



Battle Far From Over: Minister's exit Is only the beginning: CJP Founder escalates student agitation with fresh demands

New Delhi: The resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has failed to quell the nationwide student agitation, with Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) founder Abhijeet Dipke declaring that the movement has entered its "next and decisive phase". Addressing a charged gathering of student protesters, Dipke asserted that forcing the minister to step down was only the first victory and vowed to continue the agitation until every key demand of the movement is fulfilled. In a strongly worded address, Dipke said the resignation of the Union Minister could not undo the suffering of students and their families. He demanded that the Central Government immediately provide ₹1 crore compensation to the families of every student who allegedly died by suicide in connection with the ongoing education crisis, describing the deaths

as a "collective failure of governance that cannot be brushed aside by a minister's resignation." Taking direct aim at the police administration, the CJP founder sought immediate disciplinary action against DCP Sandeep Lamba, ACP Ajay Sharma and Sachin Sharma, accusing them of responsibility for the alleged lathi-charge and violent crackdown on student protesters during demonstrations on July 20. He maintained that those responsible for using force against peaceful students must be held personally accountable. Highlighting the power of public mobilization, Dipke delivered a stern warning to law enforcement and political leaders: "Do not be afraid. This is a democracy. If people are afraid to speak out in a democracy, what kind of democracy is it? If you raise your voice, only then will these people stay in line... If the students of this country can force a



Union Minister to resign, who are you?" Dipke also demanded the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all FIRs and criminal cases registered against students who participated in the protests from July onwards. Criminalising peaceful dissent, he argued, was an assault on democratic rights and an attempt to silence legitimate public outrage. In one of the most forceful

moments of his speech, Dipke urged students not to succumb to fear or intimidation. "Do not be afraid. This is a democracy. If people are afraid to speak out in a democracy, what kind of democracy is it? If you raise your voice, only then will these people stay in line. If the students of this country can force a Union Minister to resign, who are you?" he told the gathering amid loud

applause. He said the students had endured baton charges, injuries and intimidation to hold those in power accountable, warning that coercive tactics would no longer succeed against a united student movement. Reiterating that the agitation would continue peacefully but resolutely, Dipke said the movement would not

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Rahul Gandhi hails student victory; Says time has come to remove this government

New Delhi: In a fiery video statement shared on his official X handle, Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi congratulated millions of students across the nation for compelling Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan to step down amidst escalating protests over systemic examination irregularities. Describing the resignation as a "huge step towards reshaping our education system," Gandhi hailed the determination of the nation's youth who took to the streets to protect democracy, the Constitution, and their collective future. Key Points from Rahul Gandhi's Statement: A Monumental Victory for Youth Power: Rahul Gandhi commended

the extraordinary resilience of students who stood firm against state force, including lathi-charges and police suppression, asserting that their non-violent constitutional struggle forced an arrogant regime to bow down. Two Unfulfilled Demands Remain: Emphasizing that the struggle is only half-won, the Congress leader highlighted that two core demands are still non-negotiable: An official apology from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the nation's youth and students. Strict criminal action and accountability against officials and police personnel responsible for the brutal violence unleashed on peaceful student protesters. A Clarion Call to All Suppressed Sections: Drawing inspiration from

the students' victory, Gandhi called on farmers, laborers, and marginalized communities across India to take courage from the movement and unite against the government through constitutional means. "The Time Has Come to Remove This Government" Writing on his X handle, the Leader of Opposition urged students to maintain their momentum and stay united for the larger battles ahead: "Well done to students across the country; we are proud of all of you. Heartiest congratulations to every young person, every student who took to the streets and stood firm to protect democracy, the Constitution, and their future. Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation is a huge step towards rebuilding our education system, but two



demands still remain... For every person whom this government has suppressed and crushed—true courage lies in standing firm in a constitutional manner for one's dignity. The time has come to remove this government. Don't be afraid!" Gandhi reaffirmed

the Opposition's "rock-solid solidarity" with student movements nationwide, promising that the fight to overhaul India's compromised education system and ensure fair opportunities for young citizens will continue with even greater force.

TEASER



Congress' 'Chhatron Ki Goonj' draws large crowd of students...

