welfare Committee-cum-Child Protection Unit and the post of District Legal-cum-Probation Officer. Appointment of a Protection Officer under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 and appointment of a Probation Officer as per the provisions of the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958. Establishment of Mental Healthcare Centre on the islands, constitution of a Committee for speedy disposal of the articles seized under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 and the Lakshadweep Prohibition Regulation Act, 1979. Further, for establishing the procedure and the feasibility of involving an officer from the National Informatics Centre (NIC), Kavaratti in the meetings of the Computerization Committee, and the



Computerization Committee periodically holding meetings with special emphasis on the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure on the islands. The feasibility of deputing personnel to train the staff at the islands in respect of video conferencing and e-filing can also be explored by the Computerization Committee. These were the topics for the Plan of Action.

26. In compliance with the order dated 14 March 2025, the Registrar General of the High Court convened a joint meeting to discuss the above topics. On behalf of the High Court, the Registrar (Computerisation)-cum-Director (IT) and Senior Technical Director (NIC) also attended the meeting in addition to the Registrar General. The District Judge, Kavaratti, the Secretary, District Legal Services Authority, Kavaratti, and the Munsiff-Magistrate, Andrott, also attended the meeting. The Special Secretary (Law), Lakshadweep Administration, attended on behalf of the Administrator of Lakshadweep. The District Collector, Lakshadweep, Additional Superintendent of Police, Lakshadweep, Secretary, Health and Family Welfare, Superintending Engineer, PWD, and Joint Director, IT, were also present in the meeting. In the meeting, the issues cited in the order dated 14 March 2025 were discussed, and a plan of action was evolved to resolve several of the issues mentioned in the order.

27. By order dated 3 April 2025, the Registrar General was directed to furnish a progress report after conducting a joint meeting of the same working group. In compliance with the order dated 3 April 2025, the Registrar General of the High Court filed a report stating that a



preparatory meeting of the working group was convened on 5 June 2025 and a conclusive meeting was conducted on 13 June 2025. The progress on the issues cited in the order dated 14 March 2025 was discussed in the meetings, and the present status was listed.

28. As per the order dated 3 April 2025, the Registrar (Computerisation)-cum-Director (IT) also submitted a report detailing the steps taken with respect to the procurement of ICT hardware, video conferencing units for the courts in Lakshadweep, and training imparted to the Advocates, court staff, and Government officials at the Lakshadweep Islands regarding e-filing and other ICT initiatives. Details regarding the Tripartite Agreement under the e-Courts Project, along with the proposals intended to be included in the agreement, were also provided. The District Judge, Kavaratti, submitted a detailed report on 11 July 2025 regarding matters connected with the District Judiciary of Lakshadweep, i.e., court infrastructure, the issue of power supply, the position of court staff, creation of a separate cadre, and the constitution of Child Welfare Committees.

29. A note was submitted by the learned *Amicus Curiae*, Aashique Akthar Hajjigothi, wherein he pointed out certain further issues regarding the establishment of family courts, the question of giving charge to the courts in Kozhikode, making access available to the Acts, Rules, Regulations, Bye-laws, etc., pertaining to the UT Administration, and issues regarding the Electronic Filing Rules for Courts (Kerala), 2021 and the Electronic Video Linkage Rules for Courts (Kerala), 2021. A note was also submitted by the learned



Amicus Curiae, Enoch David Simon Joel, wherein he pointed out various facets. He also gave a detailed note on the history and practice of Mukhtyars.

30. We have heard Mr. R. V. Sreejith, learned Standing Counsel for the Lakshadweep Administration, Mr. K. R. Ganesh, learned counsel for the High Court Administration, Mr. E. C. Ahamed Fazil, learned counsel for the Lakshadweep Bar Association, Mr. Adarsh Kumar, learned counsel for Respondent No. 7, Mr. Enoch David Simon Joel and Mr. Aashique Akthar Hajjigothi, learned *Amici Curiae* and Mr. T. V. Vinu, learned Central Government Counsel.

Topics for consideration

31. From the earlier orders and Reports, we segregate the issues under the following broad heads:

- e-filing and video conferencing court system;
- Power supply;
- Physical Court Infrastructure;
- Non-judicial court staff;
- Family Court;
- Legal Services Authority;
- Public Prosecutors;
- Advocates;
- Mukhtyars;
- Authorities under the Juvenile Justice Act;



- Mental Health Care;
- Authorities under the Domestic Violence Act;
- Probation Officers;
- Committee under the NDPS Act;
- Other issues.

32. Now we proceed to deal with these issues segment-wise. We will narrate the developments that occurred during the hearing, the steps taken and the areas that remain to be addressed.

e-filing and video conferencing court system

33. While Lakshadweep has ten inhabited islands, court services are available only on three. As pointed out earlier, the islands are separated by long distances and connected mainly by sea routes. Travelling to the nearest court, which may be on another island, often involves long journeys by boat, subject to weather conditions and limited transport schedules. This situation makes an ideal case for the introduction of digital initiatives in the justice delivery system.

34. Initially, when the petition was taken up for hearing, a well-organised set-up for e-filing, video conferencing, and hybrid hearings was not in place. The UT Administration had informed that, to facilitate e-filing in the three Courts in Lakshadweep, funds had been sanctioned for nine sets of video conferencing equipment, along with accessories and e-filing equipment for e-Sewa Kendras. Partial delivery was to be effected and that hardware would be transported to the islands, depending on the availability of conveyance. Subject to the



resolution of connectivity issues, it was expected that e-filing could be implemented in the three courts. Training for legal professionals, Police, and court staff was felt to be necessary. It was observed that training could be conducted online, and a few staff from the mainland may be deputed to the island courts for a short period to provide hands-on practical training on the e-filing of cases.

35. During the hearing on 14 March 2025, it was informed that funds of ₹44,30,876/- were sanctioned for ICT infrastructure, including video conferencing equipment, and supply orders had been placed to ensure timely implementation. Delivery of the equipment was expected within one month. It was directed that once the equipment reached the islands, installation and integration with existing systems had to be carried out promptly. Technical teams would have to conduct testing, and court staff would have to be trained to operate and maintain the system. Connectivity issues were to be resolved through trial runs before making the system operational, so that the video conferencing facilities were made functional before the onset of the monsoon season.

36. To ensure stable network connectivity for Information Communication Technology (ICT) enabled courts in Lakshadweep, necessary steps have to be taken to address challenges in remote locations due to limited internet access. While the Case Information System (CIS) local servers of the islands are connected through the Lakshadweep State Wide Area Network (SWAN) network, public access to e-courts and e-filing services remains restricted. Efforts



should be made to improve bandwidth availability to facilitate seamless digital operations. The provisions of the new criminal law need to be updated in the Lakshadweep e-Courts services, as it was noted that delays in data entry have led to case backlogs. It was observed that the National Informatics Centre (NIC) Unit, Kavaratti, has to take steps to resolve this issue and be included in monthly review meetings of the Computerisation Committee.

