

The government of India panicked as the neighbouring countries claimed the vacant islands. Therefore, government of India headed by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru had taken the decision to inhabit the vacant rural areas of South Andaman and other isolated and remote islands of Andaman. *The innocent victims of partition and Independence, that is, the most helpless displaced Hindus of erstwhile East Bengal were found to be the most suitable to be settled in these isolated and remote islands then called 'Kala Pani'. Therefore, thousands of the displaced Hindus of erstwhile East Bengal were convinced to settle in these remote and isolated islands from 1949 to 1975 covered with dense forest uninhabited or inhabited by savage people.*

*Initially the Bengali Settlers, mostly the higher castes, were settled in 1949. But soon most of them left these islands due to the impending threat to their culture and heritage compelling the GOI to change the strategies. Hence, down-trodden Bengalis, mostly namasudra, pondro-kshatriya and other sudra communities who were helpless and dependent, were brought to these islands. Initially they were settled in the rural areas of South Andaman from 1949 to 1951 under Colonization Scheme by the Rehabilitation Department of the Government of West Bengal.*

Mr. I. Majid, ICS, the first Chief Commissioner of A & N Islands after Independence was also reportedly against the settlement of Hindu Bengalis and was unceremoniously transferred in 1949 and Bengali Chief Commissioners were appointed subsequently. The settlements started in 1953 and 1956 at Rangat, Middle Andaman and Diglipur, North Andaman respectively under Colonization Scheme directly by the Ministry of Rehabilitation, the Government of India. Thereafter, settlements were established at Neil Island, Havelock, Billiground (RBD), Little Andaman and so on. Many of these areas are still inaccessible about 60 years after settlement, viz. Smith Island, Ganesh Nagar, Jagannath Dera, Hanspuri, Bornial, (Hanspuri and Bornial were deserted by the Bengali Settlers soon after settlement), Goal Pahar, Atarjee, Broombali, Flat Bay, Kala Pathar (Havelock), Shole Bay, Kala Pahar (Ruth Land), etc.