

*Celebrate the tradition..*



N A T I O N A L  
**MINICOY FEST**



Department of Tourism  
U. T of Lakshadweep





# NATIONAL MINICOY FEST



Minicoy is the southernmost island of India in the Arabian Sea, only about 120 Km from Maldives. Mahl is the main language spoken in Minicoy, apart from Malayalam, Hindi and English. Minicoyans, being the only people speaking Mahl in India, are a linguistic minority. Minicoy is strategically, culturally and economically - one of India's most important islands.



Minicoy is famous for its boat building and seafaring tradition. More than 70% of Minicoy's Male population are Sea-farers – carving a name for themselves in the Merchant Navy sector. Since time immemorial, the Island's society has been organized around a unique traditional village system that cares for the women, while the men are away. Beaches of Minicoy having turquoise blue waters and white sands hold immense tourism potential.

The National Minicoy Fest is held every year since 2012 to showcase the rich tradition and culture of Lakshadweep in general and Minicoy in particular. The highlight of the fest is the 'Jahadhoni' race, the winner of which is awarded the Prime Minister's Rolling trophy.

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Jahadhoni – the traditional snake boat of Minicoy is not found in anywhere in India or even in Maldives. ‘Jahaadhoni’ was built to tow the sailing vessels called ‘Odi’ from the lagoon to the outer sea and vice versa. On the day of departure, young women in their traditional costume, their hearts throbbing with the pain of separation, used to keep watching till the vessel disappeared into the horizon with their husbands on board to serve on merchant ships. Throughout the journey men rowing the boat sing local songs called ‘Thaevaru’.



With the passage of time, these traditions have been fading away and the number of Jahadhonis also reduced due to fund crunch. In 2009, the administration in its efforts to revive the boat race, and create enthusiasm for the event, instituted the ‘Prime Minister’s Rolling Trophy Boat Race’ for the Jahadhoni boat race.



In 2012, in order to make it a truly national event a significant decision was taken to organize the event as “National Minicoy Fest” and in addition to boat race, many other programs like Mini Marathon, Tug of war, Food fest, Cultural programs & exhibition were also added. Since 2012 the event is being organized under the auspices of the Department of Tourism, Lakshadweep with the cooperation of all other departments, Village (Dweep) Panchayat, local village Moopans, clubs and public. Indian Navy and Coast Guard also participate in the function. The festival has been attracting a large number of domestic and foreign enthusiasts.

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# NATIONAL MINICOY FEST

## DIGNITARIES WHO VISITED MINICOY

Name

Date/Year

1. Dr. Zakir Hussain, Vice President of India	1964
2. Smt. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India	08-10-1969
3. Smt. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India	28-12-1976
4. Shri. Morarji Desai, Prime Minister of India	01-02-1979
5. Smt. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India	03-02-1981
6. Shri. Mohammed Hidayathullah, Vice President of India	11-04-1984
7. Shri. Gyani Zail Singh, President of India	20-10-1985
8. Shri. Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India	24-11-1985
9. Shri V.P. Singh, Former Prime Minister of India	07-01-1993
10. Shri Maqbool Dar, Minister of State for Home Affairs	27-10-1997
11. Shri George Fernandes, Defence Minister	06-02-1999
12. Shri.A.K.Antony, Defence Minister	24-12-2010
13. Shri Chidambaran , Minister of Home Affairs	03-11-2010
14. Smt. Sonia Gandhi, Chairperson, UPA	16-02-2014



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