

Floating in splendid isolation, southeast of the Indian subcontinent is the archipelago of 572 emerald islands, islets and rocks known as Andaman & Nicobar Islands. This Union Territory is stretched over a distance of more than 700 Km. from north to south with 36 inhabited islands. These undulating islands are covered with dense forests and endless variety of exotic flowers and birds. The sandy beaches on the edge of meandering coastline are fringed with coconut-palms that sway to the rhythm of the sea. The rare flora and fauna, underwater marine life and corals, with crystal clear water and mangrove-lined creeks, offer a dream-view. These islands offer a wonderful experience to the nature lover to experience peace and tranquility in the lap of the Mother Earth.

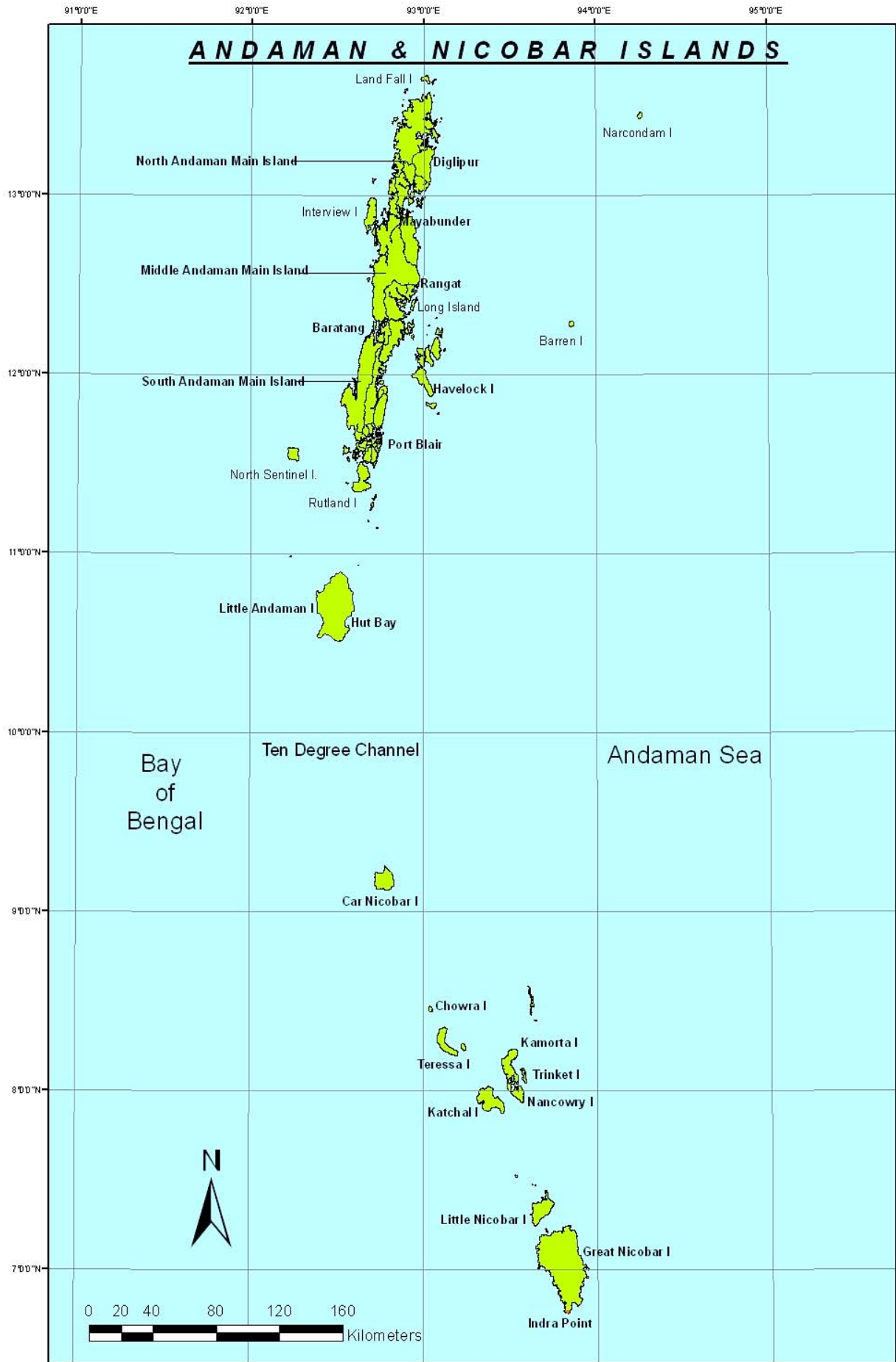
As per mythology, the name Andaman was presumed to be derived from Hanuman, who was known to the Malays as Handuman. These islands are home of aboriginal tribes of Negrito and Mongoloid stock. The Negrito stock comprises of Great Andamanese, Onges, Jarawas, and Sentinelese . They are inhabitants of Andaman group of islands. The Mongoloid stock comprises of Nicobarese and Shompens inhabiting in Nicobar group of islands. The British after aborting the first settlement taken up in 1789 came back again in 1858 to these islands for establishing a penal settlement, after the First War of Independence.

In these islands, people of all faiths and regions from all parts of India and cultures live together in complete peace and harmony. This harmonious and well knit society has been aptly described as Mini-India.

The total forests cover of these islands is more than 92% out of which about 84% is the reserved and protected forest. About 50 % of the forests have been set aside as tribal reserves, National Parks and wildlife sanctuaries. Luxuriant mangroves, perhaps the richest in the world, occupy nearly 11.5 percent of the territory. These islands are home to some of the rarest plants and animal species.

About 4 lakh population of the islands went through tremendous shock and suffered huge losses on account of the devastating earthquake and tsunami of 26th December, 2004.

ABOUT A & N ISLANDS



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1. **Location** : Bay of Bengal
 - Longitude** : 92 to 94° East
 - Latitude** : 6 to 14° North
2. **Distance** : About 1200 Kms from Vizag, Kolkata, Chennai
3. **Area** : 8249 Sq. Kms.
4. **Total length of A & N Islands** : 726 Kms.
5. **Maximum Width of A & N Islands** : 58 Kms.
6. **Forest Cover** : 7171 Sq. Kms.
7. **No. of islands** : 572
 - Inhabited Islands** : 38
8. **Administrative Units (Nos.)**
 - Districts** : 2
 - Sub-Divisions** : 4
 - Tehsils** : 7
 - Lok Sabha Seat** : 1
 - Municipal Council** : 1
 - Zilla Parishad** : 1
9. **Population** : 356152 (2001 Census)
 - Male** : 192972
 - Female** : 163180
10. **Population Composition**
 - Tribal** : Onges, Sentinalese, Jarawas, Shompens, Great Andamanese, Nicobarese
 - Non-Tribal** : Bengali (64706), Hindi (49469), Tamil (53536), Malayalam (26075), Telugu (32979), Others (5690)
11. **Literacy rate** : 81.18%
 - Male** : 86.07%
 - Female** : 75.29%
12. **Climate** : Tropical throughout the year with mean minimum temperature 23°C and maximum at 31°C. Humidity is relatively high – 70% to 90% with a gentle breeze blowing all the time. The weather is generally pleasant with average annual rainfall at 3000mm at Port Blair (May to Mid-September and November to January)