

to misconceptions in public mind. In fact last Supreme Court order must be read as a directive to 'control tourist traffic' but not 'control the Jarawas from using it.

In the long run it is expected that the implementation of the HOT SPOTS will impact on the visibility of the Jarawas by changing their practice of hanging around at the ATR. Once Jarawas become invisible on the ATR, tourist interest in the Baratang mud volcanoes might also wane. In the light of this the department of tourism may want to think of some long term alternatives to this route of tourist traffic.

For the immediate short-term objective of *regulating* tourist traffic and *changing tourist mind sets* about the mud volcanoes, I suggest two major steps for consideration.

Visitors proposing to visit Baratang in a private hired vehicles-must take the earliest convoy [6.00 am] and return in the convoy that leaves before the last one [12.30pm]. (Minor modification in scheduling may be considered for this but not the number or frequency of the total convoys) It is imperative that by 4.00 p.m all ATR vehicles are out or beyond the stretch from RK Nallah and Middle Strait.

#### RATIONALE:

Tourists plan to leave Port Blair after a standard leisurely breakfast. They move towards Baratang at that hour because the expectation is that when the sun goes down the chances of seeing Jarawas on the ATR are much higher. Hence they wait until the last convoy.

Their main intent is to catch a glimpse of the Jarawas. The fact we know is that at the peak of the day, Jarawas tend to take shelter under thick forest foliage as it is relatively comfortable and protected from bright sunlight or heavy down pours. They mostly start using the roadside in and around the last convoy time. The suggested modification for Baratang tourists would weed out casual frivolous visitors who only want to see Jarawas and not really the mud volcanoes. Also for the tourists an early start and return could be more comfortable.

The resentment to this modification of time can be addressed by the counter argument that in many tourist destinations- the number of visitors and the time is controlled for the sake of the integrity of the site- as in case of specific national monuments or wild life Parks. This also would make police checking of vehicles a '**time specific operation**' with prior knowledge and designated peak task time. I have had significant discussions and observations with Asstt.SI Mr Kartikeyan at the Jhirkatang check post.

The second suggested step would be; that the tour-operators sell not only a trip but also charge for the boat ride to the cave site. Much like the pre-paid Airport to city Taxi services- the tourists instead of just hanging at the jetty feel compelled to see the mud caves because they have paid in advance. This would insure the livelihood of the local small boat operators and cut down the chaotic situation when tourists arrive at