GREAT NICOBAR

A CONTEMPORARY CONSERVATION TIMELINE



Tracks of a leatherback turtle, Galathea Bay WLS

Great Nicobar Island has been home to rich biodiversity and indigenous communities for over 1000s of years. Hosting one Biosphere Reserve, two National Parks, and rich coastal and marine diversity, this island is of high conservation importance. This interactive timeline traces the contemporary conservation history of this unique island - click on each item to learn more.

This timeline is an initial outcome of ongoing work at the Centre for Technology Alternatives for Rural Areas (CTARA), IIT Bombay, as part of the project "Geo-Spatial Mapping of 28 years of media reporting on livelihoods and wildlife conservation in India" supported by the DST-GiSE Hub at IIT Bombay.

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Legend

- Gazette notifications, notices, policies / action plans
- Technical reports, tenders, vision documents
- Independent scientific reports and articles
- Minutes of meeting, meeting notices
- News articles/ videos
- Representations from civilians, experts, and parliamentarians
- Documents for project clearance
- RTI responses
- Legal documents, committee orders

LIST OF ACRONYMS

	5.1
AAI: Airports Authority of India IIMP: Integrated Island Management	
AAJVS: Andaman Adim Janjati Vikas Samiti IPZ: Island Protection Zone Notifica	ıtion
AC: Assistant Commissioner ISRO: Indian Space Research Organis	sation
ACF: Assistant Conservator of Forest JV: Joint venture	
ALF: Andaman Labour Force LA: Little Andaman	
ALHW: Andaman Lakshadweep Harbour Works MHA: Ministry of Home Affairs	
ANPATR: Andaman and Nicobar (Protection of MoEF: Ministry of Environment and Fo Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation, 1956 MoEFCC: Ministry of Environment, Fo	
ANPCC: Andaman & Nicobar Pollution Control Climate Change Committee MoTA: Ministry of Tribal Affairs	
ANIIDCO: Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated MP: Member of Parliament	
A&N: Andaman and Nicobar Islands NCSCM: National Centre for Sustaina Management	ible Coastal
CA: Compensatory Afforestation NCST: National Commission for Sched	luled Tribes
CERD: Committee on the Elimination of Racial NCZMA: National Coastal Zone N Discrimination Authority	Management .
CM: Chief Minister NGT: National Green Tribunal	
COPII: 11th Conference of the Parties NOC: No Objection Certificate	
CRZ: Coastal Regulation Zone NP: National Park	
DLC: District Level Committee PA: Protected Area	
DPR: Detailed Project Report PfR: Pre-feasibility Report	
EAC: Expert Appraisal Committee PM: Prime Minister	
EERI: Earthquake Engineering Research Institute PMB: Port Management Board	
EIA: Environmental Impact Assessment PVTG: Particularly Vulnerable Tribal G	roup
Eol: Expression of Interest RfP: Request for Proposals	·
ESZ: Eco-Sensitive Zone RTI: Right To Information	
FAC: Forest Advisory Committee SDLC: Sub-Divisional Level Committee	2
FD: Forest Department SLMC: State Level Monitoring Commit	
FRA: The Scheduled Tribes and Other SPV: Special Purpose Vehicle	
Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006	
GNBR: Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve TSP: Transshipment port	
GNI: Great Nicobar Island UN: United Nations	
Gol: Government of India WII: Wildlife Institute of India	
IAS: Indian Administrative Service WLS: Wildlife Sanctuary	
ICRZ: Island Coastal Zone Regulation ZSI: Zoological Survey of India	
ICTT: International Container Transshipment	

Terminal

1956-2004 -

ANPATR promulgated (in 1956), amended (until 2004)

Feb 2007 —

WII conducts survey on impact of tsunami on A&N flora and fauna, especially the Nicobar megapode

Oct 2011 -

Conservation genetics study by WII records return of leatherback turtles to GNI (especially Galathea Bay) after tsunami

2015 -

PMB calls for an EoI for the establishment of TSP & free trade warehousing zone in A&N

- Apr 2005

EERI publishes report recording land subsidence in GNI due to the 2004 earthquake

_ 19 Apr 2010

Minister of Shipping states that a feasibility report for TSP in GNI is being prepared, responding to Bishnu Pada Ray in the Lok Sabha