In one of the largest student outreach initiatives organised by the Congress in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, the 'Chhatron Ki Goonj' programme concluded ... See page 02



Who is responsible for the decaying govt accommodation ...

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No Receipts, Only Blessings

People are always eager to create controversies. These days, the donation business seems to be their favourite target. A few devoted followers have resigned from a trust, and FIRs have reportedly ... See page 05

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Congress' 'Chhatron Ki Goonj' draws large crowd of students, youth voices take centre stage

Port Blair : In one of the largest student outreach initiatives organised by the Congress in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, the 'Chhatron Ki Goonj' programme concluded on a high note with the participation of over 500 students and youth, who deliberated on key issues ranging from education and employment to the future of young India.

Organised under the directions of the All India Congress Committee (AICC), the programme was coordinated by Ms. Diksha Dular, President, Youth Congress, A&N Islands, while Shri TSG Bhasker, appointed as the Overall In-charge by Shri Rangalal Halder, President, Andaman & Nicobar Territorial Congress Committee (ANTCC), oversaw the successful conduct of the event.

The programme was attended by Shamina Shafique, AICC Observer for the Chhatron Ki Goonj campaign and former Member of the National Commission for Women, who travelled from New Delhi to interact with and encourage



the participating students. A key attraction of the event was the live screening of Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi's address on a giant LED screen. Speaking on the occasion, G Bhasker described students as the backbone of the nation and emphasised that their aspirations, concerns and voices deserve greater attention in the policymaking process. He also condemned the detention of Rahul Gandhi by the Delhi Police, terming it an attack on democratic values. The interactive session witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, who raised concerns over alleged examination paper leaks,

rising unemployment, access to quality higher education and several issues affecting the youth of the Islands. Student representatives and senior Congress leaders also addressed the gathering, calling for greater engagement with the younger generation. According to the organisers, the enthusiastic response and large turnout made Chhatron Ki Goonj one of the biggest student interaction programmes ever organised by the Congress in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The successful management of the event under the supervision of G Bhasker drew appreciation from both participants and party leaders.

Who is responsible for the decaying govt accommodation in Nicobar Islands?

Car Nicobar: In what is being described as a critical bottleneck for regional administration and governance, a severe crisis in government residential accommodation has gripped the remote Nicobar Group of Islands. The acute shortage and rapidly deteriorating condition of state-provided housing have reached a tipping point, threatening the baseline functionality of essential public services and driving employee morale to an unprecedented low. The systemic failure has prompted an urgent, high-level intervention from advocacy groups, demanding an immediate restructuring of infrastructure allocations in these frontier zones.

Taking up the issue with the highest levels of the Andaman & Nicobar Administration, Abhay Kumar, President of the public interest organisation Living on the Edge (LOTE), has submitted a detailed representation to the Lieutenant Governor and the Chief Secretary, highlighting what he described as a deepening housing crisis across several

remote islands of the Nicobar district.

The memorandum paints a grim picture of the condition of government residential quarters, many of which have reportedly fallen into severe disrepair after decades of exposure to heavy monsoon rains, high humidity and the corrosive coastal environment. According to the representation, the deteriorating buildings have become increasingly unsafe for habitation, while the absence of timely repairs and replacement has further aggravated the situation.

Unlike urban centres where employees can seek rented accommodation, most parts of the Nicobar Group offer virtually no private housing options. As a result, government employees posted to these remote islands remain entirely dependent on official quarters. With an



acute shortage of habitable accommodation, many personnel are reportedly compelled to stay in temporary or unsuitable arrangements, adversely affecting their morale, productivity and willingness to serve in these strategically important locations.

Abhay Kumar stressed that providing decent accommodation is not merely an employee welfare measure but a fundamental requirement for ensuring efficient governance, uninterrupted public service delivery and improved administrative efficiency in

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From Island Dreams to the Edge of Space; Model school girl shines at National Forum



For most students, the night sky is a canvas of twinkling stars. For 15-year-old Sujata Lall of Government Model Senior Secondary School (GMSSS), Aberdeen, it has become a destination. The young student from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands is preparing to take a remarkable leap from her classroom to the forefront of India's next-generation space mission, proving that talent and determination know no geographical boundaries.

