



The Andaman and Nicobar Islands Security Report

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The Andaman and Nicobar Islands Report

Over the summer months Allmode Intelligence will be issuing a number of 'Security Reports' that will cover the regions of Southeast Asia. They will outline security based information on different locations across these regions. The purpose of these reports are to aid vessels and their crews with up to date information that will help them build better knowledge of an area and thus improve their situational awareness.

Situational Awareness (SA) is all about having the information you need to make effective decisions. There will always be occasions when people are required to make critical choices – sometimes at a fast pace – and the vast majority of errors that can occur are as a direct result of failure in situational awareness.

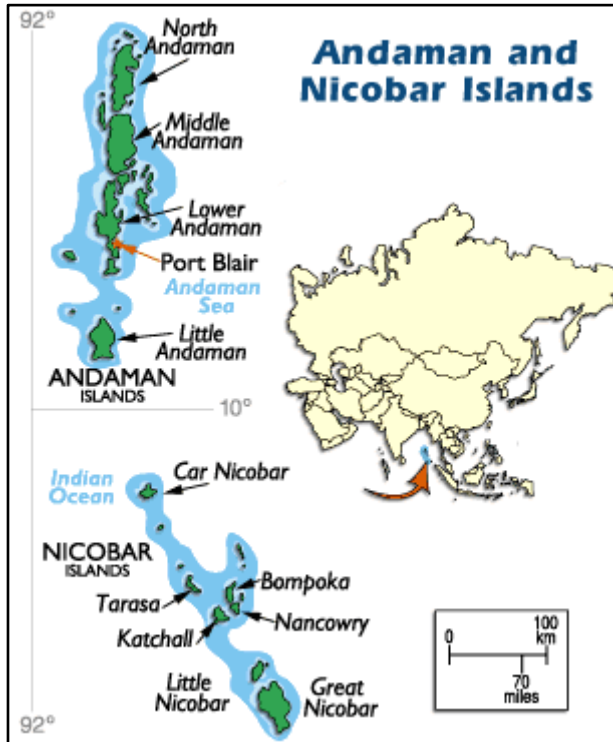
For the majority of vessels and crew visiting Southeast Asia, it will be a very familiar sight, however for some it may be their first time and often, as with many locations across the globe, looks can be deceiving and can lull people into a false sense of security.

Intelligence is more than information and news gathering. It is the process by which information is collated, verified, analysed and used to respond effectively to time critical information. Current, historical and creditable intelligence not only tells you what the risks are but projects possible hot spots of criminal activity.

At Allmode we do not outsource intelligence but gain real time situational awareness and speed of reporting by continually developing our product, and getting the time critical information out to our teams and clients. These reports will look into areas such as crime, corruption and political issues within certain areas and offer advice on how to stay safe and in some cases advice on areas to avoid. It will also offer advice on any relevant health advisories to be aware of and travel information for those wishing to travel and tour certain areas or regions.

The Andaman Islands Overview

The Andaman Islands are situated about 450 nm northwest of Phuket, in the Bay of Bengal and measure 700 kilometres from North to South. They consist of 572 islands, of which only 36 are inhabited. The population of the Islands is about 450 000.



The Andaman Islands are characterised by tropical climate throughout the year, with average minimum temperature at 23°C and maximum at 32°C. The weather is humid (70%-90%). The rainy season includes June, July, August and September. This is when there are off season prices and discounts at hotels. As far as seasons are concerned, there are no winters, whereas summer is between January and April. The monsoon season occurs from May to December. The southwest monsoon touches the Indian soil first in the Andaman Islands and then goes towards the Indian mainland. The weather is calm from January to April and to some extent in October. It is quite hot between March to May. The main tourist season in the Andaman Islands is between November and mid-May. The best time to visit these islands is between December and February when the weather is most stable.

As for scuba diving, the best time to dive the Andaman Islands is February and March, when the sea is at its flattest, with almost no wind and excellent visibility.

Tropical rainforest are rich in rare species of flora and fauna. Four out of five species of sea turtles are found in the Islands.

Tourism in the Andaman Islands was allowed by the Government about a decade ago.

Tourists who want to get to the Andaman Islands, first need to fly to India. Private charters can be organised, but there are currently no direct flights from Thailand. The best points of entry are Chennai or Kolkata – the only two cities from where there are daily direct flights to the islands. All flights arrive at the Veer Savarkar Airport in the capital city of Port Blair.

Ships to Port Blair also travel according to fixed schedules from Chennai, Kolkata and Visakhapatnam. Remember to purchase tickets in advance. The journey lasts 3 days and can be monotonous because the ships have minimal facilities and are not too luxurious.

Andaman Islands are politically fairly stable (it a Union Territory (UT) with a Lieutenant Governor heading the government) although one of the main issues facing the electorate in the 2014 election, was the conflict between commercial activities and development verses the welfare of the local Jarawa and other tribes (native tribes that live on a protected reserve restricting contact with the outside world). However, the curiosity of tourists to the island brought onlookers by the hundreds along the Andaman Trunk Road (leading to long traffic jams) which links the north to the



south and passes the reservation, thus bringing the tribe into unwanted contact with visitors. As a result of pressure groups, the road was closed, making this a contentious issue.

The indigenous tribes are distinguished in two groups: the Onge, Sentinelese, Jarawa and Andamanese of Negroid descent living on the Andaman Islands and the Shompen and Nicobarese of Mongoloid descent living in the Nicobar Islands. The Sentinelese are the least studied tribe still living in isolation on the North Sentinel Island. Their number is estimated currently at 250. Living in complete isolation for many centuries, the Sentinelese are not clothed, while the Jarawa use only adornments of bark and shell, like necklaces, arm bands, and waist bands. Many of these indigenous tribes are on the verge of extinction, with some tribes as low as 30 in number.

The island has rather a low crime rate. There is no real organised crime on the islands. As in almost all countries, pickpocketing can occur, especially in crowded areas such as bus and rail stations, tourist spots, and busy gatherings (festivals and bars) which is why it is advisable to watch your valuables and not to carry a lot of cash with you. Instead, you can secure it in safety deposit lockers available in many hotels. It is advisable to make a list of the items you are storing and then count the money well before handing it over and ensure that a person from the management cross checks your list, before you hand the items over to avoid misunderstandings at a later stage.

There are some rules travellers should follow:

- do not enter into restricted or tribal areas; taking videos, films or photographs of any indigenous tribes on these islands is a crime and is punishable by law
- do not remove or take any corals, sea stars or seashells without permits from the Fisheries department
- do not collect dead coral or touch/break live coral
- do not collect, remove or take any shells from the sea or from the beach as it deprives a crab of a possible home
- do not stand on the coral reef or cause damage to the reefs while snorkelling or scuba diving; instead, stay streamlined and watch where you put your hand and feet
- follow the traffic rules and keep left; carry legal documents, such as your driving license, permit, passport, etc.
- do not swim in unsafe waters during monsoon or after consuming liquor
- do not stay on the beaches or the forest areas at night
- nudity on beaches and in public places is not appropriate
- as far as scuba diving is concerned, use the services of scuba diving institutions having affiliation to internationally recognised organizations, such as PADI, CMAS, NAUI, BSAC or SSI.

The common currency of India is the Indian Rupee. There are several ATMs on the island, but it is always advisable to carry enough cash to pay your bills. You can exchange currency at Island Travel: 400 metres east of the clock tower. All money in India is expected to be changed through the official banks or authorised money changers. Authorisation to exchange money is given by the Reserve Bank of India. Major banks such as SBI, Indian Overseas Bank, and Central Bank of India have their branches in Port Blair and these branches mostly accept travellers' cheques and exchange money. You can also find private dealers also exchange money and many travel agencies also provide money exchange

facilities to their clients though obviously exercise caution when changing money outside of banks. Foreign currency exchange is possible at the State Bank of India, near the Mahatma Ohandi roundabout. Credit cards are not accepted anywhere.

