



Indigenous People of Andaman and Nicobar

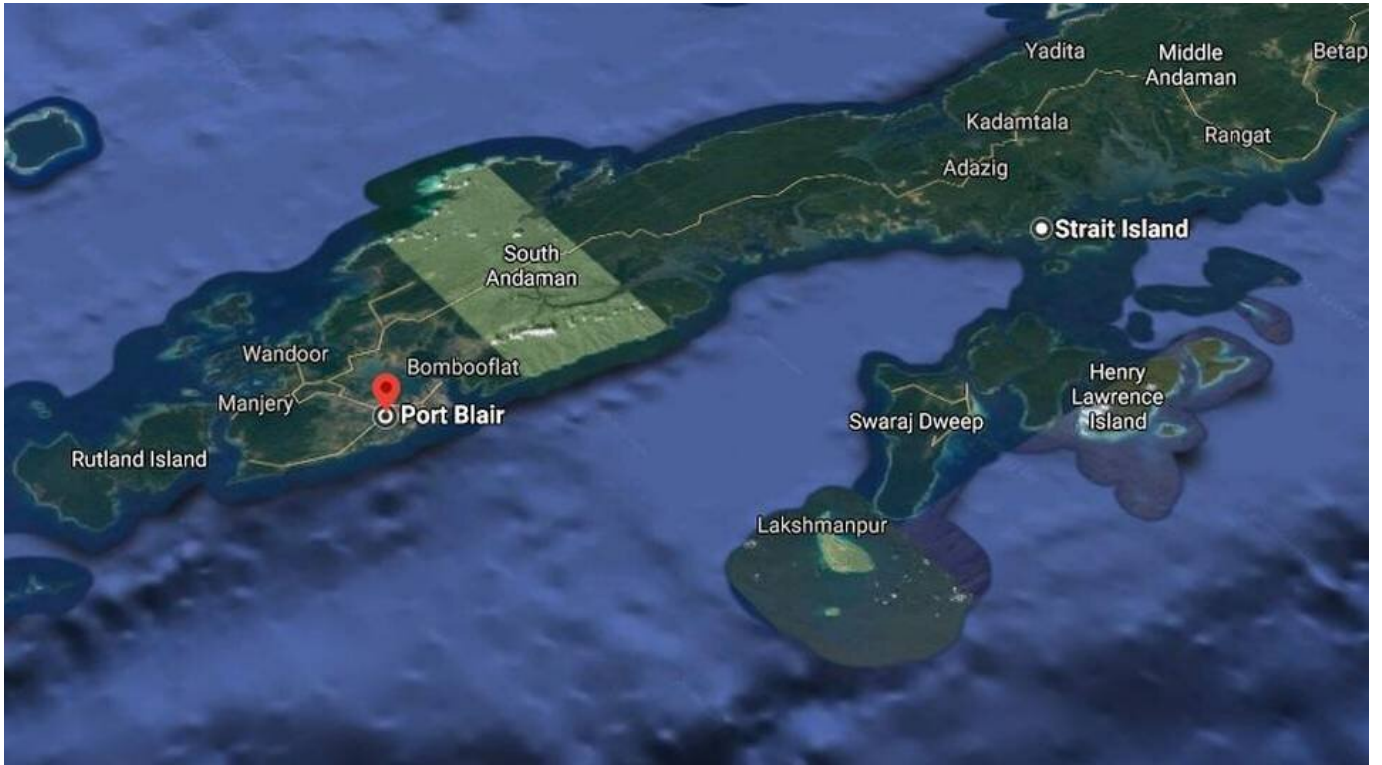
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Why in News

The report of **Covid-19** cases among the members of the **Great Andamanese** tribe is a matter of concern as the total population of the tribe is already low.

Key Points

- **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG): Great Andamanese are one of five PVTGs that reside in **Andamans archipelago**. The other four are: **Jarwas, Onges, Shompens and North Sentinelese**.
 - **Shompen** is the only PVTG in the region with **Mongoloid** features. The **other PVTGs** have **negroid** features. Some of them interact with '**Great Nicobarese**' - a **Scheduled Tribe**.
 - The **population of Andaman and Nicobar Islands' primitive tribes has rapidly declined** over the years. The **epidemics and crippling health crises** of the past have been seen to disproportionately impact these indigenous tribal groups.
 - **75 tribal groups** have been **categorised by the Ministry of Home Affairs** as PVTGs. The **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** implements the **Scheme of 'Development of PVTGs'** exclusively for them.
 - **Article 366 (25)** of the Constitution provides a process to define **Scheduled Tribes**.**
- **Great Andamanese Tribe:**
 - The tribe is based in '**Strait Island**' of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
 - The members speak **Jeru dialect** among themselves and their **number stands at 51** as per the last study carried out by Andaman Adim Janjati Vikas Samiti in 2012.
 - More than 5,000 Great Andamanese lived in the Islands before British settlers arrived in the 19th century.
 - However, hundreds were killed in conflict as they defended their territories from British invasion, and thousands more were wiped out in epidemics of **measles**, influenza and syphilis (a bacterial infection).



Source: TH