



Andaman and Nicobar Islands

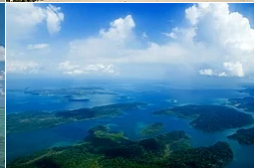
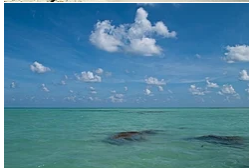
The **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** is a union territory of India comprising 572 islands, of which only 38 are inhabited. The islands are grouped into two main clusters: the northern Andaman Islands and the southern Nicobar Islands, separated by a 150 km (93 mi) wide channel. The capital and largest city of the territory, Port Blair (officially Sri Vijaya Puram), is located approximately 1,190 km (740 mi) from Chennai and 1,255 km (780 mi) from Kolkata in mainland India. The islands are situated between the Bay of Bengal to the west and the Andaman Sea to the east. The northernmost point is 901 km (560 mi) from the mouth of the Hooghly River. Indira Point, located at 6°45'10"N and 93°49'36"E on the southern tip of Great Nicobar, is the southernmost point of India.

The territory shares maritime borders with Indonesia located about 165 km (103 mi) to the south, Myanmar located 280 km (170 mi) to the north-east and Thailand located 650 km (400 mi) to the south-east. The islands occupy a total land area of approximately 8,249 km² (3,185 sq mi) with a population of 380,581 as per the 2011 census. The territory is divided into three districts: Nicobar, South Andaman, and North and Middle Andaman with the capitals at Car Nicobar, Port Blair and Mayabunder respectively.

Genetic and cultural studies suggest that the indigenous Andamanese people may have been isolated from other populations during the Middle Paleolithic era, more than 30,000 years ago. Archeological evidence of civilisation has been dated back to 2,200 years. In the 11th century CE, Cholas, one of the three Tamil kingdoms, used the islands as a naval base to launch expeditions in South East Asia. The Danish were the first Europeans to arrive on the islands in 1755. The islands became part of the British Raj in 1868. During the Second World War, the islands were invaded by the Empire of Japan. After Indian Independence in 1947, the region became a province and later a union territory after the adoption of the Constitution of India in 1950.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Union territory



Clockwise from top-right: Coral reefs around the islands; Beach at Shaheed Dweep; Andaman Sea; Cellular Jail in Port Blair; Aerial view of Nicobar Islands; Havelock Island



सत्यमेव जयते

**Andaman & Nicobar
Administration**

Emblem of Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Motto(s): Satyameva Jayate
(Truth alone triumphs)

The islands host the Andaman and Nicobar Command, the only geographical command operated jointly by the three major wings of the Indian Armed Forces: the Army, the Air Force and the Navy. While Hindi and English are the official languages, the major spoken languages include Bengali, Tamil and Telugu. Indigenous people speak any of the Andamanese or Nicobarese family of languages. Hinduism is the majority religion in the union territory, with a significant Christian minority. The islands include North Sentinel Island, home to the Sentinelese people, an uncontacted tribe.