Rickshaws or tuk-tuks are considered the most comfortable and cheap means of transport in the Andaman Islands. Nonetheless, you need to bear in mind that they can charge you whatever they want. The fares are often very high, particularly in the case of people who do not speak the language or tourists. If you decide to use a rickshaw, fix the fare prior to getting into it. It is better to take a prepaid or fixed fare taxi.

Some islands have a dog problem. There have been projects to get all the stray dogs castrated and sterilised, but they were unsuccessful. During the day, they just bark or follow you along the beach waiting for some food. Nevertheless, at nights, they tend to gang up in the villages and on the beach. Travellers are advised to carry a stick to scare off any dogs. It is also highly recommended not to feed any dogs as they will feel encouraged then and become more aggressive to new tourists.

The Andaman Islands are covered with 86% reserved forests and therefore you need to be aware of environmental hazards and take precautions in regards to snakes, crocodiles and poisonous animals. It is advisable that if tourists are planning exploring the islands flora and fauna, that they bring their own supply of antibiotics, as you may find yourself far away from the best equipped hospital on the Islands at Port Blair.

While planning a trek, check the length and difficulty of the walk. Wear protective footwear, a hat, sunscreen and insect repellent. Moreover, take wet weather gear, a topographic map and a lot of water. During your trek, read maps and signs and stay on the track, behind safety barriers and away from edges. Do not feed or play with native animals, as there is a risk of being scratched or bitten. Pay attention to the signs put on display regarding safety information.

Avoid snake bites by wearing protective footwear. Although deaths from snake bites are rare and there have been no recorded tourist deaths, in the event of getting bitten, seek medical help immediately. If you walk at night, remember to carry a torch and watch your steps.

Shark attacks in Andaman may be fatal. Avoid swimming alone and at night. Crocodiles live in creeks in South Andaman and some Islands around Havelock. While travelling near crocodile habitats, pay attention to safety signs and do not swim in rivers, estuaries or mangrove shores. There has been a fatal incident involving a tourist in the near past at Havelock.(April 2010) Be careful and vigilant when you enter waters in Andaman Islands. The main crocodile populations are around Little Andaman Island (Northern and Western sides), Interview Island and in the narrow straits that separate the main islands MacPhearson Strait, Andaman Strait, Homfrey Strait and Austen Strait. Crocodile populations are also known from many of the Nicobar Islands

Some beaches in the Andaman Islands have sand flies. It is recommended to carry a strong insect repellent. Sand flies usually come out as dusk, so avoid standing on the beach at this time. If you get a sand fly bite, avoid scratching it, keep it dry and ensure that it does not get infected.

Beautiful beaches may be dangerous, due to strong currents called rips. Never swim alone, at night, under the influence of alcohol or directly after a meal. It is recommended to always check water depth before diving in and never run and dive into the water from the beach.

It is possible to take a ship from Kolkata (about 60 hrs), Chennai or Visakhapatnam which takes almost 4 days to arrive in Port Blair, but it is cheaper (3600 RS). The ferries can take up to five days depending on weather.

It is a popular destination for boats from Thailand, particularly those en route to the Red Sea. Most yachts also stop here on their way to Sri Lanka or India and onto the Maldives.

All foreign nationals require a Restricted Area Permit (RAP) over and above an Indian Visa to enter the Andaman Islands. The Indian Visa is to be obtained in your country of residence prior to arrival in India. All foreign nationals must ensure that their India Visa does NOT have a stamp that reads "Not valid for restricted areas" on it as these Islands fall under restricted zone laws. Should your visa have such a stamp, please contact the issuing visa authority before you travel and have a new visa issued to you as you will be denied entry to the Andaman Islands.

On arrival, all foreign nationals are issued a Restricted Area Permit free of cost at the airport or port. The procedure is simple and takes about 20 minutes. The permit will allow you to stay for a period of 30 days only. This validity can be further extended in Port Blair or Havelock closer to the date of expiry by an additional 15 days provided you have proof of a return ticket. No further extensions are possible.

Foreigners holding a valid entry permit into the Andaman Islands are allowed to visit and stay at municipal areas of Port Blair, Havelock, Long island, Neil island, the islands of South Andaman and Middle Andaman (excluding tribal reserved area – 5kms away from Constance bay to Luis Inlet bay – western coast tribal reserve), Baratang, Rangat, Mayabunder, Diglipur, North Passage Island, Little Andaman (excluding tribal reserve) and all islands in the Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park except Boat Island, Hobday island, Twins islands, Tarmugli, Malay and Pluto island. Tourists can also visit Jolly Buoy island, South Cinque island, Redskin island, Mount Harriet, Madhuban, Ross island, Narcondam island, Interview island, Brother & Sister islands and Barren island during the day. (Visit to Barren island is restricted on board the vessel with no landing ashore).

As far as inter-island transport is concerned, the Directorate of Shipping Services, A & N Administration, operates regular ferry services from Phoenix Bay Jetty, Port Blair in the inter-island and foreshore sectors connecting all tourist places. The Directorate also operates vehicle ferries to important locations and several Harbour ferries.

For tourists, private boats are operated from Aberdeen Jetty (Rajiv Gandhi Water Sports Complex), Port Blair to nearby tourist places, such as Ross Island, Viper Island, North Bay, Harbour Cruise etc. Private tourist boats are also available at Wandoor (Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park) to Jolly Buoy and Red skin islands.

MV Makkruzz is a private luxury catamaran that takes tourists from Phoenix bay jetty-Port Blair to Havelock and back during season – the journey is much shorter.

However, yachts visiting the area have complained about "extreme bureaucracy", e.g. it is necessary to report in via radio every day.

There are several repair shops along the shore from Chatham Island. nevertheless, no chandlery is available.

At Shark Marine, 300 metres east of Chatham Bridge, it is possible to repack life rafts.

Fuel can be obtained by jerry cans from the service station at Port Blair, Havelock and Neil Islands.

Water can be jerry canned from a tap at the saw-sharpening workshop on the right inside the front gate of Chatham Sawmill. Water is also available from the wharf via harbourmaster. Bottled water for drinking can be purchased.

Havelock Island



Havelock Island is the largest of the islands which form Ritchie's Archipelago, a chain of islands to the east of Great Andaman in the Andaman Islands. It covers an area of 113.93 square kilometres.

The best weather and often the best diving conditions are from mid-January to mid-May. This is when the days are sunny and the sea flat. The monsoon usually appears around late May and lasts until the end of July – this is the worst time to visit the island due to strong winds, frequent rain and low visibility underwater. Between August and November there are some showers and the seas are slightly rougher, but diving conditions remain great.

Havelock Island is the most visited of the Andaman Islands, as it is perfect for those travellers who want to relax or try various activities that include e.g. camping, scuba diving and snorkelling. From Port Blair, Havelock is just a ferry ride away with 3 daily departures. The island is located 57 kilometres northeast of Port Blair. It offers spectacular white sand beaches, rain forest canopies, turquoise waters and coral reefs. The water is rich in marine life. Diving is closed in Havelock between 1st June and 31st July. Most dive shops open again on 1st August, when a new season begins. Kayaking through the wonderful mangrove creeks is also possible here. Guided tours are recommended – single and double-seat kayaks are available for rent. Those who want to admire the amazing fauna and flora of the island, can choose trekking.

The beaches are numbered. The arrival port is at Beach #1, the junction at the centre is Beach #3 (Govind Nagar), the junction near Dolphin Resort is Beach #5 (Vijay Nagar) etc. Most accommodation is concentrated around the road from Beach #3 to Beach #5.

The main beaches of the island are:

- **the Vijaynagar Beach (Beach No. 5)** – a long stretch of sand on the east coast of the Island; it is characterised by the sparkling waters and white sand; there are a lot of Mahua trees that grow several feet along the ground; it is perfect for long walks along the sea.
- **Kalapathar Beach** – situated on one corner of Havelock Island; you need to travel along the road from Beach #3 and Beach #5; it features the emerald seas, the tropical forests, the coastline and the silken smooth silver sands.

