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Supreme Court bans tourists from taking trunk road passing through Jarawa area in Andamans

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NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday banned tourists from taking the Andaman Nicobar Trunk Road that passes through the area where the Jarawas live. The road is used to reach the Limestone Cave.

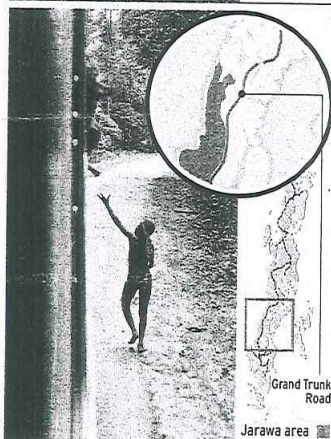
The court has already banned all commercial and tourism activities within a five-km radius of the Jarawa Tribal Reserve on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

A Bench of Justices G.S. Singhvi and H.L. Gokhale passed the order, taking on record the Andaman and Nicobar Administration's January 17 notification to comply with the court directives issued last year.

Except 30 villages notified in the schedule, the notification declares a buffer zone of an area up to a five-km radius, adjacent and contiguous to the Jarawa Tribal Reserve Area — starting from the Constance Bay in South Andaman to Lewis Inlet Bay in

HIGHWAY TO EXTINCTION

The Grand Andaman Trunk Road that cuts through the Jarawa Tribal Reserve has exposed the tribe to outside influence. Outbreak of diseases has been reported and Jarawa population has dwindled.



Grand Trunk Road
Jarawa area

LEGAL SUPPORT

1965 Plan to develop Andaman. Road proposed to extract resources in Jarawa forest

1973 Construction started on Grand Andaman Trunk Road

2002 Supreme Court orders shut down of Road

2007 Court stops people from entering five-km radius around Jarawa reserve

2012 July Bans all commercial and tourism activity in the buffer zone

2013 Ban notified

WHO ARE THE JARAWAS

Tribe indigenous to Andamans. Other tribes are Onges, Sentinelese, Andamanese. Of all the tribes in the islands, Jarawas have had the least contact with the outside world

JARAWAS
240
2001 census

You provide helicopter service to the tourists as there is a total ban in the buffer area.

Supreme Court in Andaman & Nicobar Admin. v. Union of India

GRAPHICS: B. SRINIVASAN

Middle Andaman. No person shall operate any commercial or tourist establishment directly or indirectly in the

buffer zone. Furthermore, no one shall carry out any activity, which may be prejudicial to the safety, security and

interests of the Jarawas in any of the settlement villages.

The Bench directed that

only government officials, persons residing in the reserve and vehicles carrying essential commodities for the Jarawas would be allowed on the Trunk Road.

Justice Singhvi told counsel, "You provide helicopter service to... tourists to reach the cave as there is a total ban in the buffer area."

"File affidavit"

The Bench directed the Andaman and Nicobar Administration to file an affidavit, along with a detailed map indicating the areas of Jarawas and settlement of others. It posted the matter for further hearing on February 26.

The October 30, 2007 notification, imposing the ban, was quashed by the Calcutta High Court.

On an appeal, the Supreme Court, stayed the order and asked the administration to strictly enforce the notification till it was considered by the court. This was followed by the January 17 notification.