

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
(MINISTRY OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS)  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2150**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 02.08.2021

**THE GREAT ANADAMANESE TRIBE**

2150. SHRI RAJMOHAN UNNITHAN:

Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Great Andamanese tribe, an indigenous tribe is now threatened by the Coronavirus;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether some of the people from this tribe have tested positive for COVID-19;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in order to save this tribe whose population is just over 50 people and to further stop the spread of the Cronavirus to the other uncontacted people on hearby islands?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRIBAL AFFAIRS  
(SMT. RENUKA SINGH SARUTA)

(a) & (b) Government's apprehension had been raised to the threat posed to the Great Andamanese tribe on account of the spread of the Coronavirus in the country. As a measure to ensure their safety, the Great Andamanese tribe with 56 populace have been shifted to their tribal settlement at Strait Island, which is a prohibited zone declared as Tribal Reserve under the provisions of A&N (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulations 1956 and entry to which by any outsider is prohibited and punishable. This has resulted in preventing and containing from any possible spread of COVID-19 amongst the Great Andamanese tribe. Hence, there is no evidence to suggest about existence of any serious health issues related to COVID-19 pandemic within the Great Andamanese tribe so far.

(c) & (d) Yes, sir. It has been reported by the UT administration of Andaman & Nicobar Islands that 11 Great Andamanese tribals were tested COVID-19 positive with mild symptoms or asymptomatic in the first wave of COVID-19 pandemic. They were treated in GB Pant Hospital, Port Blair out of

56 as an abundant precaution and some were kept in home isolation. After mandatory period of isolation, they were tested negative and discharged. Now all the Great Andamanese tribals are in good state of health and have been shifted to their settlement at Strait Island.

(e) : UT administration of Andaman & Nicobar Islands are very cautious in dealing with safety and protection of tribes of A&N islands in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, various proactive measures have been taken for their well being from mid-March, 2020 onwards which are detailed below:-

(i) All Tribal Welfare Officers (TWO) and the field functionaries have been briefed about DO's & Don'ts of COVID-19 and provided with guidelines for prevention, protection and care.

(ii) All field workers have been advised to maintain distance from Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) during interaction and ration distribution.

(iii) Andamanese tribes have been shifted to Strait Island so as to ensure safety by isolating them.

(iv) All Contractor/ workers in Strait Island (Andamanese settlement) have been shifted from settlement.

(v) Police, Health, Electricity and Education Departments have been advised not to replace the officials posted in the tribal settlements at Strait Island till COVID-19 situations normalize. If the officials are to be replaced then it is to be done only after conducting testing for COVID-19.

(vi) The Tribal Welfare Officer of Andaman Adim Janjati Vikas Samiti (AAJVS) and ANM of Medical Sub-centre at Strait Island has been provided with Infra-red thermal scanner & Oximeter to record the body temperature and oxygen level periodically.

(vii) 41 eligible Andamanese tribes have been administered with first dose of vaccine after observing all COVID-19 protocol. All inoculated Andamanese were kept under observation as per protocol and all are safe and protected. Second dose of COVID-19 vaccine will be administered to the eligible Andamanese as per the prescribed timeline.

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