The aforesaid petition / news item are based on the erroneous presumption that this Administration plans to relocate the Jarawas. This is completely baseless. It is categorically affirmed that neither is the Administration contemplating any resettlement of the Jarawas at a place away from their present reserve, nor is it doing anything to disturb the Jarawa way of life.

There is mention in the Times of India news item about a local lawyer having filed a Writ- Petition to the effect that the Jarawas be resettled and introduced to a more modern way of life. It is correct that such a Writ Petition has been filed by an advocate Ms. Shymali Ganguly and this has been admitted as Writ Petition No. 48/99 by the Hon'ble High Court of Calcutta Circuit bench sitting at Port Blair in which this Administration is also a respondent. This Administration has in its counter affidavit stoutly opposed any move which would be tantamount to either assimilation of the Jarawas or expediting the pace of integration with the rest of the society. This is the factual position and it is submitted that there is no question of the Administration doing anything to jeopardise the Jarawa way of life.

It may be added here that this Administration had sent a detailed report to the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (Tribal Development Division) vide DO No. 11-4/JA/AAJVS/TW-98 dated 25.3.99 on the correct position regarding the Jarawas, at the level of the Secretary (Tribal Welfare) to this Administration Shri N.C Ray. Also, it may be mentioned here that the Secretary to the Govt. of India in the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment Smti Asha Das accompanied by a team of experts from the Ministry toured these islands as recently as between 16th September and 19th September 1999, and in the course of her tour also visited the Jarawa areas in Middle Andaman and was satisfied with the manner in which this Administration is handling the issue.

Enclosed herewith is a detailed report giving the correct position on the status of Jarawas.