

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2142
TO BE ANSWERED ON 07.08.2025

Ecological and Tribal impact of the Great Nicobar Trunk Infrastructure Road Project

2142. SHRI NARAIN DASS GUPTA:

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

- (a) the total area of forest, tribal reserve and private land proposed to be diverted for the Great Nicobar Trunk Infrastructure Road project;
- (b) the number of trees proposed to be felled and whether any ecological compensation measures are in place;
- (c) whether free, prior and informed consent of the Shompen and Nicobarese communities was obtained in compliance with the Forest Rights Act and the Andaman & Nicobar (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation; and
- (d) the steps taken to mitigate long-term ecological and cultural impacts on these vulnerable communities?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

- (a) & (b) As per information received from the UT Administration of Andaman and Nicobar, under the holistic development of Great Nicobar Island, an arterial road as a part of the master plan is proposed. The arterial road project is to be executed in a phased manner.

An area of 238.76 ha is proposed to be diverted for the arterial road which includes, 39.23 Ha of Government revenue land, 39.86 ha of private land, 10.62 ha of deemed forest, 149.05 ha of protected Forest. The area falling within the Tribal Reserve is 130.400 hectares.

UT Administration has further intimated that based on the sampling undertaken by the Forest Department, the estimated number of trees to be felled in the first phase of the construction of the arterial road is 12,428 trees.

The diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes is undertaken based on the provisions of the Van(Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam 1980 and Rules and Guidelines thereof. Accordingly, the diversion of forest land is allowed with conditions for raising of Compensatory afforestation and realization of Net Present Value (NPV). In addition to this, the additional mitigation measures in the form of

Soil and Moisture Conservation works, Catchment Area Plan and Wildlife Management plan etc. are also stipulated on case-to-case basis.

- (c) & (d) 'Land' is a State subject and it is the responsibility of the concerned State/UT to comply with the provisions of all other Acts and Rules. As per the provisions of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Rules, 2023, the State Government or Union territory Administration, as the case may be, shall issue order for diversion of forest land, only after fulfilment and compliance of the provisions of all other Acts and rules made thereunder, as applicable including ensuring settlement of rights under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest 15 Rights) Act, 2006.

Further, as per the condition of Environmental Clearance one Committee is exclusively prescribed to oversee the welfare and issues related to Shompen and Nicobarese. The other two Committees have been incorporated in the Environmental Clearance to oversee the implementation of Environmental Management Plan namely (i) Committee to oversee pollution related matters (ii) Committee to oversee biodiversity related matters.