37. It was observed that for effective training in e-filing procedures, the District Judiciary at Kavaratti can seek assistance from the Information Technology Department of the High Court. The feasibility of deputing a staff member well-versed in e-filing procedures to the islands for a short duration to provide hands-on training can be explored. It was directed that the Police and other Government authorities can also be familiarised with the intricacies of e-filing. The UT Administration will have to identify and provide the minimal space required for setting up these facilities, ensuring the availability of computer terminals, cameras, and other essential peripherals for seamless e-filing services.

38. The Registrar General, by report dated 29 March 2025, stated that transportation of video conferencing equipment procured from the funds granted by the UT Administration to Kavaratti and Amini had already been completed, and that transportation to Andrott would be completed within two days. It was further informed that e-filing equipment had reached and installation was ongoing with the aid of the IT Department. For the establishment of e-Sewa Kendras, suitable



spaces had been identified and technical infrastructure made available. Installation was expected to be completed by the end of April. The Senior System Officer, Ernakulam, was to provide online and hands-on training, with a proposal to create master trainers in Kavaratti to train others on different islands.

39. The UT Administration informed that the SWAN network is saturated and steps are being taken to expand bandwidth. The UT Administration is also replacing existing copper cables with optical fibre cables to Amini and Andrott to improve connectivity. Bandwidth enhancement is expected within three to four months.

40. As regards involving an officer from NIC, Kavaratti, in the meetings of the Computerisation Committee of the High Court, it was decided that the NIC personnel shall attend monthly meetings and also provide training support for staff on the islands in respect of video conferencing and e-filing.

41. In the order dated 3 April 2025, it was noted that e-filing infrastructure was being installed, and e-Sewa Kendras were to be established by the end of April 2025. The Senior System Officer, Ernakulam, was to provide training to Advocates, court staff, and other officials, both online and through practical sessions, with master trainers based in Kavaratti. The UT Administration was also increasing bandwidth through the SWAN network and laying optical fibre cables to Amini and Andrott.



42. By report dated 30 June 2025, the Registrar General informed that installation of video conferencing and e-filing equipment, including computer terminals, cameras, and peripherals, had been completed. Courts had started using video conferencing in proceedings, though e-filing had not yet commenced.

43. The District Judge reported that two e-filing training classes had been conducted. Assistant Public Prosecutors at Amini and Andrott, conversant with the e-filing process, had offered to provide training. The Registrar (Computerisation) informed that online training could also be provided.

44. To enhance bandwidth for the Case Information System (CIS) servers connected through the SWAN network, the UT Administration informed that courts at Andrott and Kavaratti were provided with fibre connectivity, and work on Amini was expected to be completed within two weeks. A complete revamp of the SWAN network was underway, after which more bandwidth could be allocated to the courts. It was informed that a representative of NIC, Kavaratti, now attends the monthly meetings of the Nodal Officers.

45. The Registrar (Computerisation), in the report dated 9 July 2025, stated that as regards procurement of ICT hardware, including video conferencing units, the restrictions on using State Government funds had caused difficulties, but courts are currently using SWAN and optical fiber connectivity and to meet urgent requirements, video conferencing equipment was temporarily transferred from the Family



Court in Ernakulam to Lakshadweep. It was pointed out that using surplus funds from the e-Courts Project Phase II, desktops, UPS units, and printers were procured for the three courts in Lakshadweep and handed over to the District and Sessions Court, Kavaratti, ensuring basic ICT support, though full-fledged video conferencing facilities were still required. Under Phase III of the e-Courts Project, no specific funds were allocated for hardware procurement for Lakshadweep. However, the Secretary of IT, UT of Lakshadweep, has now procured and installed video conferencing infrastructure. Internet connectivity with backup, computer units with webcams, microphones, display monitors, and UPS systems are available. Video conferencing facilities are functional at Kavaratti, Amini, and Andrott.

46. While these steps have been taken during the hearing of the petition, what is essential, however, is that e-filing and video conferencing facilities have to be extended to all inhabited islands, not just to the three islands where the courts are located. The need is greatest on islands without courts. For the present, it would be feasible to utilise the office of the Deputy Collector on each island for setting up e-Sewa Kendras. e-Sewa Kendras can assist the locals in using these initiatives. The e-Sewa Kendras can be manned by regular staff or volunteers. The e-Sewa Kendras help to overcome the digital divide.

47. One more aspect is that it appears that the e-filing rules for Lakshadweep have not been notified, and the national e-filing portal does not list the Union Territory in its State drop-down menu. This matter has to be taken up with NIC. Offline training can begin with



Assistant Public Prosecutors, followed by Government officials, once the portal is made operational. The Kerala Judicial Academy can also provide training, subject to infrastructural support from the UT Administration. The learned *Amicus Curiae* has pointed out that while the Electronic Filing Rules for Courts (Kerala), 2021 are applicable to Lakshadweep, confusion exists over the applicability of the Electronic Video Linkage Rules for Courts (Kerala), 2021. This aspect, along with the framing of rules of practice, criminal and civil, for Lakshadweep, have to be addressed by the High Court Administration.

48. It is abundantly clear that e-filing and video court hearing can transform justice delivery system in Lakshadweep. These facilities in many cases may remove the need for sea travel to file cases or attend hearings, ensure continuity during the inclement, and extend legal aid and consultations to remote islands. Experience from other remote and hilly regions shows that justice delivery system can function effectively with basic infrastructure and reliable connectivity. We reiterate and emphasise that extending these facilities to all inhabited islands in Lakshadweep is of utmost necessity to reduce the disadvantages of distance and isolation, and to make justice accessible to all the residents of the islands.

Power supply

49. The proposed e-filing and Video Conferencing facilities in the courts will no doubt require stable and continuous electricity supply. To ensure an uninterrupted power supply, the UT Administration has



to examine the feasibility and cost implications of providing diesel generators with a minimum distributed generation (DG) capacity of 50 KVA or installing solar power systems of adequate capacity. If funds allocated under the e-Committee are not available for DG sets, the UT Administration shall arrange the requisite funding. Solar power systems also have to be considered as a sustainable option to meet the energy requirements of the courts and ensure the smooth functioning of digital infrastructure.

50. By order dated 3 April 2025, the UT Administration was directed to assess the feasibility of installing solar panels at the court complex within ten days, with diesel generators to be considered as an alternative if solar installation was not viable. The District Judge, Kavaratti, reported that it was jointly decided to install solar power systems at Kavaratti and Amini, and to provide each court with two separate 5 KVA online UPS units – one with a two-hour backup and another with a four-hour backup – at an estimated cost of ₹16.83 lakhs. The purchase of inverters was processed by the District Court, and the UT Administration approved the proposal on 7 July 2025, directing that the Electricity Department be approached and funds sought from the Finance Department after placing the supply order. Solar panels at the court premises were also included in a broader government scheme for renewable energy. The Registrar (Computerisation)-cum-Director (IT) stated that financial support under the e-Courts Project could be explored once a formal proposal is submitted to the High Court. The UT Administration has assured



that the solar feasibility study will be completed within ten days, and if found unviable, diesel generators will be procured.

