

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1326
TO BE ANSWERED ON 14.12.2023

Plantation under Great Nicobar development project

1326. SHRI MOHAMMED NADIMUL HAQUE:

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that Government plans to replace 13075 acres of evergreen forests of Great Nicobar with newly planted trees in the Aravalli ranges in Haryana, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether Government has any plans to stop the Great Nicobar development project considering the enormous impact it has on the environment, biodiversity and the indigenous community of Great Nicobar, if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

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

- (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 area proposed for development is only approximately 1.5% of total area of A&N islands. Further, more than 50% i.e. 65.99 sq km of the area proposed for diversion will be the area for green development where no tree felling is envisaged. Moreover, it is expected that about 15% of development area will remain as green and open spaces and the tree felling is proposed to be done in a phased manner.

The project is of significant strategic/national importance and a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) study has been conducted in this regard. Further, adequate mitigation measures and safeguards have been proposed to compensate the impact of development.

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 the area for Compensatory Afforestation in the instant case.