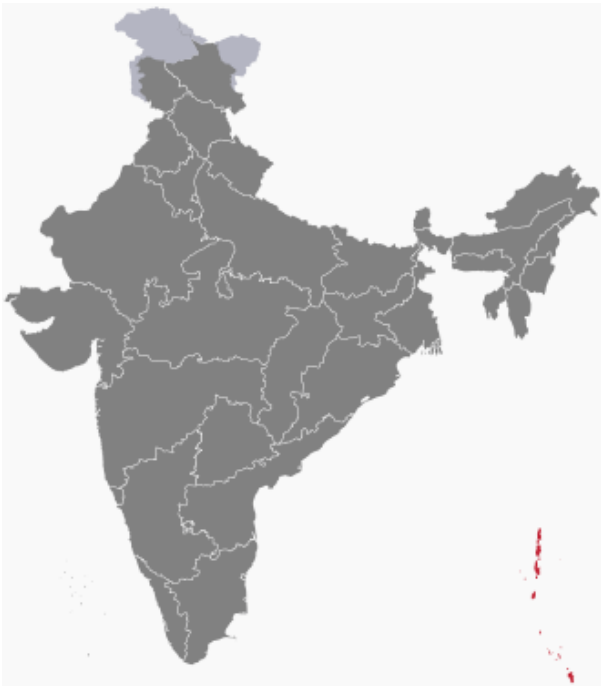
Etymology

The name Andaman might have been derived from *Handuman*, after the Indian God Hanuman from the Hindu epic Ramayana.^[3] The place was called with a similar name by the Malays, who used to be involved in slave trade in the region.^[4] The place was also referred by various names such as *Angademan* by Ptolemy in the 2nd century CE and *Angamanian* by Marco Polo in 13th century CE.^[3] Nicobar, which was located in the sea route connecting South India to South East Asia, was known as *Nakkavaram*, meaning "open/naked land" borrowed from Tamil language which later became *Nicobar*.^[5] In the middle ages (500-1500 AD), Nicobar was known as *Lankhabatus* in Arabia, probably a mis-transcription of the name *Nakkavaram*. An 11th-century CE work *Kathasaritsagar* indicates the name as *Narikel Dweep*.^[5] Marco Polo termed the island as *Necuverann*, while the islands were known as *Lo-Jan Kuo* in China, a translation of *Nakkavar* with the same meaning.^[5]

History

Early history

Genetic and cultural studies suggest that the indigenous Andamanese people may have been isolated from other populations during the Middle Paleolithic era, which ended 30,000 years ago.^[6] Archeological evidence obtained from middens have been dated the earliest civilisations back to 200-300 BCE.^[7] The islands have been mentioned by Ptolemy in the 2nd century CE.^{[4][5]}



Location of Andaman and Nicobar Islands in India


Coordinates: 11.68°N 92.72°E﻿ / ﻿

Country	India
Region	East India
Formation	1 November 1956
Capital <div>and largest city</div>	<u>Port Blair</u>
Districts	3
Government <div> • Body</div> <div> • Lieutenant governor</div> <div> • Chief secretary</div>	<div>Government of <u>Andaman and Nicobar Islands</u></div> <div><u>Devendra Kumar Joshi</u></div> <div><u>Chandra Bhushan Kumar, IAS</u></div>
National Parliament <div> • Lok Sabha</div> <div>High Court</div>	<div>Parliament of India</div> <div>1 seat</div> <div><u>Calcutta High Court</u> (Port Blair Bench)</div>
Area ^[1] <div> • Total</div> <div> • Rank</div>	<div>8,249 km² (3,185 sq mi)</div> <div>29th</div>
Dimensions <div> • Length</div> <div> • Width</div>	<div>467 km (290 mi)</div> <div>24 km (15 mi)</div>
Elevation <div>Highest elevation (Saddle Peak)</div> <div>Lowest elevation (Andaman Sea)</div>	<div>568 m (1,864 ft)</div> <div>737 m (2,418 ft)</div> <div>0 m (0 ft)</div>

[illegible]

In the 11th century CE, Rajendra Chola I of the Chola dynasty of Tamilakam invaded parts of South East Asia using the Nicobar islands as an intermediate naval base.^{[9][10]} It was part of an established Chola trade route connecting India and South East Asia, with the practice continuing in the subsequent years during the reigns of Rajendra II and Kulothunga I.^{[11][12]} Chola inscriptions from Thanjavur, dated to 1050 CE, describe the islands as *Ma-Nakkavaram* meaning "great open/naked land" in Tamil.^{[13][14]} The islands are later mentioned by Marco Polo in the 13th century CE and Friar Oderic in early 14th century CE.^{[5][15]}

Between 1778 and 1783, William Bolts tried to establish an Austrian colony on the Nicobar islands, mistakenly assuming that the Danish had abandoned the claims to the islands, renaming them *Theresa Islands*.^[18] In 1789, the British colonised the Andaman islands to set up a naval base and establish a penal