51. For uninterrupted power supply across all court establishments, solar plants may be installed in the court complexes at Kavaratti and Amini, while diesel generators or inverters may be procured for courts where solar is not feasible. The UT Administration has undertaken to complete the inverter installation within two months of receiving the proposal from the District Judge. The Registrar (Computerisation) confirmed that once the tripartite agreement under the e-Courts Project is executed, funds for solar installation can be made available under the scheme.

52. The process of securing a stable power supply for judicial infrastructure in the islands has to be expedited. Reliable electricity is essential for the effective functioning of e-Courts, video conferencing, and e-filing, all of which depend on uninterrupted power. Therefore, this initiative has to be treated as a priority.

Physical Court Infrastructure

53. The importance of a robust infrastructure for courts cannot be emphasised enough. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in the cases of *All India Judges' Association v. Union of India*³ and *Brij Mohan Lal v. Union of India and Others*⁴ has held that a sound court infrastructure is the foundation of a strong judicial system and the State has a

³ (2018) 17 SCC 555

⁴ (2012) 6 SCC 502



constitutional duty to provide the judiciary with adequate facilities so it can deliver justice effectively.

54. The three courts in Lakshadweep were established several years ago. A request for funds to repair and maintain the Munsiff-Magistrate Court at Andrott, estimated at ₹13,69,200/-, was forwarded on 2 August 2024 but has not yet been released. While old buildings have to be preserved as heritage, new annexes may be required to accommodate present and future needs.

55. Construction of a new annex to the District Court building at Kavaratti is proposed to establish a Vulnerable Witness Deposition Centre and to meet future requirements. The proposal was submitted on 31 May 2024, and a preliminary inspection by an architect from the Lakshadweep Public Works Department was conducted, but no further progress has been made. New annexes are also proposed for Amini and Andrott.

56. In the order dated 3 April 2025, the Superintending Engineer, Lakshadweep Public Works Department (LPWD), was directed to jointly inspect the court buildings with the District Judge to address infrastructure concerns. By report dated 30 June 2025, the Registrar General informed that the District Judge, Kavaratti, met the Superintending Engineer and directed the Assistant Engineers to consult Judicial Officers on other islands to assess infrastructure issues. Action will follow once reports are received. The District Judge, Kavaratti, noted that space in the existing court buildings is minimal. To meet current and future requirements, constructing new annexes



or reconstructing existing structures is essential. The Hon'ble Supreme Court, in *All India Judges' Association* case has provided a blueprint for court infrastructural requirements.

57. In a meeting convened under directions issued in the petition, the UT Administration decided to conduct a joint inspection of court buildings at all three locations with the District Judge to explore the possibility of meeting the requirements of the courts. Inspection of the District Court, Kavaratti, was carried out on 29 May 2025. A proposal for constructing a new annex on government land adjacent to the existing building was submitted to the Administrator on 31 May 2024. It was noted that the UT Administration has to first allocate the Government land immediately south of the existing court building before the plan and estimate for new construction can be prepared. Communication on this was placed before the UT Administration on 5 June 2025.

58. Field inspections of the courts at Andrott and Amini are necessary. Judicial Officers and Assistant Engineers of the LPWD can conduct joint inspections and prepare plans and estimates for additional construction. The Superintending Engineer has issued a memorandum directing Assistant Engineers to submit these plans, but they have not yet been received. For the Munsiff-Magistrate Court, Andrott, a three-storied building is proposed within the available open space, or alternatively, the reconstruction of the existing building. For the Chief Judicial Magistrate Court, Amini, the heritage building has to be preserved; expansion may involve annexing an adjacent vacant



government building. Revised norms for court buildings and judicial quarters in Kerala may guide construction, if feasible.

59. Official quarters for the District Judge at Kavaratti and the Chief Judicial Magistrate at Amini do not require immediate attention. However, the official quarters of the Munsiff-Magistrate at Andrott does meet the prescribed standards. Temporary arrangements may be needed during the monsoon to prevent leakage. If sufficient land is available, new official quarters may be constructed according to revised norms.

60. The Hon'ble Supreme Court has in above-mentioned cases emphasised that without proper infrastructure, courts cannot function optimally, which may undermine the rule of law. Article 21 of the Constitution of India guarantees the right to a fair and speedy trial, and Article 39A mandates equal justice and free legal aid. Financial constraints cannot excuse failure to fulfill this obligation. Judicial infrastructure is essential for expeditious, inexpensive, and fair trials, and it has to keep pace with changing times and technology. A court complex is not merely a building; it is the seat of justice. Strengthening infrastructure enhances access to justice, improves efficiency, and bridges the gap between the ideals of justice and their realisation. This legal position, underscored by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, applies equally to judicial infrastructure in Lakshadweep. All aspects of court infrastructure in Lakshadweep have to be taken up by the UT Administration on a priority basis.



Non-judicial court staff

61. No court can function without adequate court staff. The sanctioned post of court staff in the District and Sessions Court, Kavaratti is 13 and on a working arrangement, 4 posts are attached with the total strength 17. In the court at Amini, the sanctioned post is 9, and on a working arrangement, 2 posts are attached with the total strength 11. At Andrott, the sanctioned post is 6, and on a working arrangement, 2 posts are attached and the total strength is 8.

62. However, four posts in the District and Sessions Court at Kavaratti are lying vacant. At Amini, 2 posts and at Andrott, 1 post are vacant. The posts of Sheristadar in the District Court, Kavaratti and the Sub Court, Amini, as well as the post of Deputy Nazir in these courts, are vacant.

63. The District Judge, Kavaratti, has emphasised that owing to the non-filling of the posts in the District and Sessions Court, Kavaratti (deputation posts of Sheristadar and Deputy Nazir, and two posts of MSEs – last grade employees), the Sub Court – CJM, Amini (deputation posts of Sheristadar and Deputy Nazir), and the Munsiff – Magistrate Court, Andrott (one post of MSE), court functioning is affected and the process of filling these vacancies has to be expedited. It is also informed that new posts need to be sanctioned for the effective functioning of the Court. They are as under:

a) Senior System Officer to manage e-court-related activities across all courts in the judicial district. Creation of this post is crucial for overseeing the management of Lakshadweep's digital court.



b) Junior Superintendent at Munsiff Magistrate Court, Andrott, to serve as the Chief Ministerial of the Court.

c) One staff, preferably UDC, to the Lakshadweep State Legal Services Authority.

d) One staff each, preferably LDC, to the Taluk Legal Services Committees at Andrott and Amini.

