

TRANSFERS – THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE UGLY

During season, tickets to Havelock or Neil are virtually impossible to get on the same day (you will have to stand in line and push/shove for a few hours, and even then, you are likely to go empty-handed). Our pickup service greatly reduces the risk of not getting a ticket. However, as the rules of advance purchase of tickets keep changing, it is not a guarantee (please see below for more info; also read the last section of this document).

Non-India citizens, please note – govt ferry tickets are only issued on showing a copy of your Restricted Area Permit, which is only provided once you land in Port Blair. So we cannot buy the tickets in advance. What we do is make arrangements to have the tickets issued later – this works very well in most circumstances. But sometimes, something unexpected happens and tickets do not become available. If that happens, then we will try to put you on a different ferry. Very, very rarely (maybe 2-3 times a year), there are absolutely no tickets available, in which case we will put you in a hotel in Port Blair that night and transfer you the next day.

We can buy catamaran tickets in advance, however.

Please note that the pickup service is offered as a convenience and is not a contract for carriage. There are a lot of factors outside our control: ferries can be cancelled, tickets may be unavailable, timings may change, vehicles may break down etc. We try our best to ensure everything works smoothly. However, in the case of any problems, our maximum liability in such cases shall be a partial or full refund, minus the cost of whatever services have already been used.

When it comes to transfers, please realize the following:

1/ There are often unexpected surges in ticket demand – all from people who have also booked well in advance. This means there are more people looking for tickets than there are seats available

2/ The rules on how tickets are issued means that we cannot always purchase tickets in advance. We have some workarounds in place, but sometimes (maybe 2-3 times a year), there are problems for various unexpected reasons

3/ Because of the above, and the general way things work on the islands, sometimes, compost happens. We are not able to get your tickets on the ferry of your choice, or we are only able to get a standing-room ticket, or – in very, very rare cases, and so far, never on the return leg back to Port Blair – we may not be able to get a ferry ticket for you at all.

4/ We do not assign seats on the ferry. We have no control over that.

5/ We do not run the ferry, we do not make the rules, we do not decide when to arbitrarily change or selectively enforce various parts of the rules.

With all of that being said, we have a system that works.

When it comes to the catamaran, things usually go smoothly (unless we screw up with the tickets, which, unfortunately, does happen once or twice a year).

When it comes to the government ferry, our system isn't the perfect, always-get-everything-done-in-advance system that we would like it to be. And often, this system is less-than-transparent, even to us – which means we often don't have advance notice on how things are going, and any problems that crop up only do so at the last minute. But, let me repeat, **it usually works**. Not only does it work, it works better than every other alternative we have.

So when you book a transfer service with us, you are taking a leap of faith that our system works. And you are also accepting that we may not be able to give you advance notice on how things are going, and there may be unexpected problems (which, you can be sure, we will do our best to solve: believe us when we say that we do not want you have any unpleasant experiences associated with your time with us).

For example: there have been cases when our agent managed to get seats for guests after 3 days of ferries being cancelled (with about 1000 people clamoring for 200 tickets), and they complained because “everything was chaotic and no one told them what was going on”. From our point of view, our agent did a spectacular job putting our guests ahead of people who had been stranded for a couple of days. While we can see the guest's point of view, we do not think it is fair or appropriate for us to be hauled over coals for something that is not in our control.

This isn't exactly something that happens often. To put it in perspective, we typically have maybe 1-2 cases a year when we are unable to get tickets on the day of arrival (so far, zero cases of being unable to get tickets for the return). We have maybe 5-6 cases a year when we have to use a different ferry or get “standing-only” tickets (which means you can sit in the open on the upper deck).

So mostly, this long-winded section is merely in the interest of full disclosure. **We like to think that our transfer service is probably as reliable as it gets on the islands.** However, that element of risk is indeed present and non-zero.

If you are not ok with this element of risk, please do not book a transfer service with us.

Conversely, booking a transfer service with us implies that you have read this section fully and accept with it completely. If you have any questions or concerns, please ask!