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Andaman & Nicobar Islands Set Two Guinness World Records – Underwater Flag and Human Stack

3 May 2026

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Andaman & Nicobar Islands Set Two Guinness World Records — Underwater Flag and Human Stack

3 May 2026 · 4 min read · 3 tags

WHY IN NEWS

The **Andaman & Nicobar Administration** set **two Guinness World Records** on consecutive days in May 2026:

- May 2, 2026 — Largest national flag unfurled underwater** at **Radhanagar Beach** (Swaraj Dweep / Havelock Island): A **60×40 metre (2,400 sq m) Tricolour** was unfurled by **223 divers** including personnel from the **Indian Navy, Andaman & Nicobar Police, and other agencies**, under the supervision of Lt. Governor **D.K. Joshi**.
- May 3, 2026 — Tallest underwater human stack:** A tower of **22.3 metres** formed by **14 people** — including Lt. Governor **D.K. Joshi** himself — was sustained for **3 minutes** underwater, setting a new Guinness World Record.

Both records were part of an initiative to promote the **Andaman & Nicobar Islands as a world-class maritime and adventure tourism destination** and highlight India’s naval and diving capabilities.

RADHANAGAR BEACH — KEY FACTS

ITEM	FACT
Original name	Havelock Island (colonial name)
Renamed to	Swaraj Dweep (part of renaming initiative by GoI)
Location	Andaman Islands, Bay of Bengal
Beach certification	Blue Flag — one of India’s 13 Blue Flag beaches (as of 2025)
Known for	Pristine white sand, clear waters; ranked among Asia’s best beaches
Administration	Andaman & Nicobar Islands UT administration

BLUE FLAG CERTIFICATION

Blue Flag is an international eco-label awarded by the **Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE)**, Denmark. It is one of the world's most recognised ecolabels for beaches, marinas, and sustainable boating tourism. Criteria: water quality (BATHING WATER Directive standards), environmental education and information, environmental management, and safety services.

India's Blue Flag beaches (2025): 13 certified beaches including Shivrajpur (Gujarat), Ghoghla (Diu), Kasarkod and Padubidri (Karnataka), Kappad (Kerala), Eden (Puducherry), Miri (Odisha), Rushikonda (Andhra Pradesh), Golden (Andaman), Radhanagar/Swaraj Dweep (Andaman), and others.

ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS — STRATEGIC AND GEOGRAPHIC IMPORTANCE

Physical Geography

PARAMETER	DETAIL
Total islands	~572 (Andaman — 325+; Nicobar — ~247)
Inhabited islands	~38
Highest point	Saddle Peak (Andaman) — 732 m
Southernmost point	Indira Point (Nicobar) — India's southernmost point
Proximity to Malacca Strait	~150 km from the northern entrance
Distance from mainland India	~1,200 km from Chennai
Distance from Port Blair to Myanmar	~280 km
Distance from Port Blair to Indonesia	~150 km (Sumatra)

Strategic Importance

The Andaman & Nicobar Islands command the **Malacca Strait approach** — the world's most important shipping chokepoint through which approximately **80% of China's oil imports** pass. The **Andaman Sea** is a critical transit zone between the Bay of Bengal and the Malacca Strait.

Key strategic installations: **INS Baaz** (naval air station on Campbell Bay, Great Nicobar Island), **INS Jarawa**, **Andaman & Nicobar Command (ANC)** — India's only tri-services theatre command, headquartered at **Port Blair**.

GREAT NICOBAR DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The **Great Nicobar Holistic Development Project** — approved by the Government of India — envisages development of a:

- **Transshipment Port** (to compete with Colombo, Klang, Singapore)
- **International airport**
- **Township** for 3.5 lakh people
- **Dual-use military facility**

Managed by **ANIIDCO** (Andaman & Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation), the project has attracted environmental controversy due to its location in ecologically sensitive forest areas home to the **Shompen tribe** (Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group — PVTG) and critical leatherback turtle nesting sites.

GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS — CONTEXT

Guinness World Records (GWR) is a reference book published annually by the **Guinness World Records Ltd** (a subsidiary of Jim Pattison Group), listing world records both human achievements and extremes of the natural world. India has been actively pursuing GWR records as part of national event celebrations — including flag-related records on Republic Day and Independence Day in recent years.

UPSC RELEVANCE

PAPER	ANGLE
GS1 — Geography	Andaman & Nicobar geography, Indira Point, Malacca Strait, Bay of Bengal
GS2 — Polity	UT administration, Andaman & Nicobar Command (tri-services command), tribal rights (Shompen)
GS3 — Internal Security	Strategic importance, Great Nicobar military base, Maritime security
GS3 — Environment	Great Nicobar project controversy, leatherback turtles, forest clearance

Mains Keywords: Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Swaraj Dweep, Radhanagar Beach, Blue Flag, Indira Point, Malacca Strait, ANC (Andaman & Nicobar Command), Great Nicobar Holistic Development Project, Shompen PVTG, strategic chokepoint, Guinness World Record

Prelims Facts Corner

ITEM	FACT
Largest underwater flag	60×40m = 2,400 sq m; 223 divers; Radhanagar Beach; May 2, 2026
Tallest underwater human stack	22.3m; 14 people; 3 minutes; May 3, 2026
LG Andaman	D.K. Joshi (participated in human stack)
Radhanagar Beach / Swaraj Dweep	Renamed Havelock Island; Blue Flag certified
India's Blue Flag beaches	13 (as of 2025)
Blue Flag issuing body	Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), Denmark
Indira Point	India's southernmost point — Great Nicobar Island
Malacca Strait	80% of China's oil imports pass through
ANC	Only tri-services command in India; Port Blair
Shompen tribe	PVTG on Great Nicobar Island

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