Population (2011) ^[2]	
• Total	380,581
• Rank	<u>34th</u>
• Density	46/km ² (120/sq mi)
• Urban	37.7%
• Rural	62.3%
<u>Demonym(s)</u>	<u>Andamanese</u> , <u>Nicobarese</u>
Language	
• <u>Official</u>	<u>Hindi</u> <u>English</u>
• <u>Official script</u>	<u>Devanagari</u> <u>Latin</u>
<u>GDP</u>	
• Total (2021-22)	▲ ₹103 billion (US\$1.2 billion)
• Rank	<u>33rd</u>
<u>Time zone</u>	<u>UTC+05:30 (IST)</u>
<u>ISO 3166 code</u>	<u>IN-AN</u>
<u>Vehicle registration</u>	<u>AN</u>
<u>HDI</u> (2019)	▼ 0.719 High (7th)
<u>Literacy</u> (2017)	86.27 (12th)
<u>Sex ratio</u> (2011)	876 ♀/1000 ♂ (22nd)
<u>Website</u>	<u>andaman.gov.in (http://andaman.gov.in)</u>
Symbols of Andaman and Nicobar Islands	
<div> <div>सत्यमेव जयते</div><div>Andaman & Nicobar Administration</div></div> <p><u>Emblem of Andaman and Nicobar Islands</u></p>	
<u>Bird</u>	<u>Andaman wood pigeon</u>
<u>Flower</u>	<u>Pyinma</u>
<u>Mammal</u>	<u>Dugong</u>
<u>Tree</u>	<u>Andaman Padauk</u>
<u>List of Indian state and union territory symbols</u>	



Andamanese fishing (c. 1870)

colony.^[19] In 1794, a first batch of 100 prisoners were sent to the island but the settlement was abandoned in 1796.^[19]

In 1858, the British established a colony near Port Blair.^[20] Between 1864 and 1868, Italy tried to buy the island from the Danish. On 16 October 1868, the Danish sold the rights to the Nicobar islands to the British, which was made part of the British India in 1869.^[8] In 1872, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands were united under a single command and administered by a chief commissioner based out of Port Blair. The construction of the Cellular Jail started in 1896 and was

completed in 1906. The jail was used to house political prisoners and independence activists away from the Indian mainland.^{[21][22]}

World War II



Surrender of the Japanese to Lt.Col. Nathu Singh, commander of the Rajput Regiment, in 1945

During the Second World War, the islands were invaded by the Japanese as a part of their attack on the allies in 1942. Port Blair was captured by the Japanese on 23 March 1942 and established control over the island.^[23] The provisional control was passed on to the Azad Hind of Subhash Chandra Bose on 29 December 1943, based on the understanding with the Japanese with the islands renamed as *Shaheed-dweep* (Martyr Island) and *Swaraj-dweep* (Self-rule Island).^[24] Bose appointed General A. D. Loganathan as the governor of the islands, who had limited power while the real control of the islands remained with the Japanese.^[24] In the years under Japanese occupation, there have been reports of widespread looting, arson, rape and extra judicial killings.^{[24][25]}

Local people were often killed on trivial matters with the largest being the Homfreyganj massacre on 30 January 1944, where 44 local civilians were shot by the Japanese on suspicion of spying.^[25] Japanese Vice Admiral Teizo Hara and Major-General Tamenori Sato surrendered to Lieutenant Colonel Nathu Singh, the commanding officer of the Rajput Regiment on 15 August 1945, on board the Royal Navy ship HMS Rocksand and the territory was officially handed back over to the British to Brigadier J. A. Salomons, commander of 116th Indian Infantry Brigade, and Chief Administrator Noel Patterson, in a ceremony performed at the Gymkhana Ground in Port Blair on 7 October 1945.^[26]