64. As per Regulation 23 of the Regulations of 1965, the ministerial officers of the District Court are to be appointed by the District Judge and the ministerial officers of the courts of Subordinate Judges and Munsiffs are to be appointed by the District Judge after consultation with the Administrator. Regulation 23 reads as under:

“The ministerial officers of the district court shall be appointed by the district judge and the ministerial officers of the courts of subordinate judges and munsiffs shall be appointed by the district judge after consultation with the Administration.”

65. There are only three technical posts. All other posts are Group C posts such as Lower Division Clerk, Upper Division Clerk, etc. The technical posts are those of Head Clerk, Deputy Nazir, and Sheristadar. All the existing Group C posts in the judiciary, except the posts of Head Clerk and Deputy Nazir, are being filled through transfer and posting of common cadre staff under the Lakshadweep Administration, recruited as per the Lakshadweep Administration (Group ‘C’ Ministerial Posts) Recruitment Rules, 1991. The posts of Head Clerk, Deputy Nazir (Group C), and Sheristadar (Group B) are filled by deputation. For this purpose, recruitment rules were framed as the



Lakshadweep Judicial Services (Group 'C' Posts) Recruitment Rules, 2002, which require periodical amendments. For want of such amendments, the posts of Deputy Nazir and Sheristadar in both the District Court and Subordinate Court are lying vacant. The amendment process is pending consideration before the UT Administration. Though staff is currently employed on deputation as an interim arrangement, it is imperative, in the interest of the independence of the judiciary and judicial efficiency, to create a separate establishment and an exclusive recruitment mechanism for the judiciary in Lakshadweep. The Registrar General has informed that the High Court Administration addressed a letter on 21 December 2020 requesting the UT Administration to take necessary steps for framing rules incorporating direct recruitment as a method of appointment of court staff in Lakshadweep, but the rules have not been finalised.

66. In the order dated 14 March 2025, it was emphasised that the establishment of a separate judicial cadre should be prioritized. While Regulation 23 of the Laccadive, Minicoy, and Amindivi Islands (Civil Courts) Regulation, 1965, mandates that the District Judge is the appointing authority for ministerial officers, the current practice of allocating court staff from a common cadre without consulting the District Judge needs to be discontinued. The District Judge must have a say in this process. The District Judge has to be consulted regarding the transfer and posting of court staff, as required under the Regulations of 1965. Necessary instructions have to be issued to ensure compliance with these provisions.



67. Currently, posts are being filled by transferring staff from various departments under the UT Administration and by deputation. The present arrangement adopted by the UT Administration is only an interim measure. An exclusive recruitment mechanism for the judicial department in Lakshadweep is imperative and needs to be created by framing separate recruitment rules within a fixed time frame. Till that time, the transfer and posting of court staff should be effected with the concurrence of the District Judge. However, since no separate recruitment rules have yet been framed for the direct recruitment of ministerial staff to the judiciary in Lakshadweep, this position continues.

68. By report dated 30 June 2025, the Registrar General has informed that with regard to the creation of a separate cadre and service for the judiciary, and the protocol of consultation with the District Judge, Kavaratti, in respect of the posting and transfer of court staff, the UT Administration has agreed to form a committee with representatives of its service department and the District Judiciary, Kavaratti, to discuss the proposal for formulating a separate cadre and service for the judiciary in Lakshadweep. The creation of such a cadre and service is not merely important, but essential. A dedicated and reliable workforce, well-versed in procedural law, is necessary for the effective functioning of the court. This matter needs to be taken up on a priority basis by the UT Administration.

Family Court

69. As regards the establishment of a Family Court, the High Court



Administration, vide letter dated 7 July 2008, informed the UT Administration to establish a Family Court at Kavaratti. Reminders were also sent on 13 April 2022 and 7 February 2023, and through a letter dated 5 August 2023, a request was also made to establish one Munsiff-Magistrate Court at Kadmat and Minicoy. Establishing a Family Court may be necessary for giving effect to the various provisions under the Family Courts Act, 1984 (Act of 1984) and for fulfilling the scheme of the Act. If there are difficulties regarding the feasibility of having separate infrastructure for a Family Court due to the small number of cases, then the option of establishing a Family Court by giving additional charge to the District and Sessions Court, Kavaratti, can be considered. The purpose and scheme of the Act of 1984 is to promote conciliation and secure the speedy settlement of disputes relating to marriage and family affairs through the establishment of special courts. Under Section 9 of the Act of 1984, a duty is cast upon the court to promote settlement between the parties.

Legal Services Authority

70. Under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, the Administrator of the Union Territory has framed the Lakshadweep State Legal Services Authority Rules, 1998 (Rules of 1998). Under the Rules of 1998, an Authority is constituted as per Rule 3 having up to 15 members including ex-officio members and nominated members. The Member Secretary of the Lakshadweep Legal Services Authority has various functions to perform as listed in Rule 4. This include implementation of free services, scheme and programmes, resolution of



rural dispute etc. The Rules of 1998 also contemplates constitution of Taluk Legal Services Committee, which includes Sub-Divisional Officer and Station House Officer of the Police Station as ex-officio members.

71. The Lakshadweep State Legal Services Authority and the Taluk Legal Services Committees at Amini and Andrott currently lack dedicated human resource. The Secretary (Civil Judge – Senior Division) of the District Legal Services Authority is assisted by two Lower Division Clerks deputed from the Arts & Culture Department and Finance and Accounts Department of the UT Administration. The Registrar General, in the report dated 29 March 2025, stated that the UT Administration had sought time to discuss staff appointments with the District Judge, Kavaratti, to formulate an action plan. The UT Administration has to finalise such a plan.

72. Dedicated physical infrastructure for the Legal Services Authority is also lacking. Presently, the Legal Services Authority operates from the District Court library in Kavaratti, while the Taluk Legal Services Committees function from rooms in the Sub Court and Munsiff Court. These arrangements are inadequate. In hearings held in March 2025, the need for six computers and multi-function printers, at an estimated cost of ₹4,91,934/-, was emphasised out of which the National Legal Services Authority provided ₹2,00,000/-. For a small amount, steps were not being taken to make the Legal Services Authority effective. The UT Administration stated that an appropriate building for the Legal Services Authority will be identified based on recommendations



from the District Judge, Kavaratti. Proposals for providing residential quarters and hiring a vehicle on an annual rent basis for the Secretary were also agreed upon, as reiterated in the order dated 3 April 2025.

73. The Registrar General, subsequently by report dated 30 June 2025, informed that computers and peripherals have been purchased and a vehicle has been provided to the Secretary, DLSA. The UT Administration further stated that the old quarters behind the District Judge's residence will be demolished and new quarters constructed for the Secretary, DLSA.

