

- I b) The Supreme Court had ordered the closure of those parts of the Andaman Trunk Road (ATR) that run along and through the forests of the Jarawa Tribal Reserve. This order was hailed by many experts as an extremely important step toward ensuring the long-term survival of the threatened Jarawa community, who now

number around 250. The ATR has become a leading source of undesirable influences such as alien foods, addictives, diseases and sexual exploitation, to the Jarawa. Unfortunately the ATR remains open, in gross violation of SC orders and in complete disregard for the rights and the future of the Jarawa.

- II c) Likewise, the A&N administration has made very little effort to enforce other aspects of the Supreme Court orders, dealing with appropriate construction technology for the islands and reduction in mining of sand from the island's beaches. Had such orders instead been implemented, earthquake damage to buildings and tsunami damage to farmers' fields would have been far less.

A related issue has recently arisen. The Supreme Court based its orders on the recommendations of the Shekhar Singh Commission, which the court established. Both the defendants—the Ministry of Environment and Forests—and the litigants nominated Dr. Singh as the Supreme Court's Commissioner. His report was based on comprehensive, detailed and transparent consultations with all concerned. In a new and disturbing development, Sri Manoranjan Bhakta, the Hon. Member of Parliament from the islands, has demanded that the Shekhar Singh Commission report be reviewed, and we are astonished to learn that the A&N administration endorses this move. The A&N administration appears to have no faith in the Government of India's ministries and in the highest court of the land. It is conveying to the Andaman's public the following message: orders of the Supreme Court and the rule of law have no value. The future implications of such disregard can well be imagined.

III Failure to implement the IDA's decisions and the Supreme Court Orders have resulted in severe water scarcity, soil erosion, destruction of corals from silt runoff from denuded hillsides, and dangers of poaching and encroachment in the Jarawa reserve; the only pristine forest left. To make matters worse, the A&N administration has used the tsunami as an excuse to unleash the most extraordinarily ill-conceived projects on the Andaman Islands, such as construction of mud walls to keep off tsunamis. Experts agree that the mud walls have not a hope of achieving their purpose, and instead are simply smothering coral reefs with mud. Another astonishing project, the lining of beds of perennial streams in South Andaman with concrete, has been protested by locals because it prevents percolation of water into the water table and will exacerbate the already acute water problem. We are still awaiting further action from Andaman administration on this matter.