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Supreme Court Refuses Stay on Great Nicobar Project Proceedings

The Supreme Court declined the Union government's plea to stay Calcutta High Court proceedings concerning the environmental and cultural impact of the Great Nicobar Island Project.

A judicial proceeding evaluating the legality of the ₹72,000-crore Great Nicobar Island Project in relation to tropical forest diversion, the Forest Rights Act, and the fundamental right to cultural preservation.

KEY EXAM POINTS

- The **Supreme Court** on **October 5, 2026**, dismissed the **Union government**'s plea seeking a stay on Calcutta High Court proceedings.
- The Court emphasized that the preservation of culture is a constitutionally protected **fundamental right**.
- The original petition before the Calcutta High Court was filed by former Union Environment Secretary **Meena Gupta**.
- The petitions challenge the diversion of over **130 sq. km** of pristine tropical forest for the **Great Nicobar Island Project**.
- Challengers argue that the project violates the **Forest Rights Act, 2006**, and threatens the indigenous **Shompen** and Nicobarese way of life.

DID YOU KNOW..!?

Article 29 of the Indian Constitution guarantees the protection of cultural and educational rights of minorities and distinct sections.

The **Forest Rights Act** (Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act) was enacted in **2006**.

The **Shompen** and Nicobarese are the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) inhabiting the Nicobar group of islands.

Article 21 of the Constitution encompasses the right to a clean environment as an integral part of the right to life.

The **Forest Conservation Act** was enacted by the Parliament of India in the year **1980**.

The **Ten Degree Channel** separates the Andaman Islands from the Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal.

REVISION FLASHCARD

The Supreme Court ruled that the preservation of culture is a constitutionally protected fundamental right in the Great Nicobar Project case.

Syllabus Relevance: Highly relevant for Indian Polity (Fundamental Rights, Judicial Pronouncements) and Environment sections in TNPSC Group 1 and 2 exams.

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