Approximately 2,000 people in the Andamans are thought to have died as a result of the occupation, and at least 501 were tortured by the Japanese. The former figure represents 10% of the pre-war population of Port Blair.^[27]

Post independence

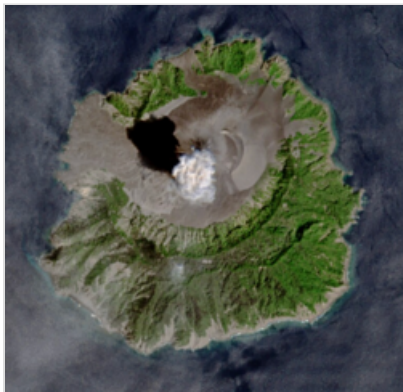
During the Partition of India, the British announced their intention to retain possession of the islands and use them to resettle Anglo-Indians and Anglo-Burmese on these islands. The islands were claimed by the Indian National Congress for India and the Muslim League for Pakistan during the partition negotiations.^{[28][29]} After the Indian Independence in 1947, the islands became part of the Dominion of India. As per the Constitution of India, the Islands were designated as the only part D territory in 1950, to be administered by a lieutenant governor appointed by the Government of India.^[30] The islands were later used to resettle

people displaced during the partition with a substantial number of displaced immigrants establishing agricultural colonies.^[31] The islands became a separate union territory administered by the Government of India, following the re-organization in 1956.^[32] The islands have been developed into a key defence establishment since the 1980 due to its strategic location in the Bay of Bengal across the Strait of Malacca.^{[33][34]}

On 26 December 2004, the coasts of the Andaman and Nicobar islands experienced 10 m (33 ft) high tsunami waves following an undersea earthquake in the Indian Ocean which resulted in more than 2,000 casualties, 46,000 injuries and rendering at least 40,000 homeless.^[35] The locals and tourists on the islands suffered the greatest casualties while the indigenous people largely survived unscathed due to movement to high grounds following the oral traditions passed down over generations that warned them to evacuate following earthquakes.^[36]

Geography

The territory consists of 836 islands and islets occupying an area of 8,249 km² (3,185 sq mi), of which only 31 are permanently inhabited.^[37] The islands extend from 6° to 14° North latitudes and from 92° to 94° East longitudes.^[38] The islands are grouped into the north Andaman islands and south Nicobar islands, separated by the 150 km (93 mi) wide Ten Degree Channel.^[37] The Andamans cover an area of 6,408 km² (2,474 sq mi) while the Nicobar group covers an area of 1,841 km² (711 sq mi).^[37] The highest point is the Saddle Peak at 737 m (2,418 ft), located in North Andaman Island.^[39]



Barren Island, the only active volcano in India

The northernmost point of the islands is 901 km (560 mi) away from the mouth of the Hooghly River in the Indian mainland. The territory shares maritime borders with Indonesia located about 165 km (103 mi) to the south, Myanmar located 280 km (170 mi) to the north-east and Thailand located 650 km (400 mi) to the south-east.^[40] Indira Point, the southernmost point of India, is located at 6°45'10"N and 93°49'36"E at the southern tip of Great Nicobar.^[41] The capital and largest city is Port Blair (officially Sri Vijaya Puram^[42]), located 1,190 km (740 mi) from Chennai and 1,255 km (780 mi) from Kolkata on the Indian mainland.^[32] Barren Island, the only active volcano in India, is located in the Andaman Sea.^{[43][44][45]}



Map of Andaman and Nicobar Islands

The islands have a 1,962 km (1,219 mi) long coast-line.^[46] The topography of the territory varies significantly across various islands. The islands may have sandy, rocky sandstone or marshy beaches on the coastlines and might be surrounded by shoals and coral reefs.^[47] The altitude varies significantly from completely flat islands to gradually raising topography from the coast to the interior in larger islands.^[47] The islands are generally surrounded by shallow seas of varying depths in the vicinity with some deep natural bays occurring along certain coasts.^[47] The islands have a moderate temperature around the year with the average ranging from 23 °C to 31 °C.^[48] The islands have a tropical climate with warm summers and not so chill winters.^[48] The rainfall is dependent on the monsoons and tropical cyclones are common in late summer.^[48]

