

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1486
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12.02.2026

Tribal consent for Great Nicobar project

1486. SMT. PRIYANKA CHATURVEDI:

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

- (a) whether the Nicobar Tribal Council has signed a "surrender certificate" on January 7, 2016 for ₹81,800 crore Great Nicobar project;
- (b) the justification for environmental clearances despite the Council withdrawing the 2022 NOC, citing "misleading information," violating mandatory NCST consultation;
- (c) whether forcing Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups to surrender tsunami-destroyed villages violates the Forest Rights Act, requiring free, prior, informed consent;
- (d) whether despite consistent opposition, 130 sq km of forest diversion, 8.5-58 lakh tree felling, turtle nesting habitat destruction have continued; and
- (e) the accountability for clearances without genuine tribal consent, prioritising infrastructure over constitutional safeguards?

ANSWER

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

(a), (b), (c) and (e) As per the information received from the Andaman and Nicobar Administration, the matter pertaining to the Great Nicobar project is currently Sub Judge before the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (NGT), Eastern Zone Bench, Kolkotta in Original Application (OA) No 93/2024/EZ, Original Application (OA) No. 95/2024/EZ, M. A No. 23/2024/EZ in Appeal No.32/2022/EZ and before the Hon'ble High Court at Calcutta in W.P.A (P) No. 12 of 2024, WPA (P) No. 16 of 2025 and W.P.A (P) No. 17 of 2025. Therefore, as such no comments are offered.

(d) The Stage-II or final approval for the project 'Sustainable Development of Great Nicobar Island' has not been granted so far. The project has only been granted an 'In- Principle approval' under the provisions of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 and rules thereunder. Only after receiving the Stage-II approval and final order for diversion of forest land for non-forestry use, the project activities can be initiated.
