

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
TRIBAL COUNCIL
LITTLE NICOBAR & GREAT NICOBAR
Quarter No. 4, CTC office, opp. Police Station, Campbell Bay – 744302

Email: manjubarnabas6@gmail.com, tribesofnicobar@gmail.com

Cell: 94342778790, 8900902606

Ref No.:

Date: 30.06.2026

Dear Jual Oram ji,

We are writing in response to your letter dated 21 May 2026 to Jairam Ramesh ji, that we came across in news reports. Your statement that *it is important to recognise that development and tribal protection are not mutually exclusive* caught our attention and we wish to take this opportunity to share with you our idea of development, and protection.

To us, development means inclusivity in the decision-making process. We will consider the islands to be developed when the views of the islanders – all islanders - are not just heard but also implemented. Development will be achieved when those who have the power to make decisions and are dutybound to address our grievances, don't keep ignoring us. We will feel protected when the government centres tribal rights instead of welfare and does not create conditions that take away our self-sufficiency.

Below are a few ways both tribal protection and development can be achieved in our islands:

Need for critical infrastructure

1. We consider the presence of critical infrastructure such as hospitals and colleges to be development. We will feel protected and safe when the personnel in-charge of running these institutions have a sensitive approach to tribal communities.
2. We will see it as development when the printer in the Primary Health Care centre in Campbell Bay gets fixed so that X-rays and ECGs can be handed over to patients and the doctors don't have to rely on photographs for diagnosis.
3. Some villages in Little Nicobar Island like Pulo Ulo, Pulo Panja, Pulo Patia, and Pulo Bha, till date have no telecommunication towers. This leads to students and youth who are eligible candidates for some courses in colleges, or vacancies in some department miss out on applying because they do not come to know about announcements on time. Same issues arise when the members of the tribal council want to communicate regarding some draft or scheme, etc and as a result there is a delay in responding to the administration. Even the administration is unable to

306
02/07/2026
Chairman Tribal Council
Great & Little Nicobar
Campbell Bay

ensure that important notices and drafts reach the residents of the villages in Little Nicobar.

4. Due to no network, the mandatory requirement of online registration for employment under MGNREGA scheme that was introduced two years back cannot be availed by those living in remote areas. The ability to modify such requirements that are not compatible with the ground reality, while trying to improve connectivity in tribal villages is a sign of development.
5. Few villages in Little Nicobar Island such as Pulo Bha, Pulo Panja, Pulo Ulo and Makachua get electricity only for eight hours and yet there is a push on digitization to procure ration. When the residents of remote villages walk to the ration shop for an entire day and the device cannot operate due to power cut, they don't get ration. For the past two years residents of Little Nicobar villages have been collecting ration from Campbell Bay in Great Nicobar Island.
6. We have been requesting for years to construct a footpath between Pulo Panja and Makachua, in Little Nicobar Island. As mentioned in point 3, Pulo Panja does not have telecom network, so if the footpath is constructed, at least the residents of Pulo Panja can communicate by going to Makachua in case of emergency. They can also access the the inter-island ships that halt at Makachua jetty.
7. The tsunami shelters in Rajiv Nagar tribal colony where we are currently living were constructed more than twenty years ago and they are in dire need of repair. We are not equipped to maintain these shelters ourselves as they are different from our traditional houses, nor do we have enough money to get someone else to repair it. When we ask the local administration to repair the shelters, we are told there is no budget while the same officers assure us that we will get anything we want once we surrender our land for the Great Nicobar project.
8. We are denied the permission to clear a few trees for a playground for our children in the tribal colony in New Chingenh because it is a forest land while the massive stretches of forest and coasts have been approved for development we did not ask for.

Need to recognize our rights and respect our decision regarding the GNI project

9. We will feel protected when the rights vested in us under the Forest Rights Act would be recognized and the false RoFR certificate issued for diversion of 130.65sqkm of our forest by DC, Nicobar will be withdrawn.