Flora and fauna

The islands have mangroves interspersed with marshes, coconut trees or dispersed bushy vegetation along the coast.^[47] There are twelve types of forests that occur in the islands including evergreen, deciduous, mangrove, littoral, bamboo, sub-montane and brackish water forests.^[49] North Andaman is characterised by wet evergreen forests with climbing plants, Middle Andaman has moist deciduous forests and South Andaman islands have epiphytic vegetation, mostly ferns and orchids.^[49] The North Nicobar islands are mostly barren with grasslands while evergreen forests form the dominant vegetation in the central and southern islands of the Nicobar group.^[49] The forest coverage is estimated to be 86.2% of the total land area with about 2,200 varieties of plants of which 200 are endemic and 1,300 do not occur in mainland India.^[49] There are more than 200 species used for timber.^[49]



Tropical evergreen forests in the interior of the islands

There are more than 8300 species of fauna of which 1117 are endemic to the islands.^{[50][51]} There are about 64 species of reptiles of which half of them are endemic to the islands.^[50] Most of the larger species were introduced by colonists and travellers, some of which became endemic due to their prolonged isolation. There are about 55 mammal species of which 32 are endemic with 26 species of rats and 14 species of bats, the most among the mammals.^{[49][46]} The endangered Indian elephant can be found in forested or mountainous areas of the islands, which were originally introduced from the mainland to help with the timber extraction in 1883.^[52] Endangered and critically endangered species endemic to the islands include the Andaman white-toothed shrew, Andaman spiny shrew, Jenkin's shrew, Nicobar spiny shrew, Nicobar tree shrew, Miller's Nicobar rat, Palm rat, Andaman teal, Nicobar scops owl, Andaman boobook and Darwin's eastern frog.^[50] Other large fauna include Wild boar, Spotted deer, Barking deer and Sambar deer.^[49]







Indian elephants were introduced in the 19th century to move timber

There are about 270 species of birds in the islands of which 90 are endemic.^[50] The islands' caves are nesting grounds for the Edible-nest swiftlet, whose nests are prized for bird's nest soup.^[53] The islands serve as an intermediate resting site for birds such as Horsfield's bronze cuckoo, Zappey's flycatcher and Javan pond heron during long distance migrations.^[54] The Nicobar pigeon found in the islands is the closest living relative to the extinct Dodo.^[55] The territory is home for about 896 species of winged insects including 225 butterflies species.^{[50][49]}

There are more than 1350 species of echinoderms and molluscs and 200 species of corals in the seas surrounding the islands.^[46] Larger marine species include salt water crocodiles, dugongs, turtles, dolphins and whales.^[46] There are more than 1350 species of fishes including 13 fresh water species.^[50] The islands are well known for prized shellfish, the commercial exploitation of which began in the early 20th century.^[49] There are about nine national parks, 96 wildlife sanctuaries and one biosphere reserve in the islands.^{[56][46]}

Official symbols of Andaman and Nicobar^[57]

Animal	Dugong (<i>Dugong dugon</i>)	
Bird	Andaman wood pigeon (<i>Columba palumboides</i>)	
Tree	Andaman padauk (<i>Pterocarpus dalbergioides</i>)	
Flower	Pyinma (<i>Lagerstroemia hypoleuca</i>)	



Nicobar pigeon, the closest living relative to the extinct Dodo

Demographics

As per the 2011 census, the population was 380,581, of which 202,871 (53.3%) were males and 177,710 (46.7%) were females.^[2] The sex ratio was 878 females per 1,000 males.^[59] There were a total of 94,551 households and about 143,488 (37.7%) of the population lived in urban areas.^[2] Hinduism (69.5%) is the major religion of people of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands followed by Christianity (21.7%) and Islam (8.5%).^[60]

