

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1648
TO BE ANSWERED ON 03.08.2023

Trees felled for Great Nicobar Project

1648. SHRI JAWHAR SIRCAR:

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

- (a) the number of trees that are estimated to be felled for the Great Nicobar project;
- (b) the number of species that are simply not possible to accommodate in bio zones outside of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands;
- (c) area of land committed for compensatory afforestation in Haryana acquired or available and in what manner it will help restore the local ecology/green cover of the Andamans;
- (d) the estimated carbon sequestration capacity loss of the project in Great Nicobar Island; and
- (e) whether it will adversely impact the target of reducing emissions by 2 billion tonnes by 2030?

ANSWER

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

- (a) to (e) The estimated number of trees to be felled in forest area earmarked for development in Great Nicobar Project is 9.64 lakh. Further, it is expected that about 15% of development area will remain as green and open spaces. Thus, potential tree felling would be less than 9.64 lakhs. Moreover, this tree felling will be done in a phased manner.

Biodiversity Conservation / Management Plan for the Great Nicobar Island ecosystem will be prepared by the UT administration in consultation with WII, ZSI, BSI and ICFRE. To safeguard the interest of critical taxa and their habitat, species specific conservation plans will be prepared. In addition to the conservation plan for critical eco-system and taxa namely Leather Back Turtle, Nicobar Megapode, and Coral Reefs, the Salt Water Crocodiles and Mangroves will also be a part of the plan to conserve the species and their habitats. The Plan along with the areas proposed for diversion shall also include the alternate sites identified for the conservation of different rare and endangered species.

Since the scope of plantation in Andaman and Nicobar Islands is very limited, therefore, the Compensatory Afforestation in the arid landscape and in the

vicinity of the urban areas would provide greater ecological value. The Government of Haryana has agreed to provide an area of 261.5 sq.km for Compensatory Afforestation.

As far as the issues of carbon sequestration capacity loss and carbon emissions are concerned, it is pertinent to mention here that out of the total area proposed for diversion, 65.99 sq.km area will be the area for green development where no tree felling is envisaged. Further, Compensatory Afforestation over degraded forest land double in extent to the area diverted i.e. over an area of 261.5 sq.km is proposed to be carried out.