- **the Radhanagar Beach (Beach No. 7)** – situated on the south coast of Havelock Island, about 12 kilometres from the Islands ferry pier; it is rated as the Best Beach in Asia; its total length amounts to two kilometres and its width is between 30 to 40 metres; the beach has a gentle gradient of around 1:20 and continues out into the sea as a sandy bottom for over 100 metres; there is almost not turbidity and wave action; the beach can be visited during any time of the year, but those who want to see the real beauty of the nature, are encouraged to go there between March and April

- **Elephant Beach (Haathi Tapu)** – further north from Radhanagar; popular with Indian tourists; a good site for snorkelling and diving, with a rich coral reef formation, clear blue conditions and fantastic underwater marine life; the beach can be reached by small cruise boat from Havelock Jetty in around 40 minutes; it is also accessible by road – go up to the Forest Camp (8 kilometres from the Jetty) towards Radhanagar side and then by walk to the Elephant beach (about 40 minutes); private ferry operators organize tours to Elephant beach from Havelock.

While on your trip to Havelock, you can dive or snorkel with Rajan - a 63-year-old elephant that belongs to The Barefoot Group. He is unique, as he is the last of the famous ocean swimming elephants of the Andaman Islands. Rajan spends most of his time in the jungle and swims only between December and April when the seas are calm. Nevertheless, to dive with Rajan, you must be a certified diver and if you want to snorkel with him, you must have some snorkelling experience.

The main activity on Havelock Island is scuba diving and Havelock is the centre of diving on the Andaman Islands.

The main dive sites on Havelock include:

- **Lighthouse (6-20 metres)** – a huge, sheltered site protected from currents, suitable for any kind of dives; with a wide range of soft and hard coral grounds; it is ideal for night dives; a sloped reef is located about 30 minutes away from the dive shop; the coral is usually better in the shallows

- **Elephant Beach (6-25 metres)** – used usually for training scuba diving as well as open water diver training

- **the Wall (10-55 metres)** – a small wall, 50-meter long, that drops to a maximum of 55 metres into the shipping channel near the jetty on Havelock; this is the best local site; the top of the wall is very colourful with purple, red and yellow soft corals; perfect for night dives due to its close proximity and easy navigation

- **Minerva Ledge (10-18 metres)** – 190 kilometres from Port Blair; it is a large plateau of hard corals, with good visibility (20-40 metres) and the possibility of meeting sharks, there is one huge narrow rock as well as some ridges and rocky areas underwater

- **Aquarium (12-15 metres)** – a fringing reef with good visibility and mostly hard corals

- **Pilot Reef (6-18 metres)** – the closest dive site to the dive centre with beautiful corals; a large reef sister to Minerva Ledge

- **Dixon's Pinnacle (18-40 metres)** – three pinnacles with a wide range of sea life, tube corals and barrel sponges

- **Jackson's Bar (20-35 metres)** – popular among experienced divers who enjoy drift diving; thermoclines are sometimes present in the currents

- **Johnny's Gorge (25-30 metres)** – 3 minutes from Minerva ledge; a small rocky outcrop in the open sea surrounded by an ocean of sand; it is not a big reef.

Another popular activity is snorkelling, which you can enjoy in the following sites:

- Radhanagar Beach (Beach #7) – has great reefs for snorkelling in both directions from the end of the road
- Elephant Beach
- both of the dive shops can take snorkellers to some of the off-shore sites
- local fishermen offer day trips and half day trips to different locations
- South Button Island – good due to shallow and colourful reef.

There are two ATMs – SBI and Axis bank. Some of the hotels and resorts can perform card transactions. Nevertheless, the best idea is to take a lot of money with you from Port Blair. Besides, it is hard to buy some items here, e.g. different factors of sun cream or mosquito repellents. Next to the ATMs, there is the only liquor/wine store on the island.

Ferries are the major way on or off the island. Three ferries operate between Port Blair and Havelock on a daily (2-4 hours) and one from Rangat. Schedules depend on day and season. All incoming flights arrive in Port Blair in time for travellers to catch a ferry, which makes it possible to reach Havelock on the same day. There is a choice between the slower, cheaper government ferry and the faster, more expensive new catamaran. It is hard to get tickets on the ferry and there are long queues. It is advisable to book ferry tickets in advance. Boarding stops 15 minutes before sailing.

From Port Blair to Havelock:

- Government Ferry: 06.00 and 14.00; duration: 2.5 hrs
- Catamaran (Makruzz): 09.00; duration: 1.5 hrs.

There is a government ferry that departs from Port Blair at 12.30, but it visits another Island before Havelock and the total time to reach Havelock is 4 hrs.

From Havelock to Port Blair:

- Government Ferry: 14.00 and 16.30; duration: 2.5 hrs
- Catamaran (Makruzz): 16.00; duration: 1.5 hrs.

The most popular form of transport is walking. Nonetheless, there are also other possibilities, such as:

- local buses and shared jeeps – operate on the 2 main roads between the port (on Beach #1), Radhanagar Beach (Beach #7) and Beach #5; there is a local bus for Radhanagar departing from Beach #1; shared jeeps are a bit more expensive; the journey from Beach #1 to Radhanagar takes about 30-45 minutes
- auto-rickshaws - from Beach #5 resorts to the market; from Beach #1 (the port) to Beach #5 and a return trip from the market to Radhanagar Beach
- bicycles, scooters and motorcycles – available for hire near the centre of 'town' (Beach #3)
- private taxi operators – with and without air-conditioning; available for hire, but they are expensive and unreliable.

Travellers to Havelock Island are encouraged to take some precautions to stay safe.

Mosquitoes are a problem, especially at dusk and after rain. Bearing in mind that the Andaman Islands are malarial, it is important to use mosquito repellents, wear long sleeves and long trousers in the evening and sleep under a mosquito net.

Sand flies can interfere while sunbathing. They sometimes appear in a larger number, so longer shirts and trousers are recommended.

Wild dogs can be a problem, particularly along the beach at night. People are regularly bitten. It is advisable to carry a stick or some stones to scare them off.

If you are going to be out until sunset or at night, do not forget to take a flashlight/torch as it gets quite dark, particularly if there is no moon, and the beaches are often backed by dense forest.

Beware of:

- currents at Radhanagar Beach during monsoon (June-September); there have been two accidents when people have been caught out by powerful waves during the monsoon months
- jagged edges of Bleached Coral at Beaches #2, #3 and #5 as the shallow beachfront waters on the northern coast of Havelock) is covered with such edges
- Saltwater Crocodiles from the Sanctuary on neighbouring islands
- travel agents/touts who want to scam travellers.



Port Blair



Port Blair is the largest town and a municipal council in Andaman district in the Andaman Islands and the capital of the Andaman Islands. It is situated on the east coast of the South Andaman Island and is the main entry point to the islands. Its population amounts to about 100 000 and it covers an area of 16.64 square kilometres.

Port Blair has a tropical monsoon climate. Average temperature is quite stable and rainfall is heavy throughout the year, except January, February and March. During summer season, the maximum temperature is 38°C, whereas the minimum temperature is 20°C. The monsoon months (May-August) are characterised by moderate to heavy rainfalls. Sometimes, heavy thunders with strong breeze appear. The winters are not very chilly. The best time to visit Port Blair is between October and March.

Travellers usually visit the Cellular Jail (that housed Indian freedom fighters during the struggle for independence), Chatam Sawmill (one of the oldest and largest in Asia), Forest Museum, Anthropological Museum, Fisheries (Marine) Museum, Naval Marine Museum (Samudrika) and the Cottage Industries Emporium (Sagarika).

Walking is the best way to see the town. Alternatively, you can use the auto-rickshaws, but beware, they will charge you quite highly as a tourist. To avoid paying too much, climb in the back of the vehicle and agree the price before setting off.. There are a lot of auto-rickshaws in Port Blair.

Local buses are also available for inter-city and intra-city travel. They are usually very cheap.

It is no longer possible to hire scooters or motorcycles in Port Blair. A lot of drivers were stopped by the police for speeding and driving without license, which is why people stopped renting them.