The Andaman islands were populated by the indigenous people (the Great Andamanese, the Onge, the Jarawa and the Sentinelese) who were isolated and spoke Andamanese languages for thousands of years.^[61] The Nicobar islands, which was part of trade routes and was frequented by travellers, were populated by Shompen people before the islands were settled by Nicobarese people, who spoke Austroasiatic languages.^[8] The islands include the North Sentinel Island, home to the Sentinelese people, among the only known uncontacted tribe in India.^[62] When the islands were first colonised, the population of the natives were estimated to be around 5,000 and while the population of islands temporarily increased during colonisation, the population saw a massive spike post-1960s due to the policies of the Union Government that encouraged settlers from other parts of the country.^[63] In the early 21st century, the population of indigenous people has drastically dropped. As of 2016, it was estimated to

Historical population		
Year	Pop.	±%
1901	24,649	—
1911	26,459	+7.3%
1921	27,086	+2.4%
1931	29,463	+8.8%
1941	33,768	+14.6%
1951	30,971	−8.3%
1961	63,548	+105.2%
1971	115,133	+81.2%
1981	188,741	+63.9%
1991	280,661	+48.7%
2001	356,152	+26.9%
2011	380,581	+6.9%
2019	434,192 ^[a]	+14.1%

Source: Census of India^[58]^[37]

Religion in Andaman and Nicobar (2011) ^[60]	
Religion	Percent
<u>Hinduism</u>	69.45%
<u>Christianity</u>	21.28%
<u>Islam</u>	8.52%
Others	0.75%

consist of 44 Great Andamanese, 380 Jarawas, 101 Onges, 15 Sentinelese and 229 Shompens.^[64] The Government of India is trying to protect the remnant population by providing access to healthcare facilities, communication and social engagement.^{[65][64]}

Languages

The Andamanese people speak about a dozen endangered Andamanese languages, which belong to two families, Great Andamanese and Ongan that are unrelated to each other or to any other language group.^[67] There are two unattested languages: Sentinelese, spoken by Sentinelese people, who refuse contact with outsiders, which might be related to Ongan as per Anvita Abbi and Jangil, which became extinct in the 1920s.^{[68][69]} Indigenous to the Nicobar Islands are the Shompen language, spoken by Shompen people and the five Nicobarese languages, which form part of the Austroasiatic language family and are spoken by about 29,000 people or 7.6% of the population.^{[70][66]}

Distribution of languages in Andaman and Nicobar (2011) ^[66]		
Language		Percent
<u>Bengali</u>		28.49%
<u>Tamil</u>		15.20%
<u>Telugu</u>		13.24%
<u>Hindi</u>		12.91%
<u>Nicobarese</u>		7.60%
<u>Malayalam</u>		7.22%
<u>Nagpuri</u>		5.53%
<u>Kurukh</u>		3.96%
Others		5.84%

The majority of the population, however, are speakers of immigrant languages which include Bengali (28.5%), Tamil (15.2%), Telugu (13.2%), Hindi (12.9%), Malayalam (7.2%). Sadri (5.5%), and Kurukh (4%).^[66] Hindi is the official language of the region, while English is declared an additional official language for communication purposes.^[71]

Administration and politics

The islands form a part of the union territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and is administered by a Lieutenant Governor on behalf of the Government of India.^[72] The union territory was established in 1956 with a chief commissioner as the head of the administration.^[73] In 1982, the Lieutenant Governor replaced the Chief Commissioner as the head of administration. In 1981, a "Pradesh council" with councillors as representatives of the people was constituted to advise the Lieutenant Governor.^[74] The territory sends one representative to Lok Sabha of the Indian Parliament from its Andaman and Nicobar Islands Lok Sabha constituency.^[75] The territory is divided into three districts, each headed by a deputy commissioner.^[76] The Calcutta High Court has jurisdiction over the islands with a permanent seat at Port Blair.^[77]

