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## Foreign flag cruise ships can now call at more than one port

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BL reported that the India Government has allowed foreign flag cruise ships to call at more than one Indian port. This comes after the Union Cabinet approved a Cruise Shipping Policy in August 2008.

Foreign flag ships carrying passengers can now call at more than one Indian port for a period of 10 years with immediate effect. The cruise ships need not obtain license from the Director General of Shipping, says a Ministry of Shipping notification.

The notification said that the Shipping Ministry observed that there is a need to promote cruise shipping in India keeping in view the unparalleled growth of cruise shipping worldwide. Since adequate Indian flag ships are not available for this purpose, the Government has relaxed the law.

The India Government is hopeful of increasing cruise passenger landings from the current 300,000 to 1,000,000 by 2010. The global cruise tourism is USD 14 billion large, engages some 300 ships and is patronized by 10 million customers.

In India, cruise tourism is active only in the west coasts of Mumbai, Mormugao and Kochi ports. Cruise shipping is an employment generating leisure activity. It is estimated that on an average, a cruise tourist spends about USD 200 to USD 300 and a cruise staff or officer spend USD 100 to USD 150 a port visit, not counting the multiplier effect of these spends.

Typically, a medium sized cruise vessel carries a thousand passengers. As it enters a port, it generates a demand for a range of services, such as sight seeing, souvenir shopping.

(Sourced from Business Line)

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