

## **Live yourself and let us live- Giant Leatherback Sea Turtle**

Are you thinking why this turtle is speaking this way! to whom and why it is saying these words?

However, no one can hear turtle's voice right! Through this article we make sure you to know why and what it is speaking about.

Andaman and Nicobar are one of the most biodiverse and beautiful islands. In coming days government is planning to urbanize Little Andaman as rival to Hong Kong, Singapore with project named as "Holistic Development of Identified islands".

What is this project about? Let us have a look.

Niti Aayog's '*Transforming islands for web*' shows phases of development in the Andaman and Nicobar island they are as follows.

**Zone1** – 102Sq km of the east coast of Little Andaman is to be developed into a financial district, a tourism and a hospital district.

**Zone2** – 85Sq km along the forest covers of the island is to be developed into the leisure zone with a film city and residential complexes which will also serve as a tourist hub.

**Zone3** – Another 52Sq km along with the forest covers on the western coast, is to be a nature zone. This is further categorically planned to be developed into a forest resort, nature healing district and a nature retreat.

Looking those developmental plans make you feel excited. However, you decide what is your opinion after hearing the other side of these developmental plans.

This project envisages the use of 244Sq km, 18% of 910Sq km island and will cover nearly quarter of its coastline – a major portion being pristine forest and coastal systems. The islands are home to particularly vulnerable tribal groups such as the great Andamanese, Jarwas, Onges, Sentinelese, and Shompen that live off forest resources. These communities are vulnerable because their number is declining and their members are economically backward and have low levels of literacy. Note – Onge Tribe's population in the island has dropped from 672 in 1901 to 101 in 2011.

Also 2500 species of flowering plants – 223 endemic, 5100 species of animals – 100 fresh water, 2100 terrestrial and 2900 marine. The breeding grounds of the Giant Leatherback sea turtle at west bay on eastern coast of Little Andaman has been allotted for the development of resorts and residential villas. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are not fully studied for their biodiversity, while researches are finding new species from these precious islands.

**The changes made in laws for these development plans are as follows.**

1. On October 2020, The Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate change issued an order allowing states and UTs with over 75% of their land under forest cover to carry out compensatory afforestation in other states or UTs which have degraded forest land. The government of Madhya Pradesh offered to carry out afforestation on the 650Sq km of its degraded forest land to enable forest land diversions in the UT.
2. On January 1, The Island Coastal Regulation Zone of the Great Nicobar island was reduced i.e., construction work that was barred within 200m of the island coast can now be carried out past 100m.

3. On January 18, The expert panel of the environment ministry buffer zones of 0-1Km width around Campbell Bay and Galathea Bay National park in the Great Nicobar.
4. On January 25, the UT government of Andaman and Nicobar de-notified 11.44Sq Km of Galathea Bay Sanctuary in the Great Nicobar.
5. On February 4, a special committee meeting was held to decide the extent of denotification of the Onge tribal reserve in the Little Andaman Island.

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands are at extreme risk of becoming uninhabitable because of rising sea levels. “Many low-lying cities and small islands at most latitudes will experience extreme sea level events annually by 2050” said the 2019 report of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change. The islands fall in the seismically active Alpine-Himalayan belt and are categorised under zone 5, most prone to earthquakes.

These rich biodiverse lands of these islands, maybe they are far away from our contact. Probably the biodiverse lives on the island may not know about these developmental plans. However, when their destruction is near those lives – The lives and the Giant Leatherback Sea Turtle of these island says “Live yourself and let us live”. Because of faraway distance of the islands our system can’t hear those sounds, in fact our system is deaf for people’s voice how can it hear the turtle and other lives’ voices.

Looks like we are done with this now! Think about your opinion once again.

What can we do from our side? Here are some actions you may take based on your opinion.

- Drop a mail to Ministry of Environment, Forest, & Climate Change; Ministry of Tribal affairs; Union Territory Government of Andaman and Nicobar islands; Niti Aayog.
- We are in the democratic system where we elect our MPs. As technically our MPs are part of Central Government, so through their voices we should convey the message to the system.

With regards

**KALOSMI FOUNDATION**

If you find any environment related issues, please mail us to email: [kalosmifoundation@gmail.com](mailto:kalosmifoundation@gmail.com).

**WHEN WE DESTROY SOMETHING CREATED BY MAN WE CALL IT VANDALISM BUT WHEN WE  
DESTROY SOMETHING CREATED BY NATURE WE CALL IT PROGRESS – ED BEGLEY JR**