74. The mediation movement has gained momentum nationally. Although a Mediation Centre has been established on paper in Lakshadweep, no trained mediators or operational centres currently exist. A formal Mediation Centre has to be established to address matrimonial and property disputes effectively. Experienced Senior Mukhtyars could be enrolled as mediators, in addition to those listed under Rule 8 of the Civil Procedure (Alternative Dispute Resolution) Rules, 2008. Mediation training, subject to approval by the Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee, should be undertaken. Emphasis has to be placed on developing a mediation infrastructure in Lakshadweep to ensure effective and timely dispute resolution.

Public Prosecutors

75. The Administrator of the Union Territory has framed the *Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi Islands (Recruitment to the Post of Assistant Public Prosecutor) Rules, 1970* (Rules of 1970). These Rules



prescribe the method of recruitment, that is by direct recruitment, transfer, or deputation and provide for classification, scales of pay, disqualification, and power to relax. By order dated 14 March 2025, it was observed that, for the effective administration of justice, the vacant post of Assistant Public Prosecutor in the court of the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Amini, has to be filled without delay. Although recruitment on a contractual basis is in progress, it was emphasised that competitive remuneration should be offered to attract competent candidates. Appointment of qualified legal professionals is essential to safeguard public interest in the courts.

76. The practice of continuing contractual appointments indefinitely, without creating a permanent cadre, is inconsistent with Sections 18 to 20 of the *Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023* (BNSS). Section 20 mandates the establishment of a District Directorate of Prosecution by the State Government. Therefore, necessary steps have to be taken to ensure compliance. In the report dated 29 March 2025, the Registrar General noted that the officials of the UT Administration had sought time to consult the District Judge, Kavaratti, to formulate an action plan for the creation of permanent posts of Public Prosecutor and Assistant Public Prosecutor and for the establishment of the District Directorate of Prosecution. The officials assured that the plan would be finalised by mid-April 2025.

77. The order dated 3 April 2025 records that the UT Administration is in the process of creating these permanent posts and setting up the Directorate after consultation with the District Judge.



78. By report dated 30 June 2025, the Registrar General informed that, with regard to the creation of permanent posts of Public Prosecutor and Assistant Public, the UT Administration has stated that there is one permanent post of Additional Public Prosecutor, for which a notification has been issued. The District Judge, however, observed that other vacancies pertain to temporary posts with inadequate pay, which discourages competent Advocates from applying. The Registry expressed concern over the absence of permanent Prosecutors despite courts functioning on three islands, and reminded the UT Administration that, under Section 18 of the BNSS, 2023, the Government is required to appoint Prosecutors in consultation with the District Judge. The UT Administration was also advised to take note of the judgment of this Court dated 9 April 2025 in W.P.(C) No. 23838 of 2021. It has been informed that a comprehensive proposal for the creation of a Directorate of Prosecution has been forwarded to the Ministry of Home Affairs. This matter requires close follow-up by the UT Administration.

Advocates

79. The Advocates in Lakshadweep have formed the Lakshadweep Bar Association. In an order dated 14 March 2025, it was noted that no Welfare Fund Scheme exists for Advocates in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep. The possibility of including Advocates under the Welfare Fund Scheme of the Bar Council of Kerala was directed to be explored. In a meeting was held with the Secretary, Bar Council of Kerala on 27 March 2025 regarding the feasibility of formulating a Welfare Fund Scheme for Advocates practising in Lakshadweep, the



Secretary stated that lawyers practising in Lakshadweep are enrolled with the Bar Council of Kerala and hence are eligible to enroll themselves in the Welfare Fund administered by the Kerala Bar Council. It was further pointed out that Advocates filing Vakalath in Lakshadweep courts generally do not affix the welfare fund stamp, and it was suggested that the practice of affixing the welfare stamp be made mandatory. Awareness among Advocates practising in the islands regarding the Welfare Fund and the requirement of affixing welfare fund stamps can be ensured through the respective Association, if any. In the order dated 3 April 2025, it was confirmed that Advocates from Lakshadweep could enrol in the Kerala Advocates' Welfare Fund and that the affixing of welfare fund stamps is mandatory.

80. By report dated 30 June 2025, the Registrar General informed that, with respect to the feasibility of formulating a Welfare Fund Scheme for Advocates practising in Lakshadweep, the Bar Council of Kerala stated that eighteen advocates enrolled with the Council are currently practising in the Lakshadweep Islands. The Bar Council of Kerala clarified that it has no objection in including these Advocates in its welfare schemes, including the Kerala Advocates' Welfare Fund, and extending to them the facilities available to its members, however, it was also pointed out that the Lakshadweep Bar Association is presently not a recognised association, and that welfare stamps can be issued only through recognised Bar Associations. The Bar Council expressed its willingness to take appropriate steps once the Lakshadweep Bar Association submits an application in accordance with the Kerala



Advocates' Welfare Fund Act and Rules. This is an aspect which the Advocates' Association in Lakshadweep has to consider.

Mukhtyars

81. Their history and status being peculiar, Mukhtyars of Lakshadweep occupy a unique position in the legal framework. Mukhtyars of Lakshadweep are different from the 'Mukhtar' referred to in the Legal Practitioners Act, 1879. The laws in the Islands were earlier different from the law prevalent in the mainland, and therefore, to ensure that every litigation is decided based on the relevant customary law prevalent in the Islands, persons who were familiar with the customary laws of the Island and who were able to converse in the local language were permitted to participate in the proceedings as a Mukhtyar. Also, the distance from the mainland and the lack of a sound transportation system discouraged the Advocates from the mainland from appearing in the courts in Lakshadweep. Thus, the system and the practice of the customary law, and the geographical isolation of the Island gave rise to this class of laypersons, without a formal degree in law, to represent the local residents in the Courts of Law.

82. The learned *Amicus Curiae* and the Bar Association of Lakshadweep have submitted a note after the hearing was closed that the Mukhtyar system should be abolished. However, it is not within the scope and intention of this *suo motu* petition to enter into adversarial adjudication. Also, Mukhtyars are not represented in this petition. The District Judge has informed that with the advent of the



Bar Associations, new enrolment of Advocates, and the changing legal landscape, no new Mukhtyars are getting enrolled and a few remaining ones are all of advanced age.

83. The Mukhtyars, many of whom are above seventy years old, and currently lack a statutory provision for a beneficial scheme, such as a welfare fund. However, in view of their long-standing contributions to the local residents, introducing a welfare scheme for the elderly existing Mukhtyars can be considered by the UT Administration. The UT Administration could assess the feasibility of creating a dedicated welfare fund for Mukhtyars. This, however, will have financial implications, and therefore, it is entirely for the UT Administration to decide. That apart, as stated earlier, the experience and services of the Mukhtyars can be effectively utilised in alternative dispute resolution proceedings, such as mediation. The Mukhtyars, being natives of the Islands, can play an effective role as mediators. This aspect can be explored.

