An expert committee of the Union Environment Ministry has “deferred” clearance to a ₹100 crore proposal by the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation Limited (ANIIDCL) to develop an island resort, as well as put up “premium tents” and “tree houses”, on the grounds that it doesn’t take into account the biodiversity of the islands’ coast.

The Centre has been working on a long-term plan to make several of the islands more conducive to tourism. Last year, the Home Ministry revived an Island Development Agency that would coordinate infrastructure projects to aid tourism in the A&N islands as well as Lakshadweep.

The ANIIDCL presented plans for the development of a premium Island Resort at Lalaji Bay, Long Island, A&N Islands, to an expert committee of the Environment Ministry tasked with evaluating infrastructure proposals along India’s coasts.

Last month, the Environment Ministry approved a new set of rules for infrastructure development along the coasts. The new rules, in general, gave greater flexibility to development and infrastructure projects.

“...The committee observed that as the area where the premium resort is proposed seems to be in an ecologically very fragile and is biodiversity rich, a sub-committee shall undertake a site visit to assess the likely impact of tourism activities on the eco-system... the proposal in its present form is premature for its consideration for appraisal ... and therefore deferred,” read the minutes of the meeting conducted on January 25.

The panel also expressed “concern” over the management of solid waste collection, treatment and disposal and how these would be managed once the project was commissioned and handed over to the resort.