Another option is to hire private cars to do local sightseeing around Port Blair and South Andaman.

Some of the nearby islands to explore include:

- **Ross Island** – the former capital of Port Blair; it is a tiny island standing as guard to Port Blair harbour (10 minutes from the Phoenix Bay Jetty, Port Blair and 20 minutes from Aberdeen Jetty, Port Blair); it houses the ruins of old buildings, such as Ballroom, Chief Commissioner's house, Government House, Church, Cemetery, Hospital, Bakery, Press, Swimming Pool and Troop Barracks; the island is a perfect destination for nature walks amongst forest surroundings with deer, peacocks, exotic birds, etc.; it covers an

area of more than 0.6 square kilometres and is popular with tourists; the entire island can be explored on foot and is open every day except Wednesday; overnight stays are not possible.

- **Viper Island** – a small island situated inside the Port Blair harbour (20 minutes boat journey); this is a beautiful tourist attraction that can be approached by a harbour cruise from the Phoenix Bay Jetty in Port Blair; its vicinity to Port Blair makes it ideal for a half day trip; private ferries operate to Viper Island during Harbour cruise from Aberdeen Jetty every day at 3.00 PM

- **North Bay Island** – there are possibilities for snorkelling, scuba diving and sea walks, but the corals are mostly dead.

- **Jolly Buoy Island** – in Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park; it offers stunning corals and amazing marine life; it is a perfect place for snorkelling; although regular day trips from Port Blair to the island are possible, no night stays or camping are allowed; first you need to reach Wandoor by road and then take a Jetty; one day before, you have to obtain a permit from the IP&T Department Building, Port Blair or through any local tour operator in Port Blair.

- **Red Skin Island** – like Jolly Buoy Island, it also lies in the Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park; it has a nice beach and offers spectacular view of corals and marine life; the island is popular with snorkellers and is a great day trip from Port Blair; night stays are not permitted

- **Chidiya Tapu (Bird Island)** – situated at the southernmost tip of South Andaman Islands, 30 kilometres from Port Blair; it is a lush mangrove forest with numerous birds

- **Barren Island** – one of the most easterly islands; it is the only active volcano in South Asia; it is located 135 kilometres northeast of Port Blair and is 300 metres above sea level; the first recorded eruption of the volcano was in 1787; the most recent eruption took place on 19th July 2009; as far as reef type is concerned, there are vertical walls, ridges, black sand slopes; visibility is usually very good – 20 to 35 metres; the southern side of the island has a deep wall down to more than 700 meters of depth; the northern side of the island slopes more gently; visibility can exceed 50 metres here; the island is uninhabited by humans; instead, there are goats, birds, bats like flying foxes and a few rodent species, such as rats; it offers fantastic scuba diving conditions, which make it attractive to the tourists; Barren Island can be approached by board vessels and you can view the island from the vessel; there is no permission to get onto the island; the island can be visited by chartering boats/seaplane and a permit from the Forest Department is required.

The dive centre in Port Blair can organise diving trips to North Bay and other dive sites off Wandoor.

Port Blair is well connected with Chennai and Kolkata by daily flights.

Regular passenger ship services are available to Port Blair from Chennai, Kolkata and Vishakhapatnam and back. There are three or four sailings every month from Kolkata and Chennai to Port Blair and vice versa. There is one sailing from Vishakhapatnam per month. The journey lasts about 50 to 60 hours.

The services by ferry vessels are provided within the sheltered water and narrow creeks. Port Blair connects Phoenix bay, Chatham, Junglighat, Bamboo flat, Hope town, Dundas point, Mithakhari and Viper Island. There are three major routes in Port Blair and about 45 trips are operated in these routes. Ferry services are available between Long Island and Yeratta in Middle Andaman and Mayabunder and Kalighat in North Andaman.

There are two Jetties in Port Blair:

- Phoenix Bay Jetty to Havelock, Neil Island and other far places
- Rajiv Gandhi Water Sports Complex to take smaller ferries to Ross Island, North Bay and Viper Island.

Yachts cannot anchor behind Chatham Island to wait for and collect officials. The new anchorage is about a quarter of a mile away from the small harbour behind Chatham Island. A “boat boy” will take care of your dinghy. The anchorage on the East of Chatham Island is said to be good.

You can use the services of tailors, carpenters, mechanics, electricians and upholsterers in Port Blair.

Other Islands



Neil Island is located 36 kilometres east of Port Blair and 18 kilometres east of the Havelock Jetty. It is the easternmost inhabited island in Ritchie’s Archipelago and easternmost inhabited island in the entire Andaman and Nicobar group of islands. Daily ferries connect Port Blair to Neil Island and to Havelock. Neil is a flat island. The jetty and main village are at the centre of the west coast of Neil Island. It is a degree or two warmer than Havelock, due to the lack of forest cover. Beaches are numbered 1 to 5. The beach west of the village is popular with campers. Beaches ring the shores of Neil. Snorkelling and scuba diving are popular activities here. There are no ATM or money-changing facilities here, so it is advisable to bring cash with you. It has beaches at Lakshmanpur, Bharatpur and Sitapur.

Cinque Island is surrounded by coral reefs and blue waters. Uninhabited North and South Cinque are the prettiest islands in the Andaman Islands. It features rare corals, underwater marine life and clear water with visibility levels of up to 80 feet. Getting there takes two hours from Chidiyatapu and three and a half hours from Wandoor by boat. There are no regular boat or ferry services. It is not allowed to stay overnight in Cinque Island. To visit this island, a special permit from the Forest Department is required. Chartered boats of permitted category are allowed from Port Blair and Wandoor.

Narcondam Island is the most remote island in the Andaman Sea, 270 kilometres from Port Blair. It offers walls (dropping to more than 700 metres), canyons, pinnacles, sandy areas, sponges (4 metres tall) and excellent visibility – 20 to 50 metres. It is also home to an extinct volcano.

Long Island is situated 82 kilometres from Port Blair and 35 kilometres north of Havelock. It is about 10 kilometres from North to South and 5 kilometres from East to West. It is connected by a ferry three times a week from Phoenix Bay Jetty in Port Blair. 6 kilometres north from Long Island jetty there is a wonderful sandy beach at Lalaji Bay. It also has beautiful forest cover and coconut plantations. The population of a village near the jetty, is about 1500 people. The island is populated by settlers and factory workers from different parts of India. You can explore the island via a track through the main village, plantations, fields, forest and rainforest. This is a 6-kilometre trail that starts at the jetty and ends at Lalaji Bay. Another small trail runs north from Lalaji Bay, leading to a secluded cove with calm water, some regenerating coral and a white sandy beach. It is perfect for those travellers who want to snorkel or sunbathe in privacy. Currently there are no dive centres in Long Island, but the larger diving operators of Havelock offer safari trips to explore the dive sites of Long Island. Besides, snorkelling is popular. Nevertheless, you must remember that it is difficult to find good quality equipment. Those who want to reach Long Island by boat, can choose from Rangat/Yeratta Jetty/Uttara Jetty near Baratang Island. There are neither motor cars nor roads on the island, which is also free of traffic or crime. People tend to walk or use bicycles.

South Button Island lies southwest of Havelock. It is a part of the Rani Jhansi Marine National Park, popular for both snorkelling and diving. Incredible marine life and stunning healthy coral attract visitors. You can also admire schools of fish, such as Snappers, Barracuda, Trevally, Sweetlips, Groupers, Angel fish and Butterfly fish. South Button can be visited as a day trip from Havelock. There are no beaches and tourists are not allowed to climb the rocky outcrops. The island is the most popular snorkelling destination due to its excellent coral and shallow depths.

Baratang Island is a large island of around 80 square kilometres. It is located about 90 km away from Port Blair, due west from Havelock Island, between the two large islands of South Andaman and Middle Andaman, forming a 'bridge' between them. The island has mud volcanoes, limestone caves, beautiful beaches and mangrove creeks that attract tourists. Baratang offers fantastic short trekking opportunities through the Ranchi village off the South Creek.

