

Sentinelese

The Sentinelese, the third tribe in the Negrito group, have traditionally been based only in North Sentinel Island. The Sentinelese continue to be a hostile tribe and contact with them had been few and far between, even with the contact policy of the Administration previously being followed. The only known friendly contact with the Sentinelese took place in 1991 when a team led by the Director of Tribal Welfare, Shri SA Awaradi was able to land on this island without any resistance from the Sentinelese and they accepted gifts of coconut. After this, there were infrequent expeditions up to the year 1996, but these were not friendly expeditions, in that, articles were merely left on the beach, and thereafter the team left the place without seeing the Sentinelese. A few years ago two vessels had run aground in the vicinity of North Sentinel island. One of these was a Panamanian vessel called M.V. Primrose, while the other vessel was M.V. Rusley. Since these could cause serious navigational hazards, the Shipping Department of the Administration had arranged for the dismantling and disposal of these vessels and this activity necessitated landing on the island for sometime. After the year 1995 the A&N Administration has not sent any contact expedition to the North Sentinel Island and no one has been permitted to go to the island for the last 4 years. However, given the incidence of poaching by foreigners from South Asian countries in the waters around the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the Navy and Coast Guard have been patrolling the waters around North Sentinel Island from time to time.