Districts of Andaman and Nicobar^[76]

Name	Capital	Area (km ²) ^[78]	Population (2011) ^[79]	Tehsils ^[79]
<u>North and Middle Andaman</u>	<u>Mayabunder</u>	3,302	105,597	<u>Diglipur</u> , <u>Mayabunder</u> , <u>Rangat</u>
<u>South Andaman</u>	<u>Port Blair</u>	3,106	238,142	<u>Port Blair</u> , <u>Ferrargunj</u> , <u>Little Andaman</u>
<u>Nicobar</u>	<u>Car Nicobar</u>	1,841	36,842	<u>Car Nicobar</u> , <u>Nancowry</u> , <u>Great Nicobar</u>

The indigenous communities have their own system of administration. There are long term settlements known as *baraij* and short-term settlements known as *chang*. The coast-dwellers (*aryoto*) have semi-permanent settlements and the interior groups (*eremtaga*) dwell on temporary settlements, which enable

them to migrate during dry seasons.^[7]

Economy

As of 2022, the GSDP was ₹103 billion (US\$1.2 billion).^[80] Agriculture is a major occupation with nearly 50% of the population engaged in the sector.^[81] Only about 48,675 hectares (120,280 acres) of land, which is about 6% of the total land area, can be used for agriculture.^[81] Rice is the main food crop, grown in about 20% of the arable land.^[82] Most of the food for consumption is imported from mainland India.^[81] Coconut and arecanut are the cash crops grown in the Nicobar islands.^[81] Other crops include pulses, oilseeds, vegetables like okra, brinjal, cucurbit and radish; spices and fruits such as mango, sapota, orange, banana, guava and pineapple.^[83] Rubber, red oil, palm and cashew are grown on a limited scale in plantations.^[83] The territory has an exclusive economic zone of more than 0.6 million sq. km, which contributes to the fishing industry. As of 2017, the region produced 27,526 tonnes of fish, mostly from marine sector with minor contribution from inland fisheries.^[83]

As of 2008, there were 1,833 registered small-scale industries with majority being involved in engineering, woodworking and textiles apart from 21 factories.^[84] District Industries Centre (DIC) is the body responsible for the development of small and medium industries in the islands.^[84] Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation Limited (ANIIDCO), established in 1988, is responsible for the development and economic growth of the islands.^[84]

Tourism

Tourism is one of the major contributors to the economy of the islands. The islands had more than 400,000 visitors in 2016 with a 94% contribution from domestic tourists.^[81] In 2018, plans to develop facilities in various islands under the National Institute of Transforming India (NITI) Aayog was initiated by Government of India, with the aim of increasing tourist inflows.^{[85][81]} Foreign tourists are issued Restricted Area Permits (RAP) which gives access to specific areas with conditions.^[86] While domestic tourists do not require a permit to visit the accessible parts of the islands, the tribal reserves are forbidden and requires special permission for access.^[87] The islands have many beaches due to its long coastline and various water sports are practised including kayaking, scuba diving and parasailing.^[88]



Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Island in 2004

Major attractions include the Cellular Jail, Chatham Saw Mill, Forest Museum, Samudrika Naval Marine Museum, Anthropological Museum, Fisheries Aquarium, Science Center and Carbyn's cove in Port Blair; Bharatpur, Lakshmanpur and Sitapur beaches in Shaheed Dweep; Elephant and Radhanagar beaches in Swaraj Dweep; Hudi tikri, Red, Bird and Bat islands, Amkunj beach near Rangat; Dhaninallah mangroves and Karmatang beach near Mayabunder; limestone caves and mud volcanoes near Diglipur; Craggy island and Ross & Smith islands and various national parks and protected sanctuaries.^[89]

