

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 991**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 29.07.2024

**Great Nicobar Island Project**

991. SHRI ASADUDDIN OWAISI:

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware that about 10 million trees are cut and displace indigenous tribes living in Great Nicobar Island as part of a Government project to develop the island for tourism etc.;
- (b) whether such project is consistent with the country's domestic and international obligations to protect the environment; and
- (c) the details of the response of the Government in this regard?

**ANSWER**

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

- (a) to (c) The Central Government vide letter dated 27.10.2022 has accorded the In-principle/Stage-1 approval for diversion of 130.75 Sq. km forest land for sustainable development in Great Nicobar Island. The project is of significant strategic and national importance. The estimated number of trees to be affected is 9.64 lakhs. However, more than 50% i.e. 65.99 Sq. km of the area proposed for diversion is reserved for green development where no tree felling is envisaged. It is expected that about 15% of development area would continue to remain as green and open spaces and therefore the number of trees likely to be affected is going to be less than 9.64 lakhs.

Protection of the interests of tribals is inherent in conditions of approval accorded by the Central Government and the UT Administration has been entrusted with such responsibilities as elaborated in the approvals granted.

The approval granted by the Central Government is in consonance with the policies and programme of the Government which includes *inter-alia* mitigation measures to compensate the impact of development on flora and fauna. The conditions stipulated under the Environmental Clearance (EC) has provisions for preparation of Biodiversity Conservation / Management Plan for the Great Nicobar Island ecosystem with inputs from WII, ZSI, BSI and ICFRE.

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