

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2590**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 23.03.2023

**Environmental impact of new projects in Great Nicobar Island**

2590 SHRI BINOY VISWAM:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) the details of the Minutes of the Forest Advisory Committee meetings where decisions regarding the infrastructure project in Great Nicobar Island were taken;
- (b) the details of the plan for the Compensatory Afforestation Scheme for the aforesaid project;
- (c) whether Government is aware that damage to the tropical and coastal ecosystems in Nicobar can not be offset by planting trees in landlocked semi-arid eco-systems thousands of kilometers away; and
- (d) whether Government is aware that the proposed shipping port in Nicobar will prevent the critically endangered leatherback turtles from accessing nesting sites at Galathea Bay?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE  
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

- (a) to (d) The proposal for diversion of 130.75 Sq. Km of forest land received from the UT administration of Andaman and Nicobar Islands was placed before the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) in its meeting held on 21.09.2022. The in-principle (Stage-I) approval in the matter was accorded by the Central Government on 27.10.2022. The project is of significant strategic and national importance.

The issue of Compensatory Afforestation was considered by the FAC, which observed that the plantation of native species in the non-notified forest lands in the arid landscape and in the vicinity of the urban areas would provide greater ecological value.

Adequate mitigation measures have been proposed to compensate the impact of development on flora and fauna including leatherback turtles. The Biodiversity Conservation and Environment Protection are inherent in the conditions of Stage-1 approval accorded under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and those stipulated in EC & CRZ clearances.

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