Transportation

The islands are served by Veer Savarkar International Airport near Port Blair which has regular flights to major cities in India.^[90] The airport operates as a civil enclave, sharing airside facilities with INS Utkrosh of the Indian Navy.^[91] The airport has a single runway of 3,290 m (10,794 ft) in length, with the civilian terminal operated by the Airports Authority of India with air traffic operations managed by the Indian Navy.^[92] Andaman and Nicobar Command of Indian Armed Forces operates air bases of Car Nicobar AFS, INS Kohassa, INS Utkrosh and INS Baaz.^[93]



Veer Savarkar International Airport is the only major airport in the islands

There are 23 ports along the islands with a major port at Port Blair and eight other significant ports including Diglipur, Mayabunder, Rangat, Hut Bay, Car Nicobar, Katchal and Campbell Bay.^{[94][95]} In 2022, the Government of India proposed the development of a new container ship terminal and an airport at Great Nicobar.^[96] There are 39 light houses situated across the islands.^[97]

As of 2018, there are 422 km (262 mi) long national highways in the state with the major highway being the 230.7 km (143.4 mi) long NH 4 connecting Port Blair and Diglipur.^{[98][99]}

Infrastructure

Power

There is no single power grid connecting all the islands and independent power houses caters to the power requirements of individual islands.^[100] The islands have an installed power capacity of 68.46 MW with majority of the power generated from diesel power plants and a single hydroelectric powerplant of 5.25 MW on Kalpong river.^[101] In 2016, a new 15 MW diesel power plant was established in South Andaman with Japanese assistance.^{[102][103]} Commissioned in June 2020, a 10 MW photovoltaic power station is operated by NLC India in Port Blair.^{[104][105]} In 2022, the government proposed additional power plants and infrastructure to be developed in Great Nicobar.^[106]

Telecommunication

4G mobile service is provided by various telecom operators in the islands.^[107] Till 2020, Internet was provided through satellite links and access was limited. Bharat Broadband Network started work on laying fiber optic submarine cables connecting the islands with Chennai in December 2018.^{[108][109]} On 10 August 2020, the undersea optical fibre cable went live, which enabled high-speed broadband connections in the islands.^{[110][111][112]}

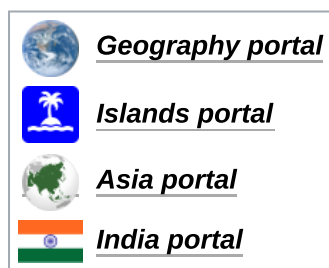
Education

The first primary school in the islands was established in 1881.^[113] During Independence, 12 schools were functioning on the islands including one high school.^[113] As of 2023, there are 428 schools functioning in the islands with a total enrolment of 86,081 students.^[113] Jawaharlal Nehru Rajkeeya Mahavidyalaya was the first institute of higher education, established in 1967.^[114] Mahatma Gandhi Government College was established in 1990 and is affiliated to Pondicherry University.^[115] Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Government Polytechnic was established in 1984 and the affiliated engineering college, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Institute of Technology was established in 1989.^[116] Andaman Law College is the only law college in the state, established in 2016.^[117] The Andaman and Nicobar Islands Institute of Medical Sciences was established in 1963.^[118]

In popular culture

- Arthur Conan Doyle refers to the Andaman islands in the Sherlock Holmes novel *The Sign of the Four*.^[119]
- Bengali author Sunil Gangopadhyay based the events of one his Kakababu-series adventure thriller novels, *Sabuj Dwiper Raja* (1976), on the islands. In 1979, it was made into a film of the same name, shot extensively on the islands.^{[120][121]}
- The National Award winning Malayalam film *Kaalapani* was set against backdrop of the Port Blair's Cellular Jail and was extensively shot in the islands.^[122]
- The Netflix Original Series, *Kaala Paani*, is based on a fictional illness that spreads in the islands.^[123]

See also



- Coral reefs in India
- List of islands of India

Notes

- Projected

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