308
02/07/2026
Mishnah Tribal Council
Great & Little Nicobar
Campbell Bay

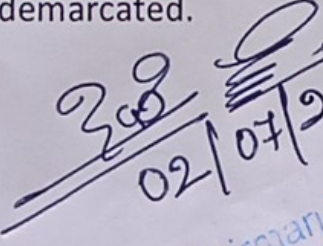
10. We consider it development when the women folk in our community or any community are not objectified. The idea of geo-surveillance and area demarcations proposed as part of GNI project seems intrusive and in violation of our rights and those of the Shompen people.
11. We will feel protected and secure when the wildlife sanctuaries declared in the culturally significant islands of Little Nicobar, Menchal, Meroe without any notice or consultation with us, will be de-notified.
12. We would have felt protected if the tribal welfare experts who have drafted a vague tribal welfare plan would have taken the opportunity to speak with us and asked us what we want, or read our letters where we mention that we wish to be relocated to our ancestral villages.

Need to strictly implement reservation under SC/ST quota and employment schemes

13. Many times, there is zero reservation implemented for SC/ST candidates, more recently for the post of Auxiliary Nurse Midwife as advertised by the A&N Health Department, despite qualified women being present in Makachua, Pulo Panja, Pulo Ulo and Afra Bay. In remote villages when such posts are given to outsiders, they refuse to stay as they cannot adjust, and the girls and women of our community are deprived of health care.
14. Often, employment schemes are withdrawn suddenly and our youth ends up wasting their time. For instance, there was a training workshop conducted for electricians in our villages in Little Nicobar last year under some scheme under which four youth from each village were assured employment as electricians – one year has passed and there is no information about what happened to those vacancies or the scheme.

Need to curb encroachment by non-tribals

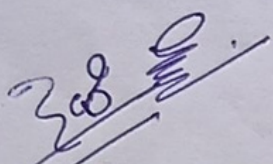
15. We will feel protected when land encroachments by settler communities in our ancestral land and seascapes, as well as in the tribal colonies we are currently residing in are kept in check.
16. For us development means not having to buy fish from the market. The use of trawlers for commercial fishing by non-tribal fishers leave little fish for our consumption and need to be regulated and buffer areas for beyond which trawling is not permitted need to be demarcated.


02/07/2026
Chairman Tribal Council
Great & Little Nicobar
Campbell Bay

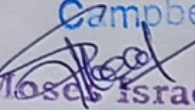
We are trying our best to bring up these issues with the local administration but we hope this gives you a better idea regarding the needs of the island, specifically the tribal communities. To us development is having an inclusive mindset, and making the best use of existing land and infrastructure in this remote area. We refuse being bystanders while our lands and seas get ravaged by outsiders' notions of development and the consequences of which will be borne by our future generations.

We hope your ministry will ensure both development and protection of tribal rights in the islands.

Sincerely,


Barnabas Manju

Chairman, Tribal Council Little & Great Nicobar Islands
Campbell Bay

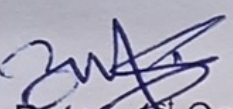

S. Moses Israel

Vice Chairman

Tribal Council Campbell Bay

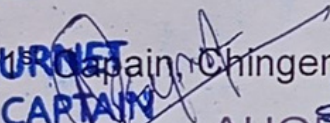
Moses Israel

Deputy Chairperson, Tribal Council Little & Great Nicobar Islands


Titus Peter, 1st Captain, Pulo bhabi

1st Captain

Pilobabhi Great Nicobar

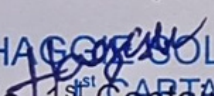

Burnet Chingen

**1ST CAPTAIN
CHINGEN**

AUGUSTINE

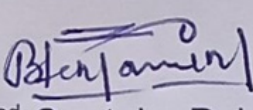
S/o. Late Nicodemus

Augustine Nicodemus, 1st Captain, Pulo Panja
Little Nicobar Island


HAGGIE SOLOMON

Haggie, 1st Captain, Pulo Bha

**PULOBHA VILLAGE
LITTLE NICOBAR**


Benjamin, 2nd Captain, Pulo Ulon

B. BENJAMIN

S/o. Raseungnyi

2nd Captain

Pulo-Ulo, Little Nicobar

Titus
TITUS RUFUS
1st Captain
Titus, 1st Captain, Afra Bay
Great Nicobar
md
1ST CAPTAIN
MAKA CHUA
LITTLE NICOBAR
Andrew, 1st Captain, Makachua
CAMPBELL BAY

Timothy
TIMOTHY
1st Captain
Timothy, 1st Captain, Pulo Patia
Pulo Patia Village
Little Nicobar