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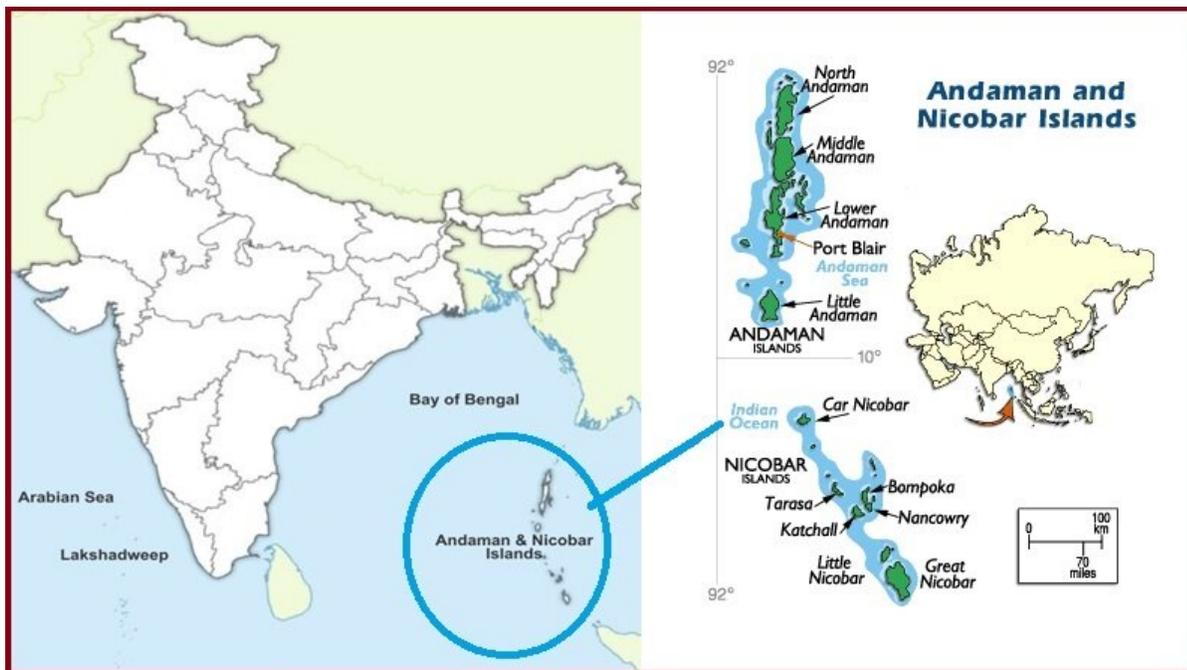
## Protecting the Sentinelese

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### Why in News

Recently, the **Anthropological Survey of India (ANSI)** policy document warned of threat to the Sentinelese from commercial activity.

The policy document comes almost two years after American national John Allen Chau was allegedly **killed by the Sentinelese on the North Sentinel Island.**



### Key Points

- **ANSI Guidelines:**
  - Any **exploitation** of the **North Sentinel Island of the Andamans** for commercial and strategic gain would be **dangerous for its occupants, the Sentinelese.**
  - The **Right of the people** to the island is **non-negotiable, unassailable and unfringeable.** The prime duty of the state is to protect these rights as eternal and sacrosanct.
  - Their **island should not be eyed** for any commercial or strategic gain.
  - The document also calls for **building a knowledge bank on the Sentinelese.**
  - Since ‘on-the-spot study’ is not possible for the tribal community, anthropologists suggest the ‘**study of a culture from distance**’.
- **About the Sentinelese:**
  - The Sentinelese are a **pre-neolithic, negrito tribe** who live in North Sentinel Island of the Andamans.
  - They are **completely isolated with no contact to the outside world.** The first time they were contacted by a team of Indian anthropologists in 1991.
    - Due to no contact, the census of Sentinelese is taken through photographing the island individuals from distance.
    - It has a population of about **50 to 100 on the North Sentinel Island.**
  - Surveys of North Sentinel Island have **not found any evidence of agriculture.** Instead, the community seems to be **hunter-gatherers, getting food through fishing, hunting, and collecting wild plants living on the island.**
  - Sentinelese are also listed under **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)** by the government of India. The **other four PVTGs** of the islands are **Great Andamanese, Onge, Jarawa, and Shompens.**
  - They are protected under the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation, 1956.**
    - It declares traditional areas occupied by the tribes as reserves, and prohibits entry of all except those with authorization.
    - Photographing or filming tribe members is also an offense..

### **Anthropological Survey of India**

- It is a **premier research institute for anthropological research in bio-cultural studies.**
- It was established in **1945.** It is one of the many organizations under **the Ministry of Culture.** It has **headquarters at Kolkata** and **branches in Port Blair, Shillong, DehraDun, Udaipur, Nagpur, and Mysore** in addition to two **field stations at Jagdalpur and Ranchi.**
- The Survey through its anthropological research **contributes in respect of the biological, social and cultural heritage of the country.**

- It is also recognised as one of the most advanced centres **for research and training in anthropology and allied disciplines.**
- **Objectives:**
  - To **study the tribes and other communities** that form the population of India both from the biological and cultural point of view
  - To **study and preserve the human skeletal remains**, both from modern and Archaeological.
  - To **collect samples of arts and crafts** of the tribes of India.
  - To function as a **training center for advanced students in anthropology** and for administration.
  - To **publish** the results of the research.

## Way Forward

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- The academics have suggested that the **best path forward is a policy of "controlled contact"** with these communities instead of a policy of no contact.
- Carefully managed contact to avoid the spread of disease, but **also enable the building of trust and providing aid and medical help if needed is the best way.**
- Establishing contact with the outside world can also **help governments to document their way of life, preserve their culture and their holistic development.**

**Source:TH**