Sujata has been selected as a National Finalist for the prestigious Mission ShaktiSAT programme, an international initiative that identifies and mentors promising young minds in space science and satellite technology. Her achievement has placed her among an elite group of students from across the country who will help conceptualise and build student-designed satellites, marking an extraordinary milestone in her academic journey. Her fascination with science found the right platform in 2025 when she joined the Mission ShaktiSAT programme through the Atal Tinkering Lab (ATL) at her school. What followed was months of rigorous learning, perseverance and unwavering commitment.

Sujata completed nearly 120 hours of specialised training, mastered 21 intensive learning modules, and successfully navigated more than 550 lessons covering satellite systems, space technology, engineering concepts and innovation. Her consistent performance enabled her to clear the programme's demanding technical evaluation and national-level interview, earning her a coveted place

among the finalists.

The next chapter of her journey begins this August when she heads to Gautam Buddha University, Greater Noida, for a 10-day National Workshop from August 22 to 31. There, she will work alongside some of the brightest young innovators from India and several other countries, receiving advanced hands-on training in satellite design, systems engineering and space research.

The programme will culminate in a landmark event on October 11, 2026, when two student-designed MoonSats are scheduled to be launched by ISRO from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota—a mission that will symbolise the aspirations of thousands of young dreamers across the country. For Sujata, this achievement is about much more than personal success. It is a message to every child growing up in the islands that opportunities are not defined by distance. From the shores of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to the doorstep of India's space programme, her story is a shining example of how curiosity, dedication and quality education can transform dreams into reality. As her journey gathers momentum, Sujata Lall has already become an inspiration for countless students across the islands. She carries with her not only her own aspirations but also the hopes of a region that now has one of its young minds reaching for the stars. Her success is a proud moment for her family, her school and the entire Andaman and Nicobar Islands, reminding everyone that even from the country's farthest frontiers, extraordinary dreams can take flight.

Breaking the deadly grip of ‘Ghost Nets’ on Andaman’s Marine Ecosystem

Port Blair: In a major initiative to protect the fragile marine ecosystem of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the Department of Fisheries on Wednesday conducted a “Ghost Net Removal Drive” at the Fish Landing Centre, Junglighat, removing nearly 600 kg of abandoned fishing nets that continue to threaten marine biodiversity long after being discarded. Known as “ghost nets,” these lost or abandoned fishing gears silently trap and kill fish, turtles, dolphins and other marine organisms. They also contribute to marine plastic pollution, damage

coral reefs and coastal habitats, and pose serious navigational hazards to fishing vessels, making their timely removal vital for the health of the marine ecosystem. The Department said the drive was part of its sustained efforts to promote sustainable fisheries management, improve sanitation at fish landing centres and encourage environmentally responsible fishing practices across the Islands. During the awareness programme, fishermen were sensitised to the dangers posed by ghost nets and urged not to abandon damaged

fishing gear at sea or near fish landing centres. Instead, they were advised to deposit unusable nets at designated collection points for scientific and eco-friendly disposal. The drive was coordinated by Hemanto Kirtonia, In-charge, Fish Landing Centre, Junglighat, with active participation from officials and staff of the Department of Fisheries, members of the fishing community and representatives of the Sri Vijaya Puram Municipal Council (SVP MC). Officials said the removal of ghost nets will not only help conserve the Islands’ rich



marine biodiversity but also improve cleanliness at fish landing centres and provide a safer and healthier working environment for fishermen. The Department of Fisheries has appealed to fishermen, fish traders and other stakeholders

to actively support future Ghost Net Removal Drives and adopt responsible fishing practices to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands’ invaluable marine resources for future generations.

Understanding Tolyamory: What Is the relationship term everyone is talking about?

