

GOVERNEMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PLANNING

LOKSABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2189
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12.03.2025

IMPLICATIONS OF GREAT NICOBAR ISLAND PROJECTS

2189. SHRI MANISH TEWARI:

Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

- (a) the timeline for completion of the Rs.72,000 crore Great Nicobar Island mega-infrastructure project including the international container transshipment port, cruise terminal, airport and tourism facilities;
- (b) whether the Government has conducted an assessment of the project's efficacy in achieving strategic, economic and tourism goals, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) the reasons for denial of RTI requests by the Government regarding environmental clearances on the grounds of strategic and security concerns;
- (d) the details of measures being taken to protect the rights, culture and welfare of the indigenous tribes of Great Nicobar Island amidst large-scale development activities; and
- (e) whether the Government has sought consultations or approvals from experts or stakeholders regarding the potential environmental and social impacts, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION; MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE

(RAO INDERJIT SINGH)

(a) to (e)

- i. The "in-principle" approval for this project has been received from the Department of Expenditure (DoE) on 08.08.2023 for the project meant for Holistic Development of Great Nicobar Island with the tentative cost of Rs 81,000 Crores over a span of 30 years.

- ii. The decision on the proposal involving development of Great Nicobar Island project has been taken after due consideration of potential environmental and social impacts and also taking into account the significant strategic, defence and national importance of these developmental projects. The environmental clearance has been granted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) for development of International Airport on 04.11.2022 and for International Container Transshipment Port (ICTP), Township and Power Plant on 11.11.2022. The process of prior environmental clearance involves an examination of the project for assessment of impacts and preparation of an environmental management plan (EMP) through different stages such as screening, scoping, public consultation, and appraisal.
- iii. Several studies were conducted to carry out the environmental impact assessment (EIA) and studies regarding their consequent mitigation measures were undertaken by the top statutory and non-statutory bodies. A detailed scrutiny of the EIA/EMP report took place during the appraisal of the project by an independent Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) having experts from the field of science and engineering.
- iv. Additionally, three independent Monitoring Committees viz Committee to oversee pollution related matters; Committee to oversee biodiversity related matters; Committee to oversee welfare and issues related to Shompen and Nicobarese; as prescribed in the Environmental Clearance to oversee the implementation of EMP have already been constituted and regular meetings of these Committees are being held.
- v. It is also stated that the subject matter of Environmental Clearance and welfare of tribal communities in the Great Nicobar Island is sub-judice in the Hon'ble High Court of Kolkata bearing WP (P) No. 12 of 2024 titled Meena Gupta vs Union of India & Ors and in National Green Tribunal vide Application No 93/2024/EZ filed by Ashish Kothari before the National Green Tribunal, Eastern Zone Bench, Kolkata.