Rangat Island is 90 kilometres by sea and 170 kilometres by road from Port Blair. At Cuthbert Bay beach, near Rangat, travellers can admire a turtle nesting ground. Rangat is useful as a stopover on longer itineraries involving Baratang and destinations further north. The beaches near Rangat include:

- Amkunj Beach – 15 kilometres away from Rangat Bazar jetty towards Mayabunder
- Curtbert Bay Beach – 20 kilometres away from the Rangat Bazar jetty towards Mayabunder.

Diglipur, joined by a sand bar, is 30 minutes away from Aerial Bay jetty near Diglipur, which is itself 120 kilometres by sea and 250 kilometres by road from Port Blair. Diglipur is a useful base for excursions to Kalipur beach and Ramnagar beach. Saddle Peak (the highest point in the Andaman Islands – 732 metres) accessible from Diglipur, is popular for trekking/nature trail through the rain forest. It is a national park and has an area of 33 square miles. The only river in the Andaman Islands, Kalpong, flows from here. It offers white-sandy beaches and excellent snorkelling conditions. Kalighat, near Diglipur, is a small passenger ferry terminal in the mangroves, connected by daily two boat services from Mayabunder. Port Blair – Diglipur (11 km)/Kalipur (8 km) (Aerial Bay jetty) boat services are also available twice a week. Craggy Island, a small island off Kalipur, also has good snorkelling conditions. If you are a good swimmer, you can make it across. If not, a dunghi is available.

Ross and Smith Islands are a 20-minute boat ride from Port Blair. These twin islands are connected by a narrow sandbar of white sand. Ferries to Ross Island depart from Aberdeen

Jetty behind the aquarium in Port Blair at 8.30 AM, 10.30 AM, 12.30 PM and 2 PM every day, except Wednesday. Due to the fact that this is a marine sanctuary, a permit from the Forest Office, opposite Aerial Bay Jetty, is required. A boat from Aerial Bay can be organised, but while staying at Pristine Resort, taking dunghi is cheaper and more convenient as you do not need to travel to Aerial Bay.

Little Andaman Island is located south to south Andaman, 120 kilometres by sea from Port Blair and has a wonderful beach at Butler Bay, two waterfalls and a plantation of oil palms. There are also several sandy beaches along the coastline. The break water at Hut Bay offers a magnificent view to the tourists. Butler Bay, a beautiful beach, situated 14 kilometres from Hutbay Jetty, provides perfect conditions for basking, snorkelling and surfing. Other beaches include, among others, Netaji Nagar beach (11 kilometres from Hutbay Jetty) and Harminder Bay Beach. The Onges and Nicobarese are two of the aboriginal tribes of the islands. Entry to the tribal area is restricted. Ferry services are available every day from Port Blair and the journey takes between seven and nine hours. Regular seaplane services are also available from Port Blair.

North Passage Island lies 30 kilometres northeast of Havelock island, between Strait Island, Guitar island and Long island. To the east of the island, across the channel, there is John Lawrence Island in Ritchie's archipelago and closer west lies the expanse of Middle Andaman. The only inhabitants of the island are representatives of the Forest Department and caretakers of the Coconut Plantatio. 95% of the landmass of North Passage Island is the Reserve Forest. The island has a beautiful beach, Merk Bay, on its north-eastern side, fronting the coconut plantation and overlooking Ritchie's Archipelago. The western side of North Passage Island ensures calm and sheltered waters between North Passage and Middle Andaman.

Beaches

Apart from the beaches mentioned above, there are also:



- **Corbyn's Cove Beach** – the coconut-palm beach, six kilometres away from Port Blair; it is perfect for swimming and sun-basking; there are such facilities as hotel, restaurant, bar, changing room and adventure water-sports; the Snake Island, located across the beach, is famous for scuba diving; the water near the Corbyn's Cove Beach has a very strong current and large waves rise in it so it is not advised to try swimming there; the best time to visit Corbyn's Cove Beach is between December and early April

- **North Bay Beach** – located north of Port Blair; it offers snorkelling opportunities around its fringing coral reefs; private ferry service can take you from Aberdeen Jetty across North Bay, where the corals spread over a large area; while snorkelling, you can admire many species of fish, lobsters and clams on the coral reef.

- **MundaPahar Beach** – 2.75 kilometres from Chidiyatappu bus stop; it is good for swimming; bus services are available from Port Blair bus terminus to Chidiyatappu, which is the southernmost tip of South Andaman Island, 28 kilometres from Port Blair Bus stand; it is known for bird watching, sunset view, panoramic scenic beauties and many colours of oceanic view

- **Wandoor Beach** – around 29 kilometres west of Port Blair; it is famous for scenic beauty and a popular tourist attraction; across Wandoor Beach there is the Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park is just; to visit the Park, you can take the boat Wandoor Jetty

- **Collinpur Beach** – located near Tirur, 36 kilometres away from Port Blair; it has a beautiful sandy beach with shallow water, which is suitable for swimming, sun-basking and sunset viewing

- **Ramnagar Beach** – in the northern region at the Diglipur Island; accessible through water and road; this sandy beach is 15 kilometres away from Kalighat and is surrounded by palm and coconut trees; Ramnagar Beach is popular among tourists from India and all over the world; you can go scuba diving or snorkelling; the beach can be visited during any time of the year, but the panoramic scenery of the spring blossoms can be admired in the months of December and early April.

- **Harminder Bay Beach** – one of the most exquisite beaches of the Andaman Islands; it is situated 100 kilometres away from Port Blair at Hut Bay Island; you can travel to the beach by ships run by Inter Islands shipping services from Port Blair; the climate of the beach is tropical and it is cool in the evenings

- **Karmatang Beach** – situated in the northern region of the Middle Andaman, 12 kilometres away from Mayabunder, 240 kilometres away from Port Blair (when travelling through road) and 136 kilometres away (when travelling through water); it is surrounded by natural beauty from all sides and famous for the turtles and pleasant weather.

Diving in the Andaman Islands



Diving in the Andaman Islands is a unique experience. The coastal water that surrounds these islands are home to one of the richest coral reef ecosystem in the world. The coral reefs and underwater formation are undamaged by human activity. The best season for diving is from December to April.

Dive Sites in the Andaman Islands include:

- **Ritchie's Archipelago** – 55 kilometres north from Port Blair; with shallow coral gardens, narrow channels with mangroves, a wreck and sloping walls; visibility is usually good (15 to 30 metres)
- **Cinque Island** – one of the best dive destinations in the island, with clear emerald water and a visibility of up to 80 feet; the deep dive is perfect for experienced divers
- **North Point** – at Cinque Island; the site is mostly characterised by sponges, small corals and diversity of fish species
- **Southeast Reef** – at Cinque Island; it is a good site for novices; the southeast part of the reef consists of hard and soft corals and very dense on the rocks of about 16 metres
- **Corruption Rock** – sticks out between Chidiyatappu and Rutland Island; the dive site is situated on the western side of the rock and consists of big underwater boulders, gullies, channels, ridges and canyons
- **Rutland Island** – the shallow waters near the island are home to many fishes and coral; it is a good place for training open-water divers; there is also a ship-wreck site
- **Fish Rock** – near Passage Island that offers a colourful dive; it consists of rocky slopes, boulders and drop-offs characterised by corals and lots of sponges; below 25 metres, the rocks are covered in small bushy soft corals; hard corals are not so evident
- **Bala Reef** – on the western side of Little Andaman; it spreads over 4-5 square kilometres and is said to be one of the best sites in the Andaman for colourful corals
- **Havelock Island** – one of the best dive spots near Havelock is Mac Point, with mostly hard corals and good visibility
- **Barracuda City** – with numerous fishes and sometimes turtles; mostly hard corals are found; the site is more suitable for experienced divers
- **Invisible Bank** – on the way from Phuket to Port Blair, where you must check in before exploring north or south; 108 kilometres east from Port Blair; a big flat rock sticking out of the sea, surrounded by over 8 metres of water; rocky canyons; good visibility (25 to 40 metres); Flat Rock, protruding from the water, is the only place to dive; the waters just around it are very shallow, but it is possible to get out to a depth of 15 metres; there are almost no corals
- **Turtle Bay** – an easy dive site that does not exceed 14 metres
- **Campbell Shoal off North Button Island** – its bottom is covered with mostly hard corals, with sporadic sandy patches; it is also home to reef animals
- **MV Mars (7-15 metres)** – a small wooden local cargo ship that sank during a storm in 2006; the nearby reef is ten meters away; visibility is usually not very good, but it is great when it appears through the gloom
- **Neil's Cove (12-18 metres)** – an extension of another similar dive site called the aquarium, gentle slope out to the sea with the reef running from a cove; hard coral prevails
- **7th Heaven (6-12 metres)** – a small coral patch 300 meters off Number Seven Beach.

