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Supreme Court order violated Report by: RASHMI RAWAT

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The Supreme Court's order prohibiting erection of any religious structures including temples, churches, mosques, gurudwaras, etc erected on the government land seems to have no impact in remote Andamans where such structures have been erected at many places with impunity. In its recent edition, the EOI had named a number of temples that have come up illegally at Port Blair itself.

In the latest instance, a temple has been erected at Middle Strait, just close to the Police Check Post in gross violation of the Apex Court's order. What makes it all the more serious and glaring an offence is the fact that the said temple has come up literally under the nose of the police personnel and that too on public land in a highly prohibited area. According to reports, to begin with someone had simply erected a trident (Trishool) under a banyan tree at Middle Strait and after some time that tree was covered from all sides and a temple began functioning.

This is the story behind most of the religious places that were erected on revenue land. The Middle Strait is just out of the Jarawa reserved area where public is strictly prohibited other than at convoy time. Surprisingly, this very temple has come up in full knowledge of the police personnel who are always on duty very close to the temple. No one bothered to enforce the Supreme Court's order and stop the construction of the temple. It's not known as to who has constructed this temple and whether the police personnel were hand in glove with the unidentified persons/persons. When contacted, the Superintendent of Police, N&M, under whose jurisdiction Middle Strait falls, said that he was not aware of the temple having come up and as to who was behind the illegal action. He told this correspondent that he would enquire about it and call back; which he did not. Repeated calls made to him throughout the day were not answered.