The modern dating landscape is filled with complex vocabulary designed to categorize how individuals navigate intimacy, commitment, and personal boundaries. One concept receiving growing attention from relationship experts, sex therapists, and marriage counselors is tolyamory. Coined by American advice columnist and podcaster Dan Savage, the word is a clever portmanteau merging “tolerate” and “polyamory”. It specifically describes an arrangement in a long-term relationship or marriage where one partner chooses to tolerate, ignore, or deliberately look the other way regarding their spouse’s romantic or sexual pursuits outside the relationship. Unlike traditional monogamy, external affairs take place; however, unlike ethical non-monogamy, there is a total absence of open negotiation, shared ground rules, or explicit mutual consent. Key differences between ethical Polyamory and Tolyamory: Understanding the stark distinction between polyamory and tolyamory is critical, as the two dynamics represent fundamentally different



structural, ethical, and emotional frameworks within a relationship: Ethical Polyamory: Built on a foundation of open communication, full transparency, ongoing negotiation, and explicit consent from all parties involved. Everyone knows about external partners, and clear boundaries are collaboratively set to ensure mutual respect. Tolyamory: Relies heavily on silence, unsaid compromises, emotional distance, and turning a blind eye. One partner engages in extra-marital behavior or infidelity, while the other simply tolerates it frequently because they feel unprepared, unwilling, or financially unable to dissolve the primary relationship. Why Couples Stay in Tollyamorous Arrangements Relationship therapists emphasize that tolyamory is significantly

more widespread in long-standing marriages than public conversations might suggest. Partners often choose endurance and quiet acceptance over direct confrontation or divorce due to complex practical realities. Maintaining family stability for children, preserving financial security, preventing the division of shared assets, avoiding social or cultural stigma, and valuing overall companionship often outweigh the desire for strict sexual exclusivity. For some individuals, this dynamic becomes an unwritten trade-off that allows them to maintain a comfortable domestic life. However, mental health experts warn that long-term, unaddressed tolyamory frequently breeds deep-seated resentment, emotional burnout, anxiety, and a gradual erosion of self-worth over time.

Premchand Classic brings curtain down on month-long NSD Theatre Workshop in Islands



Port Blair: A powerful stage adaptation of Munshi Premchand’s timeless classic Duniya Ka Sabse Anmol Ratan brought the curtains down on the month-long Production-Oriented Theatre Workshop, leaving the audience deeply moved with its enduring message of compassion, selfless sacrifice, humanity and moral courage. Staged at the Andaman Club, the performance showcased the remarkable transformation of the workshop participants, who spent an intensive month mastering the finer nuances of acting, dialogue delivery, stagecraft and teamwork. Their polished performance earned prolonged applause from the

audience. The workshop, organised by the Directorate of Art & Culture, Andaman & Nicobar Administration in collaboration with the National School of Drama (NSD), New Delhi, was held from June 25 to July 24 with the objective of nurturing theatre culture among the youth and the general public of the Islands. Director of Art & Culture, Ms Priyanka Kumari, who attended the valedictory function as the chief guest, said the presentation of such a thought-provoking play was a fitting culmination to the workshop. She observed that the Islands possess abundant artistic talent

EDITORIAL

29 July, 2026

When the youth speak, democracy must listen

The nationwide protests under the banner of the CJP have emerged as one of the most significant youth-led democratic movements in recent times. What started as a student-driven campaign has evolved into a wider public movement, drawing support from civil society, professionals, social activists and several political parties. The participation of the younger generation reflects growing concern over issues that they believe will shape the country's future.

The movement has also found resonance in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, where the State Congress organised demonstrations in solidarity with the nationwide agitation. Though limited in scale compared to the mainland, the protests in the Islands underline that national concerns continue to evoke strong responses even in remote parts of the country. A notable feature of the broader movement has been the moral force generated by social activist Sonam Wangchuk, whose prolonged hunger strike became a powerful symbol of peaceful democratic resistance. His fast, conducted to press for dialogue and the safeguarding of the interests of Ladakh, drew nationwide attention and renewed public focus on the movement's demands. The sustained public support and mounting pressure eventually prompted the Government to agree to hold discussions with the movement's representatives. While the dialogue itself does not resolve the issues at hand, it reaffirms an important democratic principle—that engagement and negotiation remain the most effective means of addressing public concerns.

The unfolding developments offer important lessons for all stakeholders. Peaceful protest is a constitutional right and has historically played a vital role in shaping India's democratic journey. Equally, governments have a responsibility to respond with openness rather than indifference. Ignoring widespread public sentiment often deepens distrust, while timely dialogue can help build confidence and reduce confrontation.