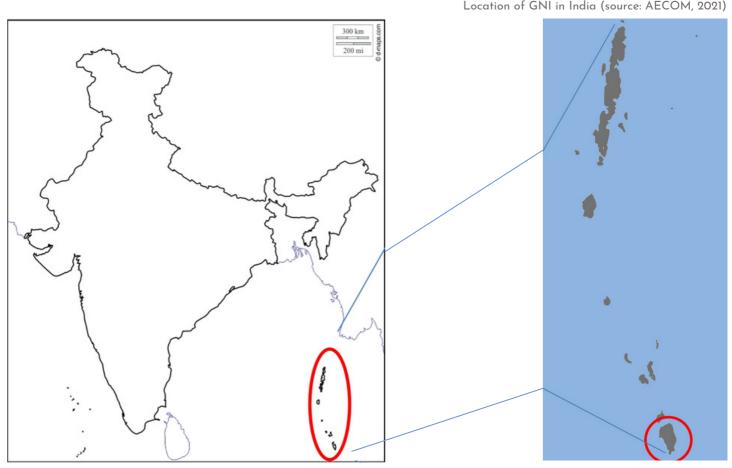
- 2012

MoEF (now, MoEFCC) publishes report on India's Biosphere Reserves for COP11, with a section on GNBR

— 22 May 2015

Policy on Shompen Tribe of GNI is published

Location of GNI in India (source: AECOM, 2021)



Jul 2016 -

AECOM's technical report states
that cruise facility is the only
feasible option at GNI, building a
port is not favourable

Jan 2017 -

Study on distribution and status of leatherback turtles in the Nicobar islands reveals Galathea bay as the most important nesting site

08 Mar 2019 -

ICRZ notification published, which categorises GNI as Group I category of bigger oceanic islands > 1000 sq km

22 May 2019 -

FAC recommends that CA for forest diversion in states/UTs with high forest cover can be carried out in forest-deficient states/UTs

02 Sep 2019 -

Tender issued for assessment of regulatory framework and options for restructuring PMB, ALHW, and ALF into a new JV/SPV

2019 -

NITI Aayog commissions video report on stakeholder's views on development in GNI (posted on A&N Collective's YouTube channel)

11 Aug 2020 **—**

PM Narendra Modi announces a TSP project in GNI involving an investment of Rs. 10,000 crore

04 Sep 2020 -

Director, Tribal Welfare, A&N,
constitutes an empowered
committee to examine NITI Aayog's
proposals for LA and GNI

____ Nov 2016

Ministry of Shipping, Indian Ports
Association publishes final report
for Sagarmala (Vol. VI), containing
AECOM's July 2016 technical report

____ 10 Aug 2018

NITI Aayog presentation mentions
TSP at South Bay, eco-tourism site
at GNI, and a committee to address
'land issues' for LA and GNI

— May 2019

NITI Aayog publishes 'Transforming the islands,' containing a SWOC analysis for the suitability of GNI for the holistic development plan

— 18 Jun 2019

NCZMA approves ICRZ plans of Middle Andaman, Car Nicobar, GNI and IIMP of Kamorta island in its 38th meeting

- 26 Dec 2019

WAPCOS Limited issues tender for a traffic study for TSP at South Bay (Galathea Bay), GNI

- 22 Jun 2020

Three firms including Adani show interest in the A&N PMB's EoI for the TSP at GNI, GoI grants inprinciple approval to the project

— 26 Aug 2020

NCSCM submits draft ICRZ and Coastal land use maps for GNI, calls for suggestions and comments

- 07 Sep 2020

NITI Aayog issues a 201-page RfP for 'Preparation of Master Plan for Holistic Development of GNI'

Sep 2020 —

NITI Aayog releases statement of queries from bidders and responses regarding RfP for GNI

28 Oct 2020 -

Draft notification published which declares 65.81 sq km ESZ with an extent of 0-1 km around Campbell Bay NP

Nov 2020 —

India Brand Equity Foundation's (Adani Ports) presentation on ports mentions the proposed TSP under 'Recent Trends and Studies'

18 Nov 2020 -

MoTA issues a no-objection letter for the denotification of Tribal Reserve in GNI

01 Jan 2021 —

Notification recategorising GNI from Group I (>1000 sq km) to Group II (>100 but <1000 sq km) is published