Authorities under the Juvenile Justice Act

84. Under Section 2(59) of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, the term State Government in relation to a Union Territory refers to the Administrator. Accordingly, all references to the State Government in the Act apply to the Union Territory. Chapter III of the Act deals with the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB), which has to be constituted for every district to ensure protection of children's rights. The JJB can direct Probation Officers or social workers to undertake social investigations, conduct inquiries to declare fit persons



for the care of children in conflict with law, and inspect jails to ensure no child is lodged in adult facilities, taking immediate measures to transfer any child to an observation home or place of safety. The proper functioning of the Juvenile Justice Board is, therefore, critical. In Lakshadweep, the JJB constituted under the Act was dissolved on 29 February 2020 and has not been reconstituted since. Despite communications dated 28 August 2024, no action had been taken. Child Welfare Police Officers are required at each Police station.

85. As noted in the order dated 14 March 2025, children centre services are not available, and essential infrastructure, including Special Homes, Shelter Homes, Observation Homes, and Places of Safety, remains to be established. To address these gaps, a Child Welfare Committee-cum-Child Protection Unit and a District Legal-cum-Probation Officer under the Block Development Officer on each island have to be set up to manage the Juvenile Justice Board efficiently.

86. The Registrar General's report dated 29 March 2025 highlighted the requirement of a Legal-cum-Probation Officer and no such officer is appointed in the Union Territory. The UT Administration stated that available officers could be entrusted for this purpose and are equipped to file social information reports upon court request. The term of the previous JJB expired on 5 October 2020. The Munsiff-Magistrate, Andrott, reported pending cases. Members nominated earlier were found unfit, and the UT Administration has issued a fresh notification for nominations, with details to be communicated within two days.



87. Under Section 27 of the Act, the State Government has to constitute Child Welfare Committees (CWC) in every district to discharge statutory duties, provide induction training, and ensure sensitisation of members. The District Child Protection Unit has to provide secretarial and staff support. The Committee exercises powers under the Code of Criminal Procedure, submits reports to the District Magistrate, and maintains a panel of legal-aid counsel and support persons for victims under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, and other sexual offences.

88. At subsequent hearings, the UT Administration informed that the CWC has been constituted and support persons under the POCSO Act are being appointed. Childline services have been made functional, with all helpline numbers merged into a single emergency number, '108'. Officers are appointed on every island to follow up on calls related to women and children.

89. By the report dated 30 June 2025, the Registrar General informed that the CWC was reconstituted, with a representative of Women & Child Development assigned as a support person for POCSO victims. The Police and Women & Child Development Department will coordinate to address the needs of sexual crime victims. Six cases are now pending before the JJB due to delays in reconstitution. Four applications for Board membership have been received; though approvals were to be completed within fifteen days of the meeting on 13 June 2025, no information on appointments has been received. The Judicial First Class Magistrate, Andrott, noted that



the previous CWC was constituted under the old Juvenile Justice Act, and the new Act has different qualification requirements for members.

90. The office of the Child Welfare Committee-cum-Child Protection Unit and the post of District Legal-cum-Probation Officer have been established, with the Legal Assistant in the Law Department notified as District Legal-cum-Probation Officer.

91. Regarding the child centre services and care institutions, the UT Administration designated one quarter as a “One Stop Centre” to function as a Childline, Special Home, Shelter Home, Observation Home, and Place of Safety, supervised by the Women & Child Department. However, the Act provides for separate categories of childcare institutions: Children’s Homes and Open Shelters for children in need of care and protection, and Observation Homes, Special Homes, and Places of Safety for children in conflict with the law. Rule 29(5) of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Model Rules, 2016, mandates that these institutions operate from entirely separate premises to prevent interaction between the two groups. Housing all categories in a single One Stop Centre may be inconsistent with the statutory mandate. This aspect will have to be considered by the UT Administration.

Mental Health Care

92. Another pressing concern is the implementation of the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 (Act of 2017). Mental Healthcare is also a subject within the schemes of the Legal Service Authority. The Act of



2017 acknowledges the vulnerability of individuals with mental illnesses, the discrimination they face, and the challenges their families endure. It aims to ensure that mental health patients receive the same level of treatment as those with physical illnesses, supporting their recovery, rehabilitation, and integration into society.

93. In the report dated 29 March 2025, it is informed that the UT Administration has appointed a Psychiatrist in Kavaratti and two Psychologists offering telemedicine consultation. The designated officers in each island report mental health cases to Kavaratti, and if further assistance is required, the patients are transferred to Thrissur Mental Health Centre, Kerala. The available Psychiatrist periodically visits all the islands. There were no psychiatric social workers in the islands. In the order dated 3 April 2025, it was noted that a Psychiatrist is currently posted in Kavaratti and telemedicine services are available through Psychologists. However, one Psychiatrist post remained vacant. Mental health patients are referred to the Mental Health Centre in Thrissur when required.

94. In the report dated 30 June 2025, the Registrar General stated that as regards the establishment of a Mental Healthcare Centre in the islands, the UT Administration has informed that one Psychiatrist, one Psychiatric Social Worker, and one Counsellor are available, and they are conducting regular camps in all islands. It was also informed that another Psychiatrist will be appointed in a month and there are facilities at Kavaratti for keeping the patients under observation as per the provisions of the Act of 2017. The UT Administration also stated



that the Tele-Manas facility is active, which will cater to the needs.

95. Currently, individuals requiring mental health treatment are sent to healthcare centres in Kerala, as there are no facilities for their treatment and observation in the islands. This issue requires urgent attention. The Legal Services Authority should take note of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) scheme, which provides for various measures to assist mentally ill individuals, including skill development programs and support for independent living. The Legal Services Authority should also explore ways to ensure proper support for the mental healthcare services in Lakshadweep.

Authorities under the Domestic Violence Act

96. Sections 8 and 9 of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (Act of 2005) envisage the appointment of Protection Officers, as far as possible, a woman, to assist the Magistrate in the discharge of his functions under the Act of 2005. Protection Officers have to make a Domestic Incident Report to the Magistrate and ensure that the aggrieved person is provided with legal aid under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987. Also, the Protection Officers have to get the aggrieved person medically examined if she has sustained bodily injuries, and they have to forward a copy of the medical report to the police station and the Magistrate. In the order dated 14 March 2025, it was noted that no Protection Officer had been appointed. However, in the subsequent hearings, it was informed that the UT Administration, by notification dated 29 September 2016, had already appointed the Lady Village Extension Officers as Protection



Officers in their respective islands. In the order dated 3 April 2025, it was observed that the Protection Officers under the Act of 2005 had been appointed on all islands. However, it is necessary to develop a protocol to ensure that these important posts do not remain unfilled for a long time.

