

Niti Aayog vision for Great Nicobar

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In News: Recent developments in Little Andaman Island (A bullet through an island's heart) more than 150 sq. km. of land is being made available for Phase I of a NITI Aayog-piloted 'holistic' and 'sustainable' vision for Great Nicobar Island, the southernmost in the Andaman and Nicobar group.

Phase I of a NITI Aayog-piloted 'holistic' and 'sustainable' vision for Great Nicobar Island

- This amounts to nearly 18% of the 910 sq. km. island, and will cover nearly a quarter of its coastline.
- The overall plan envisages the use of about 244 sq. km. – a major portion being pristine forest and coastal systems.
- Projects to be executed in Phase I include a 22 sq. km. airport complex, a transshipment port (TSP) at South Bay at an estimated cost of ₹12,000 crore.
- Project parallel-to-the-coast mass rapid transport system and a free trade zone and warehousing complex on the south western coast.

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- In mid-2020 of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation (ANIIDCO) as the nodal agency.
- The other is the centrality of the NITI Aayog.
- First, on September 4, 2020, the Director, Tribal Welfare, A&N Islands, constituted an empowered committee to examine NITI Aayog's proposals for various projects in Little Andaman and Great Nicobar Islands.
- A copy of the 2015 'Policy on Shompen Tribe of Great

Nicobar Island' was part of the communication sent out, giving an indication of the aims of the committee.

Threat to Shompen

- The December 26, 2019, tender document by WAPCOS Limited for a 'Traffic Study for Creating Transshipment port at South Bay, Great Nicobar Island' justifies the port here by noting that "the topography of the island is best suited, which has not been damaged much even by the tsunami on 26.11.2004 (sic)".
- In 2005 Earthquake Engineering Research Institute (EERI) Special Earthquake Report by a multidisciplinary team from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur, recorded witness accounts of 8-metre-high tsunami waves hitting the Great Nicobar coast on December 26, 2004.
- Loss of life and property then was limited because the Great Nicobar coast is largely uninhabited. This raises questions over safety of life, property and the investments in this zone and that too without accounting for the complex ecological, social and geological vulnerabilities here.