Snorkelling is possible at North bay, Carbyn's Cove, Chidiyatapu, Havelock, Jolly Buoy, Redskin Island and Ross and Smith Island.

Cruising

The coasts of the Andaman Islands offer safe harbours and tidal creeks, which are often surrounded by mangrove swamps.

The chief harbours include:

- starting northwards from Port Blair – the great harbour of South Andaman
- on the east coast – Port Meadows, Colebrooke Passage, Elphinstone Harbour (Homfray's Strait), Stewart Sound and Port Cornwallis
- on the west coast – Temple Sound, Interview Passage, Port Anson or Kwangtung Harbour (large), Port Campbell (large), Port Mouat and Macpherson Strait.

There are also many other safe anchorages, such as:

- in the South Andaman – Shoal Bay and Kotara Anchorage
- in the North Andaman – Cadell Bay and the Turtle Islands
- in the archipelago – Outram Harbour and Kwangtung Strait.

Anchorage	Depth	North Latitude	East Longitude	Comments
Port Blair	30'	11°41.3	92°42.8	Clearance port. Mud, some rock
Chiryatapu	35'	11°29.3	92°42.4	Tuck in close to be protected from NE. Beware boulder.
Middle Cinque	35'	11°18.2	92°42.2	A bit exposed to swell. Snorkelling good for fish viewing
South Rutland	28'	11°21.3	92°39.5	Sand. Glorious beach. Turtle nesting beach.
SW Rutland	32'	11°23.0	92°35.4	Sand. Long beach. Better protection than south Rutland.
Twin Islands	28'	11°23.6	92°33.1	Sand. Strong currents in pass. Manta rays
NW end Andaman Straits	30'	12°17.3	92°44.7	Mud. Tricky entrance, rocks appear at low tide.
Nilambur village	20'	12°10.0	92°45.7	Day stop. Tucked into side of channel to visit village.
SE end Andaman Straits	20'	12°04.3	92°42.2	Anchor on shoaling mud.

Havelock main port	30'	12°02.9	92°58.7	Sand/mud. Small village ashore. Fruit/veg market inland.
Havelock Village 7	20'	11°59.0	92°57.0	Sand. Nice beach. Small resorts/restaurants ashore
Neil Island south	28'	11°49.5	93°01.4	Pretty bay. Isolated.
Ross Island	mooring	11°40.5	92°45.6	Short stop to visit interesting historical island.
Hut Bay, Little Andaman	20'	10°35.6	92°33.4	Sand/mud. Good holding inside breakwater.
<u>Chennai Harbor, India (TNSA)</u>	wall	13°05.4	80°17.6	Clearance port. Advance notice required. Heavy coal dust.

(Source: http://hackingfamily.com/cruise_info/Indian/Andamans_Cruising.htm)



The Nicobar Islands



The Nicobar Islands are an archipelagic island chain in the eastern Indian Ocean, in Southeast Asia, 150 km north of Aceh on Sumatra, 1,300 km southeast of the Indian subcontinent, across the Bay of Bengal. They are separated from Thailand to the east by the Andaman Sea and form part of the Union Territory of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, India. The Nicobar Islands' area is 1,840 square kilometres. The Nicobar Islands are separated from the Andaman Islands by the Ten Degree Channel.

The climate of the Nicobar Islands is warm and tropical. Temperatures are from 22 °C to 30 °C. Annual monsoons contribute to heavy rainfall – about 3000 to 3800 mm annually. Heavy rains occur from May through November. More moderate rain is observed from December through mid-January. Small amounts of rain are from January through April.

Thunderstorm frequency varies from island to island. The greatest activity occurs during the months immediately preceding and the first few weeks immediately following the beginning of the Southwest Monsoon.

The cloudiest months are between June and September, when the cloud coverage is from 70 to 80 percent. The months with least cloud coverage are February and March – 30 to 40 percent in the north and 50 to 60 percent in the south.

The visibility is good except during heavy rains.

There are coastal mangrove forests as well as tropical and subtropical moist broadleaf forests. The Nicobar Islands are a distinct terrestrial ecoregion, with many endemic species.

The currents near Car Nicobar Island flow rapidly enough to cause tide races, particularly north of the island.

The tidal currents in the vicinity of Chowra Island set NE during the rising tide and SW during the falling tide.

The tidal currents in St. Georges Channel are strong and set NE through the channel on the rising tide, and SW through the channel on the falling tide.

The Nicobar Islands consist of three groups:

- **Northern Group:**

- **Car Nicobar (126,9 km², 17,800 inhabitants)** – is the northernmost of the Nicobar Islands, between Little Andaman and Nancowrie, 250 km from Port Blair; it is one of two local administrative divisions of the Indian district of Nicobar, part of the Indian union territory of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands; Car Nicobar is flat except for some cliffs in the north and small hilly areas in the interior; the island is covered with coconut palms and wonderful beaches surrounded by the sea; there are 15 villages, the largest is called U-rèk-ka ("Malacca" for tourists); Car Nicobar has the tropical climate, which is due to its location – 9 degree from the equator; its annual rainfall is 400 mm; the average humidity of the island is 79%, the average maximum temperature is of 30.20 °C, whereas the average minimum temperature is 23 °C; the major products grown in the area are coconuts and areca nuts
- **Batti Malv (2,01 km², uninhabited)** – is 30 kilometres south of Car Nicobar; it is visited regularly by the inhabitants of Car Nicobar for the collection of nuts; the NW end of the island is low, but rocky cliffs lie on the other sides; it has only one landing point on its northern side through a naturally formed cavity into the rock; the coastal surface has sharp ground formation; nearby cities include Meulaboh, Lang Suan and Medan; the 40 m curve surrounding the island lies up to 5 miles SE and 2.8 miles N of the island; Batti Malv is considered a good radar target up to 11 miles

- **Central Group:**

- **Chaura, Chowra or Sanenyo (8,2 km²)** – lies about 24 miles SSE of Batti Malv Island; it is generally low, but rises to a 104.5 m high rocky pinnacle at its S end; the main village, Sanenya, is situated on the NE coast; the island's population is two thousand people; reefs extend about 1.5 miles from the NW side of the island; a shoal, with a least depth of 2.4 m, lies between 2.5 miles NW and 4 miles NNW of the N point of Chowra Island; depths of 16.5 to 18.3 metres are found between the shoal and the island reef; Chowra has no safe berthing due to the coral formation around the island, but you can anchor in depths of 16.5 to 18.3 metres, abreast of Sanenya Village; there is no source of drinking water on this island
- **Teressa or Luroo (101,4 km²)** – is located west of the island of Camorta, northwest of Katchal, north to Chowra and east to Bompoka; Teressa Island is 2.5-hour journey from Nancowry Island and about 1 hour 35 minutes from Port Blair; elevations of the northern part of the island reach 87 metres; the north end of the island is 250 metres high; Teressa Island is enclosed by long beaches on both the sides; the island has a hilly terrain – its northern part has elevations up to 250 metres; Hinam Village lies 4.5 miles SSE of the northern summit and is only visible from seaward on a NE bearing; Laksi Village is 4 miles SE of Hinam Village; the village is hard to identify from seaward; Bengala Village lies on the east side of the island, about 2 miles S of its NE extremity; Karawa Village lies 3.5 miles farther S; reefs extend over 1 mile from the N and S ends of the island, but less off the W coast
- **Bompoka or Poahat (13,3 km²)** – lies about 1,8 NM east from southern end of Teressa Island; the hills on the island rise up to 193 metres; the island is characterised by dense forest; the shores around the island are grown with thick coconut palms; Poahat Village is located on the west side of the island; the part of the sea between Teressa and Bompoka Islands offers a good shelter for ships; Teressa island is often visited by passenger vessels; the island has a few

inhabitants; Bompoka lighthouse is on the south-west point of the island; due to submerged rocks around the landing point, only the locals can approach it safely