18 Jan 2021 -

ESZ Expert Committee approves 0-1 km extent ESZs around Campbell Bay NP and Galathea NP in its 44th meeting

25 Jan 2021 ——

Galathea WLS is denotified

28 Jan 2021 -

MoEFCC releases National Marine
Turtle Action Plan

___ 07 Oct 2020

A&N FD sends proposal to MoEFCC for diversion of forest land for sustainable development in GNI (Phase-I)

__ 28 Oct 2020

Draft notification published which declares 14.93 sq km ESZ with an extent of 0-1 km around Galathea NP

-04 Nov 2020

NCZMA approves recategorisation of GNI from Group I to Group II in its 41st meeting

- 22 Dec 2020

ANIIDCO submits documents to MoEFCC for forest diversion in GNI

— 05 Jan 2021

NBWL approves denotification of Galathea Bay and Megapode WLSs in its 60th meeting

——— 18 Jan 2021

MoEFCC's letter to A&N FD mentions previous letters seeking approval of the central government for diversion of forests in GNI

____ 25 Jan 2021

Megapode WLS is denotified

— 19 Feb 2021

Proposal for airport is posted/last updated on the India Investment Grid website



Fiddler Crab, Campbell Bay

Mar 2021 -

AECOM publishes a 126-page PfR titled: 'Holistic Development of GNI at A&N' with NITI Aayog as the client

02 Mar 2021 -

ANIIDCO is designated as the nodal agency to implement the holistic development plan for GNI

03 Apr 2021 -

Project is listed under 'Investment opportunities in maritime sector' in a presentation at the India Maritime Summit

14 Apr 2021 -

WII conducts a survey to understand current status of beaches in GNI with respect to sea turtles as part of EIA

- 02 Mar 2021

ANIIDCO sends proposal to the EAC for the issue of ToR for conducting EIA study

– 17 Mar 2021

258th EAC Infra-I meeting is held; no decision taken as proponent made a presentation instead of submitting the requisite documents

-05 Apr 2021

EAC Infra-I recommends GNI proposal for grant of ToR for EIA studies in its 260th meeting

-06 May 2021

NITI Aayog responds to an RTI saying "no vision document has been prepared for proposed development plans in GNI"

25 May 2021 —

MoEFCC issues ToR for EIA to ANIIDCO

14 Jun 2021 -

Turtle researchers send a letter to the concerned authorities about the impact of development projects in LA and GNI

28 Jul 2021 -

ZSI prepares a report on the conservation of flora and fauna of GNI as a part of the EIA

Aug 2021 -

ISRO publishes the Shoreline
Change Atlas of India, indicating
the instability of the shoreline at
Galathea Bay

10 Aug 2021 -

ACF, A&N signs undertaking regarding the CA scheme and kml file for double degraded forest area in Madhya Pradesh

12 Aug 2021 -

Department of Tribal Welfare, A&N
gives certification that any
exemptions needed from existing
laws will be provided

24 Dec 2021 -

Tehsildar, Patwari, and AC, Campbell Bay sign undertaking regarding land acquisition for the airport and road infrastructure

28 Dec 2021 -

Draft EIA report is uploaded on the ANPCC website

__ 07 Jun 2021

WII responds to an RTI saying it has never conducted "any study exclusively on leatherback turtles of A&N"

—— 20 Jul 2021

Proposal for TSP is posted/last updated on the India Investment Grid website

— Aug 2021

AECOM submits a Preliminary
Engineering Design Report for the
ICTT at Galathea Bay to NITI
Aayog

- 10 Aug 2021

Secretary (Power), Secretariat, A&N signs undertaking regarding the proposed power plant

—— 11 Aug 2021

ANIIDCO, the proponent, signs undertaking stating that it does not have any environmental policy

—— 18 Nov 2021

IPZ, 2011 is amended to allow for the setting up of a gas based power plant is in ICRZ III area

— 26 Dec 2021

<u>Public hearing is announced in local newspaper</u>

— 27 Jan 2022

Public hearing is held in Campbell Bay

04 Mar 2022 -

The Supreme Court directs
petitioner challenging the denotification of Galathea WLS to
approach the concerned High Court

07 Mar 2022 -

ANIIDCO submits the final EIA
report and application for
environmental and CRZ clearance
to EAC Infra-I

21 Mar 2022 -

MHA declares WLSs on Little Nicobar, Menchal, and Meroe islands (announced during the 306th EAC Infra-I meeting)