Probation Officers

97. The Probation of Offenders Act, 1958 (Act of 1958) is applicable to the Union Territory of Lakshadweep. Section 13 of the Act of 1958 mandates the appointment of a Probation Officer, while Section 14 outlines their duties. One of the duties of the Probation Officer is to inquire, in accordance with any directions of a court, into the circumstances or home surroundings of any person accused of an offence with a view to assist the court in determining the most suitable method of dealing with him and submit reports to the court. No Probation Officer is appointed on the Islands. The UT Administration has sought time to address the same and in the order dated 3 April 2025, it was mentioned that the UT Administration is also working to appoint a Probation Officer under the Act of 1958. This aspect also has to be looked into.

Committees under the NDPS Act

98. A Disposal Committee is mandated under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 (NDPS Act), and Rules 13 and 14 of the Lakshadweep Prohibition Regulations, 1979, govern the confiscation of seized articles; there is no clear provision outlining the procedure for the disposal of confiscated articles. There was, however,



no committee constituted. In the order dated 3 April 2025, it was mentioned that the UT Administration will notify the constitution of a committee for the expeditious disposal of seized articles under the NDPS Act, within fifteen days. By a report dated 30 June 2025, the Registrar General informed that the UT Administration has notified a District Level Drug Disposal Committee and the same was communicated to the District Judiciary, Kavaratti.

Other Issues

99. One more issue that arose for consideration is the publication and availability of statutory enactments for the Lakshadweep Islands. The learned *Amicus Curiae* pointed out that access to the Acts, Rules, Regulations, Bye-laws, etc., applicable to the Lakshadweep Administration is difficult. Although the official website of the Lakshadweep Administration has been uploading its Gazette publications since 2015, the publications from earlier years are very difficult to obtain. The Union Territory Administration should consider digitising earlier Gazette notifications relating to enactments or compiling them into a consolidated volume, as no private publications are available in the market. Consequently, Advocates and the general public can rely on Government publications.

100. At present, during vacancies in the Lakshadweep courts, the charge is given to the courts under the District and Sessions Court, Kozhikode. This is a historical practice from the time when Lakshadweep had more transportation facilities to Kozhikode as compared to Ernakulam. But now, with the passage of time,



Lakshadweep is more connected to Ernakulam than to Kozhikode. This is an aspect which will have to be looked into on the administrative side of the High Court. Earlier, there was no separate Portfolio High Court Judge for the Lakshadweep district, and the Portfolio Judge of the Kozhikode district used to be in charge of Lakshadweep. Considering the need for special attention, a separate Portfolio Judge of the High Court has been nominated for the Lakshadweep district.

Overview of the steps to be taken

101. In summary, as emphasised earlier, the unique topography, history, societal evolution, and customary laws of the Lakshadweep Islands require special attention to their judicial administration and infrastructure. Implementation of video conferencing and e-filing in courts is necessary due to the geographic and weather-related difficulties, along with inter-island communication challenges. Out of 36 islands, only one has a District Court, one has a Sub Court and one has a Munsiff Court, with substantial distances between them.

102. Initially, ICT initiatives on the islands were rudimentary. After joint meetings between the High Court and UT Administration, ICT facilities are being developed on the three islands with courts, but these must also extend to other inhabited islands. To facilitate this, e-Sewa Kendras should be set up with e-filing facilities and at least one full-time or part-time employee or volunteer to assist residents. Kiosks with access to the National Judicial Data Grid would enable residents, including those unfamiliar with technology, to track case status in both



District and High Court. Advocates can appear in hybrid hearings, and witnesses can be examined via video conferencing, reducing travel needs. The Deputy Collector's offices may provide suitable space for such Kendras. Training in e-filing and ICT processes can be organised by the UT Administration with assistance from the IT Directorate of the High Court and the District Court, including a train-the-trainer approach. Reliable network and bandwidth are essential. Administrative issues regarding the use of the e-Court Project Grant have to be resolved, and Lakshadweep has to be integrated into the National e-Filing Portal. Clarification on the applicability of the Electronic Video Linkage Rules for Courts (Kerala), 2021, to Lakshadweep is required. The High Court may consider assigning an officer from the IT Directorate to focus on ICT needs in the islands, working directly with the District Court Administration. The Computerisation Committee may also dedicate periodic meetings to island-specific ICT concerns, including participation from the NIC Unit at Kavaratti.

103. The success of the ICT initiatives depends on dependable power supply, regular maintenance of court buildings, and expediting the construction of the Andrott court. Another concern is the availability of court staff. The High Court has requested the UT Administration to create a separate judicial cadre, but recruitment cannot be effectively implemented until the rules are finalised. Currently, appointments are made by transferring from various departments under the UT Administration and by deputation, with the



District Judge supervising their work. Although the number of family disputes is low for a separate Family Court, the suggestion to designate the District Court to handle Family Court matters can be explored. Statutory obligations require Family Courts, and every litigant's case is important, regardless of the total number of disputes. The matters, such as giving charge to judges at Ernakulam, are for the High Court Administration to consider.

104. The Legal Services Authority has an important role on the islands. Close community ties can make mediation particularly effective. Mukhtyars, who have historically been permitted to appear in courts, can be mediators. Adequate infrastructure and staff are necessary for the Legal Services Authority and vacancies of the Public Prosecutors have to be filled up without delay. Registration of the Lakshadweep Advocates' Association would enable the Advocate practising on the Islands to be eligible for benefits under the Advocates' Welfare Fund.

105. The authorities and committees under the Juvenile Justice Act have to be strengthened to ensure proper implementation. At the initiation of this petition, most of these posts were vacant, though steps have since been taken to fill them. The proposal to house child centre institutions under one roof has to be examined for its feasibility and legality. While some mental healthcare measures exist on the Island, there is no dedicated mental health institution and the patients have to travel to the mainland. Appointments under the Probation of Offenders Act and the NDPS Act were not made previously; however,



the UT Administration is now taking steps in that regard. Despite the small population, these authorities perform essential functions directly impacting vulnerable individuals. Issues under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, the NDPS Act, 1985, and the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, may be less frequent than on the mainland but are nonetheless present.

106. It is true that the population of the Lakshadweep Islands is low compared to other States in the country. The volume of litigation is correspondingly small, the crime rate is extremely low, and the islanders enjoy a peaceful coexistence with strong social structure. However, access to justice and the benefit of social welfare measures is the right of every Indian citizen, irrespective of the size of the population among whom they live. When the judicial infrastructure in other States, including Kerala, is being strengthened and digital initiatives are being launched, the Lakshadweep Islands have to be included in the fold of this movement. It is in this context that the digital initiatives would have a direct impact on the lives of the residents. Let not the limited size of the Union Territory be a reason for overlooking its requirements.