- **Katchal (174,4 km²)** – is located about 1,600 kilometres away from mainland (India) and 305 kilometres south to capital Port Blair; the Island is not open to tourists and special permission is required from the local administration at Port Blair; Katchall Island is separated from Camorta Island and Nancowry Island to the NE by Revello Channel, which is about 3.8 miles wide and free from dangers, except for a detached 12.8 m patch about 4.5 miles NE of the SE end of Katchall Island; the island is densely wooded and rises to a height of 227 metres in its central part; it is considered a good radar target up to 18 miles; depths off the west side of the island are very irregular; some 16.5 to 18.3 m patches lie up to 4 miles off this coast
- **Kamorta (188,2 km²)**
- **Nancowry or Nancowrie (66,9 km²)** – is situated close S of and overlaps the S end of Camorta Island; it is about 160 kilometres south-southeast of Car Nicobar; the island is also part of the Nicobar and Andaman Tribal Reserve Area, which means non-native people are not allowed to visit it or conducting business without permission; Nancowry Harbour, a secure landlocked inlet, is located between them; the E entrance of Nancowry Harbour lies between the SE end of Camorta Island and the NE end of Nancowry Island; the approach to this entrance leads through Beresford Channel
- **Trinket** – lies between 1.5 and 2.5 miles E of the S part of Camorta Island and is separated from that island to the W and NW by False Bay and Beresford Channel; Trinket Island is low, level, covered by coconut trees and surrounded by an extensive reef; Morrel Point, the south end of the island, is marked by a beacon; the island's surface reduced considerably after the 2004 Tsunami
- **Laouk or “Isle of Man” (0,01 km²) (uninhabited)**
- **Tillangchong (16,84 km²) (uninhabited)**
- **Southern Group (Sambelong):**
 - **Great Nicobar (1045,1 km²)** – is the largest, but sparsely inhabited (population of 9,440), island of the Nicobar Islands; the southernmost point of the Great Nicobar Island (and India itself) is Indira Point (6°45'10"N and 93°49'36"E), about 150 km north of Sumatra, Indonesia, 540 km and more than a day's sea voyage from Port Blair; Great Nicobar is largely covered by rainforest and known for its diverse wildlife; the island was strongly affected by the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake tsunami – many people were killed and it was cut off from all outside contact for more than a day
 - **Little Nicobar (159,1 km²)** – is densely wooded; it is home to Mount Deoban, which rises up to 413 metres on the central part, and the Empress Peak, which rises to 401 metres on the NE part of the island; Little Nicobar is considered a good radar target up to 23 miles; the NW coast between Sombrero Point and Pahua, about 6 miles SW and then about 7.5 miles S to Cape Edinburg, is fringed by a reef which extends up to 0.5 mile offshore.
 - **Kondul (4,6 km²)** – is located in the middle of Little Nicobar Island and Great Nicobar Island; it is high and rocky on its northern side and rises to a height of 92 metres;

after the 2004 tsunami, the island became partly uninhabitable; those who survived the disaster, have been moved to shelters in Campbell Bay, which is the closest city to Kondul; there are densely populated forests and mangroves; both sides of Kondul Island are covered with beaches

- **Pulo Milo or Pillomilo (Milo Island; 1,3 km²)**
- **Meroe, Trak, Treis, Menchal, Kabra, Pigeon and Megapod** – they are all uninhabited.

Allmode Summary and Advice

This edition focuses on the Andaman Islands and aims to help create better Situational Awareness (SA) and highlight the risk of visiting a particular location.

The Andaman Islands are generally safe. Nevertheless, as always, you should take the same precautions with your personal safety and possessions.

This report will provide you with useful information regarding the Islands to make you aware of possible dangers and threats and will help you plan your travel.

Health Advisory

Health services are limited on the Andaman Islands. This is mainly due to the fact that they are remote and have low population. Although most Islands have a Primary Health Centre (PHC), services can be limited and poor. It is recommended to go to the nearest PHC for immediate assistance and then move to the G.B Pant hospital in Port Blair, which is better equipped. Serious, life threatening or needing special care conditions should, however, be treated on mainland India. There is a Recompression Chamber for Port Blair, which is based in the General Hospital.

Malaria risk in the Andaman Islands is not high enough for most travellers to take antimalarial tablets. Nonetheless, it may be considered for certain groups who may be at higher risk. They include longer stays in rural areas, visiting friends or relatives, those with medical conditions, immunosuppression or those without a spleen. Taking some precautions is advised: avoid mosquito bites, wear long sleeves and long trousers, use insect repellents on exposed skin and sleep under a mosquito net. If you develop a fever, consult a doctor immediately. Malaria can develop even up to one year after exposure.

The most common health problems for visitors are diarrhoea and problems related to sun. Take sensible precautions with food to avoid troubles. Do not drink tap water in the Andaman Islands. Instead, travellers are encouraged to drink a lot of bottled drinking water to prevent dehydration. Watch out for what and where you are eating. Choose fruits that can be peeled. Avoid fresh salads (or wash them with purified water) and ice made from tap water. Be careful when you decide to have ice cream, cold milk and undercooked fish or meat. In the event of diarrhoea, it is essential to replace lost fluids, minerals and salts

Wash regularly and wear light, loose clothes made from natural fibres due to heat rash and fungal infections caused by humidity.

In the event of getting injured, consult a doctor immediately and/or take antibiotics as well as apply an antiseptic cream regularly as high humidity levels may cause infections.

It is important for travellers to seek medical advice at least 6 weeks prior to their departure as some vaccinations may require more than one injection. Make sure you are up to date with vaccinations for diphtheria, tetanus and polio.

Diphtheria is a serious bacterial infection that can be caught from a coughing or sneezing infected person. You can also get infected by coming in contact with an object that has bacteria on it. The disease symptoms include sore throat, swollen glands in the neck, fever and weakness

Tetanus is a serious illness caused by Clostridium bacteria that live in soil, saliva, dust and manure. The bacteria enter the body through a deep cut or a burn. The infection causes painful tightening of the muscles and can lead to "locking" of the jaw. A vaccine can prevent tetanus. Adults should get a tetanus shot, or booster, every 10 years.

Polio is a crippling and potentially fatal infectious disease. There is no cure, but there are safe and effective vaccines. Polio spreads from person to person, invades the brain and spinal cord and causes paralysis. Initial symptoms of polio are fever, fatigue, headache, vomiting, stiffness in the neck and pain in the limbs. There is no cure for polio, it can only be prevented by immunisation.

Other advised vaccinations include

- hepatitis A – a viral liver disease that can cause mild to severe illness; the virus is transmitted through ingestion of contaminated food and water or through direct contact with an infected person; symptoms of hepatitis A usually develop between 2 and 6

weeks after infection; the most common symptoms are nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, low fever, loss of appetite, rash, tiredness, fatigue, jaundice and pain in area of liver

- hepatitis B – a serious disease caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV); infection with this virus can cause scarring of the liver, liver failure, liver cancer and even death; hepatitis B is spread by infected blood and other bodily fluids such as semen, vaginal secretions and open sores; symptoms, which often occur one to six months after exposure, include: jaundice, fever, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain

- typhoid – a bacterial infection that can spread throughout the body and affect many organs; it is caused by a bacterium called *Salmonella typhi* and is very contagious; an infected person can pass the bacteria out of their body in their stools or urine (less frequently); symptoms include high temperature (39-40°C), stomach pain, headache, constipation or diarrhoea.