29 Apr 2022 -

UN CERD writes to the Gol enquiring about protection for and compliance with existing laws for the vulnerable tribal groups of A&N

16 May 2022 -

Haryana Tourism Corporation issues an EoI for the Aravalli Safari Park in Gurugram and Nuh, spread over 10,000 acres

07 Jun 2022.

Gazette notification directs the Lieutenant Governor of A&N to assume the powers and functions of the State Government under FRA

26 Jul 2022 -

Directorate of Tribal Welfare, A&N announces the constitution of the SDLCs, DLCs, and SLMC and the ToR for each under the FRA

11 Aug 2022 ·

'Special Gram Sabha' notice is issued for FRA considerations of SDLC/DLC surrounding development plans in GNI

-05 Mar 2022

ANIIDCO signs undertaking regarding procedure for CRZ approval for the project

- 17 Mar 2022

AAI releases tender to appoint a technical consultant to prepare a DPR for Greenfield International Airport at Chingenh in GNI

- 24 Mar 2022

293rd EAC Infra-I meeting is held; proposal is deferred as documents were submitted just two days prior to the meeting

-09 May 2022

Project proponent responds to the additional details sought in the 293rd EAC Infra-I meeting held on 24th March

– 24 May 2022

EAC Infra-I designates airport as a joint military-civil facility and notifies PAs for turtles, megapodes, and corals at its 297th meeting

-08 Jun 2022

Ministry of Shipping, Gol, declares Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port Trust as nodal agency for the proposed port

– Aug 2022

Centre for Financial Accountability publishes a compendium of 3 NPs threatened by infrastructure projects, including Galathea NP

- 12 Aug 2022

Gram Sabha meeting deciding that forest within Gram Panchayat boundaries may be diverted for development plans in GNI is held

16 Aug 2022 -

Pramukh, Up-Pramukh, AAJVS
representative, and Chairman of
the Tribal Council sign NOC for
forest diversion

19 Aug 2022 -

Project proponent responds to the additional details sought in the 297th EAC Infra-I meeting held on 24th May

22 Aug 2022

EAC Infra-I recommends project for grant of Environmental and CRZ Clearance in its 306th meeting

30 Aug 2022 ·

Nicobar Times interviews Campbell
Bay Pramukh regarding the residents' stand on the proposed projects

— 18 Aug 2022

<u>Deputy Commissioner, Nicobar, issues certificate of FRA process completion</u>

- 20 Aug 2022

The Nicobarese community appeals for relocation to Chingenh and Pulo Bhabhi (sites proposed for the port and airport)

— 28 Aug 2022

The Nicobarese community disagrees with the declaration of WLSs in the islands of Menchal, Meroe, and Little Nicobar

Working on the coastal road just outside Campbell Bay in 2006. It was washed out by the December 2004 earthquake and tsunami



22 Sep 2022 -

Meeting to be chaired by the Deputy Commissioner, Nicobar, is announced, to discuss the relocation appeal put forth by the Nicobarese

03 Oct 2022 —

Leatherback WLS is declared in Little Nicobar Island

06 Oct 2022 -

Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar announces the Aravalli Safari park 3 weeks before forest clearance was granted to the GNI project

10 Oct 2022 -

Keshav Chandra, IAS, makes a speech regarding the GNI project

27 Oct 2022 -

MoEFCC grants Forest Clearance to the GNI Holistic Development project

11 Nov 2022 ____

MoEFCC grants Environmental Clearance to the GNI Holistic Development project

18 Nov 2022 -

MoTA (PVTG Division) says they have no information on the tribal communities of A&N, transfers RTI query back to MHA

22 Nov 2022 -

Tribal Council withdraws NoC for forest diversion, stating that it was done without consent and by concealing important information

___ 03 Oct 2022

<u>Coral WLS is declared in Meroe</u> island

__ 03 Oct 2022

Megapode WLS is declared in Menchal island

- 06 Oct 2022

Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar announces that funds for the Aravalli safari park would be sourced from ANIIDCO

— 22 Oct 2022

Kuldeep Rai Sharma, MP, A&N writes to the Lieutenant Governor regarding the appeal of relocation made by the Nicobarese community

-07 Nov 2022

MoTA (PVTG Division) says they have no information on the tribal communities of A&N, transfers RTI query to NITI Aayog and MHA