Lakshadweep Judicial Administration and Infrastructure Committee

107. With the positive stand taken by the Union Territory Administration during the hearing of this petition and in the meetings, many issues were resolved by consensus of UT Administration and the



High Court Administration. Pursuant to our directions over the last six months, joint meetings were held, the officers met, discussed the issues, found solutions, and evolved timelines. The progress over the last six months achieved through this methodology and by consensus has been heartening. We are of the opinion that these continued efforts and co-ordination between the High Court Administration, the Legal Services Authority, and the UT Administration will bring about a tangible and effective change at the ground level in the Union Territory. However, for long-term solutions, these informal initiatives need to be formalised in the form of a permanent committee - *“Lakshadweep Judicial Administration and Infrastructure Committee”*. The officers (*ex officio*) who have been participating in the joint discussions so far can form the permanent committee, which shall be co-ordinated by the Principle District Judge, Kavaratti. The basic principle that the Committee will follow would be resolution of the issues by consensus. The focus of the Committee being on finding solutions by consensus, and that local issues are different, the Co-ordinator of the Committee may invite stakeholders to the meetings for their inputs, such as local elders, panchayat members, and in particular, the office bearers of the Advocates’ Association. Though not formally made a part of this Committee, the office bearers of the Advocates’ Association should generally be invited to attend its meetings. Advocates can provide valuable inputs as regards the court infrastructure as they are closely connected with the litigants. Their familiarity with the unique problems of the islanders will also help the members of the Committee in its task to take informed decisions. Since the Portfolio Judge for the



district may change from time to time, for the sake of continuity of these measures, the Chief Justice may nominate one High Court Judge for the purpose of monitoring along with the Portfolio Judge. Guidance can be provided by the Portfolio Judge and the nominated Judge.

108. The formal orders establishing the Committee can be issued by the UT Administration and the High Court Administration. In case any intervention of the Court is required, the Co-ordinator of the Committee can approach this Court, by filing an application in this disposed of matter.

Directions

109. Accordingly, the following directions:

(A) The Lakshadweep Judicial Administration and Infrastructure Committee is constituted to address the infrastructure and other issues pertaining to the administration of justice in the Lakshadweep Islands. The composition of the Committee will be as follows,-

- (i) Registrar General, High Court of Kerala;
- (ii) Principal District Judge, Kavaratti-cum-Member Secretary, Lakshadweep Legal Services Authority;
- (iii) District Collector, Kavaratti, Lakshadweep;
- (iv) Nominee of the Administrator, Lakshadweep;
- (v) Superintendent of Police, Kavaratti, Lakshadweep;
- (vi) Superintendent Engineer, Public Works Department, Lakshadweep;



(vii) Registrar (Computerisation)-cum-Director (IT), High Court of Kerala, and

(viii) a representative of the National Informatics Centre.

(B) The Administration of the Union Territory of Lakshadweep and the High Court Administration, within three weeks from today, will accordingly issue necessary orders.

(C) The Co-ordinator of the Lakshadweep Judicial Administration and Infrastructure Committee will be the Principal District Judge, Kavaratti.

(D) The Lakshadweep Judicial Administration and Infrastructure Committee may, at its discretion, invite other stakeholders to attend any of its meetings. The President of the Lakshadweep Bar Association should generally be invited to these meetings to provide inputs on the local conditions.

(E) The Lakshadweep Judicial Administration and Infrastructure Committee will hold periodical meetings to review the progress of various initiatives, at least three times a year, physically or online. Preferably, at least one meeting in a year will be held physically at the District Headquarters at Kavaratti. The agenda of this meeting will be circulated in advance.

(F) The Lakshadweep Judicial Administration and Infrastructure Committee will endeavour to decide the issues by way of consensus, and steps for implementation will be taken within the time limits determined by the Committee. The Committee may invite stakeholders for discussion.

(G) The report of the meetings will be placed before the



Portfolio Judge and the nominated Judge.

(H) The Portfolio Judge and the nominated Judge can also call for a meeting of this Committee if so require. If the Portfolio Judge and the nominated Judge consider it necessary for a particular issue, may give suggestions, guide the functioning of this Committee, and if so require, preside over any of the meetings, physical or through video conferencing.

(I) Initially, the Lakshadweep Judicial Administration and Infrastructure Committee will look into the following issues, which are indicative but not limited to:

- (i) E – Sewa Kendras to be established on each of the inhabited islands, and the utilisation of the office space available in the Deputy Collector's office can be explored as a temporary solution.
- (ii) The approval of electronic filing rules needs to be approved by the Union Administration and as stop gap adoption of the Electronic Filing Rules for Courts (Kerala), 2021.
- (iii) Adequate provision for installation of inverters and solar panels for the reasonable and sufficient requirement of energy for the courts and e-Sewa Kendras.
- (iv) Optical fibre connectivity to strengthen the Video Conferencing and e-filing.
- (v) Finalisation of recruitment rules of judicial staff by the Administrator / Ministry of Home Affairs.
- (vi) Finalisation of the creation of the Prosecution Directorate pending before the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- (vii) Creation of a separate cadre for the judiciary in the Union Territory.



- (viii) The infrastructural issues faced by the courts, construction of new buildings, repair and maintenance of new buildings, etc.
- (ix) Construction, repair and maintenance of the premises of the Legal Services Authority, including residential quarters and other infrastructural issues.
- (x) Notification of officials and institutions under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, the Probation of Offenders Act, 1958, the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, etc.
- (xi) Protocol for notifying and initiating the process of filling up the anticipated vacancies in advance.
- (xii) Mental healthcare establishments and issues associated therewith.
- (xiii) Other aspects outlined in this judgment, which are not specifically referred to above, but require steps to be taken.
- (xiv) Any other issue specifically directed by the Portfolio High Court Judge and the nominated Judge will be looked into by the Committee.

(J) In case any further directions are required in respect of the judicial administration in the Union Territory, it will be open for the Co-ordinator of the Committee, the District Judge, Kavaratti, or as directed by the Portfolio Judge and the nominated Judge, to file an interim application in this disposed of petition for directions on a particular issue that requires intervention of the Court. The application so filed, preferably, subject to an appropriate administrative order, be placed before the



Bench of which one of us is a party.

110. The Writ Petition is disposed of with the above directions.

111. We place our appreciation on record for the assistance rendered by the learned *Amicus Curiae*, the learned counsel for the parties, and the officers of the Lakshadweep Administration who have taken a positive stand in the matter.

Sd/-
NITIN JAMDAR,
CHIEF JUSTICE

Sd/-
ZIYAD RAHMAN A. A.,
JUDGE

Krj & Eb



APPENDIX OF WP (C) 7547/2025

PETITIONER EXHIBITS

EXHIBIT P1	ORDER DATED 24.01.2025 IN WP (C) NO. 15855/2020
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