The current vaccine against cholera gives very low protection and therefore is not usually recommended. Those who plan to stay longer than a couple of weeks, can also consider vaccinations against rabies and Japanese B encephalitis.

Arrival/Departure Procedures

Entry formalities

No permit to visit the Andaman Islands is required for Indian nationals. Nevertheless, permits (rarely given) are obligatory to visit Nicobar Islands and other tribal areas. Application may be submitted to the Deputy Commissioner, Andaman District, Port Blair.

While obtaining the visa to India, all foreigners have to specify that they are going to visit the Andaman Islands. Foreigners who arrive in Port Blair with a stamp saying "Not valid for restricted areas" (or similar) will not be allowed to enter the Andaman Islands as it is a restricted zone. It is important to make sure that your visa does not include this stamp and if it does, you should contact the issuing embassy.

Foreigners with a valid India Visa, can arrive in Port Blair. However, to enter the Andaman Islands, a Restricted Area Permit (RAP) is required. It can be obtained from the immigration authorities on arrival at Port Blair. The permit is free of charge. Foreign nationals with the Restricted Area Permit can stay on the islands for 30 days. Nevertheless, if you arrive without a confirmed flight back, you may receive only a 15-day permit. It is highly recommended to ask for 30 days in your application. If you include your return flight date, your permit will be issued to end on that date, which will cause problems if you want to extend your stay or get delayed by weather.

This 30-day period can be extended by additional 15 days at the immigration office in Port Blair, but you will have to submit a confirmed return ticket (for journey within the next 15 days). Getting the extension depends on your reason for extension.

Extension for a maximum single stay of 45 days is granted only in "deserving cases". You must then leave the islands and can return after 72 hours. The permit is checked when arriving at most islands, checking into hotels and booking ferries. It must be given back when you leave the islands so it is very important not to lose it.

If you plan to arrive by sea, you will have to arrange your permit prior to arrival, either in Chennai or while applying for your Indian visa.

Permits can also be obtained from Indian Missions Overseas, Foreigners Registration Offices at Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and the Immigration authorities at the airports at Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai.

The places covered by Restricted Area Permit:

- for a night stop: South Andaman Island, Middle Andaman Island and Little Andaman Island (excluding the tribal reserve), Neil Island, Havelock Island, Long Island, Diglipur, Baratang, North Passage Island and islands in the Mahatma Gandhi Marine National Park (excluding the islands of Boat Hobday, Twin, Tarmugli, Malay and Pluto); a permit is required to stop for a night in the park
- for a day stop: South Cinque Island, Ross Island, Narcondam Island, Interview Island, Brother Island, Sister Island and Barren Island.

All foreign passports must be valid of a minimum duration of 6 months.

Clearance

Yachts are not allowed to stop anywhere else prior to completing formalities at Port Blair (South Andaman). It is reported that using an agent here for clearance is straightforward and simple. Cost is about US\$200.

On Arrival

Call the port authorities on VHF channel 16, a few hours before your arrival and inform them about your ETA. Then, call again when you arrive to receive instructions on where to anchor and so that they can inform Customs and Immigration. It is best to arrive during the day.

The Coastguard will visit the yacht with their own boat. Customs and Immigration officials must be collected in your dinghy. A complete list of stores and equipment (with serial numbers) will be required. You also have to list your depth sounder as a 'fish finder'.

A visit must be paid ashore to the Harbour Master at the Port Management Board (PMB) to lodge a written itinerary of all the places you are going to visit. The HM should provide you with data regarding the radio times and frequencies (via SSB radio) for your required daily radio check-ins. If you only have a VHF radio, your visit will be very restricted.

It is essential that you have up to 8 copies of all your documents (including Departure documents from your previous port) and the required letters. An embossed boat stamp will also be necessary.

On Departure

The leaving procedure has been simplified. First visit Port Captain's office to pay your dues, then Immigration. When you are ready to leave, call Port Control with your clearance number.

Inform Port Control in advance of your expected time of departure.

Standard operation procedure for foreign yachts visiting the Andaman Islands:

- Obtain clearance/permit from the Indian High Commission/Embassy before departing from last port of call and submit the following particulars to the Indian High Commission/embassy:
 - purpose of visit
 - port of registration
 - last port of call
 - next port of call
 - name of local agent (if any)
 - particulars of the owner and crew
 - itinerary of the vessel.
- Clearance need to be obtained from Port Management Board, Port Blair, 48 hours before entering Indian Territorial waters
- Immigration clearance will be given at Port Blair on arrival/departure. On arrival, yachts will be inspected by Navy, Customs and Immigration for clearance.

- Visit permit is issued by the Immigration Officer for thirty days.
- No deviation from the pre-drawn itinerary is permitted.
- Yachts should be fitted with HFRF sets for communication. Otherwise, their visit will be restricted to VHF range.
- Yachts in Indian waters need to inform their location twice a day at 08:00 AM and 08:00 PM to Port Management Board Control Room.
- No diving equipment is allowed to be carried on board. The vessel can obtain the diving equipment locally from approved diving agencies.
- The yacht is not permitted to pick up commercial passengers, Indian or foreigners on board during the permitted cruise. Nevertheless, yachts are allowed to carry passengers to and from Port Blair who have been cleared by Immigration authorities.
- Equipment capable of sea and mapping cannot be carried aboard.
- No arms and ammunitions are allowed to be carried aboard the yacht. Arms carried for self-protection need to be declared on arrival.
- Yachts visiting the islands may have an authorised agent at Port Blair.
- Clearance of Customs, Port Management Board and Immigration is necessary prior to departure.

Maritime News

On 12th August 2014, a cargo dinghy, with more than 5 tonnes of cargo and two persons on board, went missing between Port Blair and Havelock. On 14th August 2014, one person, Ranjan Mondal, was found at No. 19 Beach in Havelock. Despite continuous search, there was no trace of the Dinghy or the missing person, Karak Mondal. As Ranjan Mondal reported, the Dinghy had hit rock near Kalapathar area and the missing passenger had drowned.

In January 2014, a private tourist boat, Aqua Marine, sank while commuting from Ross Island to North Bay. The boat had 32 Indian tourists on board. On 27th January 2014, 21 were declared dead, 28 were rescued and one person was still missing. According to the initial report, the boat was carrying more passengers than authorised and passengers were not wearing their life jackets although they were available.

Security Awareness Training

Are your crew compliant with the mandatory STCW 95 modules?


STCW Regulation VI/6 became mandatory on 1st January 2014. This regulation requires all seafarers on ships subject to the ISPS Code to have received security related training and instruction relevant to their assigned duties on-board.

- **Proficiency in Security Awareness**

ALL seafarers who **do not** have specific security-related duties on board are required to hold a Proficiency in Security Awareness Certificate ([PSA](#)) and will need to take an approved course approx. 4 hours in length.

- **Proficiency in Designated Security Duties**

All seafarers with **designated** security duties stipulated in the ship security plan will be required to hold a certificate of Proficiency in Designated Security Duties ([PDSD](#)) and will need to take an approved course approximately 10 hours in length.



Are your Crew prepared?

New STCW 95 – proficiency in security awareness & for seafarers with designated security duties.

Course Topics:

- Reporting a security incident
- Security threat procedures
- Enhancement of maritime security through heightened awareness
- Recognition of security risks and threats
- Maintaining security awareness and vigilance
- Maintaining conditions set out in a Ship Security Plan.
- Vessel Security Inspections
- Security equipment and systems.

On 1st January 2014, security training required for seafarers will change.


STCW Regulation V/8 will enter into force. This regulation requires all seafarers on ships subject to the ISPS Code to have received security related training and instruction relevant to their assigned duties on-board.


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- Security Equipment and Systems Introduction

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