— 11 Nov 2022

NITI Aayog sends the RTI query back to MoTA

- 22 Nov 2022

ZSI publishes a book on the faunal biodiversity of GNI

- 24 Nov 2022

Debi Goenka and Conservation Action Trust file an appeal in the NGT challenging the Forest Clearance

27 Nov 2022 -

Former Gol Secretary EAS Sarma highlights that the GNI project was given Environmental Clearance without prior NCST consultation

08 Dec 2022 -

Jawhar Sircar questions the diversion of forest land in GNI in the Rajya Sabha

21 Dec 2022 ____

ANIIDCO issues an RfP for consultants for a detailed master plan for township in GNI, mentioning a "vision document"

11 Jan 2023 -

First hearing challenging the Forest and Environmental Clearance is held before the NGT, Kolkata

28 Jan 2023 -

Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port issues call for EoI on behalf of ANIIDCO for phase-I of the ICTT project at Galathea Bay

08 Feb 2023 -

Day 1 of the online deliberations on the GNI development project hosted by Centre for Financial Accountability

Feb 2023 —

Centre for Financial Accountability
publishes a report on the GNI
development project based on the
2-day online event

17 Feb 2023 -

MHA declares 10 sensitive installations in A&N and 5 states as out-of-bounds for the general public under the Official Secrets Act

-01 Dec 2022

Debi Goenka and Conservation Action Trust file an appeal in the NGT challenging the Environmental Clearance

- 10 Dec 2022

Ashish Kothari files an appeal in the NGT challenging the Environmental Clearance

- 26 Dec 2022

MoEFCC constitutes a High Level Committee to monitor ANIIDCO's work involving diversion of 130.75 sq km of forest land in GNI

<u> — 22 Jan 2023</u>

87 ex-bureaucrats write an open letter to the President requesting to stop the GNI development project

- 29 Jan 2023

Former Gol Secretary EAS Sarma writes to the President regarding violations of tribal rights in the approval of the GNI project

- 09 Feb 2023

Day 2 of the online deliberations on the GNI development project hosted by Centre for Financial Accountability

— 14 Feb 2023

Respondent no. 2, ANIIDCO, files a counter affidavit against the NGT petitions

- 22 Feb 2023

Respondent no. 1, MoEFCC, files a counter affidavit against the NGT petitions



Nicobar Megapode, Galathea Bay WLS

26 Feb 2023 -

Details of the Forest Clearance for entire GNI project are kept confidential citing strategic reasons

08 Mar 2023 -

10 firms including Adani, JSW Infra,
Boskalis, Concor, and RVNL submit
an Eol for the ICTT project at
Galathea Bay

29 Mar 2023

Ashish Kothari files a rejoinder in response to the counter affidavits filed by the respondents

03 Apr 2023 -

NGT special bench orders a stay on irreversible project work for 2 months, orders a High-Powered Committee to revisit the clearance

- Feb 2023

<u>Directorate of Shipping Services</u> <u>stops issuing ship tickets to non-</u> <u>islanders to go to GNI</u>

- 09 Mar 2023

In the response to queries,
ANIIDCO annexes the draft master
plan which mentions that the
project will not be financially viable

— 03 Apr 2023

Final hearing is held before a fivemember special bench of the NGT 08 Apr 2023 -

Former Gol Secretary EAS Sarma
writes to the NCST again, asking
for intervention in the GNI
development project

02 May 2023 -

70 Ex-bureaucrats request the NCST to look into the threats posed by the GNI project to the Shompen and the Nicobarese

03 May 2023.

Ashish Kothari files an appeal to review the NGT order

12 May 2023 -

ANIIDCÓ responds to NCST order, dismissing petitioner EAS Sarma's contentions as unfounded and misleading — 14 Apr 2023

Former Gol Secretary EAS Sarma writes to the President again regarding the legal lacunae in GNI development project

-02 May 2023

NCST orders A&N administration to respond to violations of the FRA in Forest Clearance and forest diversion for the GNI project

—— 12 May 2023

The NGT disposes of the appeal to review the order

– 21 May 2023

Non-islanders continue to be denied ship tickets for GNI two months after the "unofficial rule" was first exercised

Large parts of Campbell Bay, on the eastern coast of GNI, submerged in the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami of December 2004