At the same time, the growing involvement of political parties calls for caution. Political support can amplify public concerns, but it should not overshadow the original objectives of a people's movement. Student-led agitations derive their strength from credibility, independence and moral conviction. Excessive politicisation risks diverting attention from the core issues and reducing genuine public concerns to partisan contestation.

For India's youth, the movement is an opportunity to demonstrate that democratic participation is not confined to protests alone. It also involves informed debate, constructive engagement and respect for constitutional values. For the Government, it is a reminder that dialogue is not a sign of weakness but of democratic maturity. And for political parties, it is a test of whether they seek to strengthen public discourse or merely extract political mileage.

Ultimately, democracy flourishes not when dissent is suppressed, but when it is heard with patience and addressed with sincerity. The significance of the present movement will not be measured merely by the size of its rallies or the intensity of its protests, but by whether it succeeds in fostering meaningful dialogue, responsible leadership and durable solutions. In a vibrant democracy like India, the voices of the youth deserve not only attention but also thoughtful engagement.

British coin puzzle...

S. Balakrishnan

A small twenty pence British coin was making me go mad ('As if you are not already fully mad', someone is mumbling by me side); I could not make out the head or tail of that tiny coin – both figuratively and literally. The reverse of it showed the hind part of an animal with a long tail and clawed paws. Was it a fire-spitting dinosaur? My imagination went wild. Being a Harry Potter fan I hoped it could as well be a dragon, issued to honour the novel series and its author Ms. JK Rowling. It was then it struck me like a lightening that I could use Google lens to identify objects. The iPhone had been gifted by my daughter; oh, not a brand new one but the one she was using. Because she had switched to a newer version she dumped ('gifted'!) the older version. At 70+ years I am slowly struggling to learn its various uses and Google Lens is one such handy option. The search revealed that the coin is a part of a coin puzzle that forms the British Royal Coat of Arms. This fact aroused my interest further and I started nagging my relative living in London to get me all the six coins of that coin puzzle.

Surprised that there was such a coin puzzle set at all, she assured to get me one. 'We mostly use the phone to pay for all services & goods by just taping, so we hardly come across coins', she explained. The next time she flew down to Chennai she did bring two such sets, rolled in toilet roll paper (Yuck!). But it was the premium Cushelle toilet roll paper of UK to give a cushiony effect to the dear coins. One set I promptly presented to her by beautifully (?) framing the coins in a glass photo frame. I thoughtfully attached two peacock feathers to add elegance to the simple photo frame. Wish she had brought the One Pound coin also that depicts the coat of arms on the reverse side. Instead I put up a one pound coin with the Queen's bust. The total value of the set is 1.88 Pound Sterling which is 240.21 INR!

When UK's Royal Mint called for new designs on the

back side of coins in 2008, the winning set was designed by Mr. Matthew Dent who said, "This piecing together of the elements of the Royal Arms to form one design had a satisfying symbolism – of uniting the four countries of Britain (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) under a single monarch". The one pound coin at the top, showing the coat of arms, was the decision of the Committee that chose the final design. It was like icing on the cake.

As this coin puzzle set was designed in 2008 when Queen Elizabeth II was the ruler, the obverse of all these six coins invariably has the bust of the Queen. King Charles III took over on September 8, 2022 and was crowned on May 6, 2023.

The British Royal Coat of Arms has a quartered shield at the centre; three lions representing England are depicted on the top left quarter and bottom right quarter. On the top right section is the Scotland's single rampant lion while the harp musical instrument on the bottom left quarter represents Ireland. This quartered shield is supported by the English lion on the left and by the Scottish unicorn on the right. At the bottom is the French motto 'Dieu et

mon droit', meaning 'God and my right'. Though new designs are created when the next ruler ascends the throne, the constituent parts of the Royal Coat of Arms, however, have not changed and remain the same as they have been since Queen Victoria came to the throne in 1837.

I expected a perfect, closely-fitting puzzle, so I felt a bit disappointed by this British Royal Coat of Arms coin puzzle. But it was a novel idea created in the coins and, therefore, has added value to my numismatic collection.

.... Krishnanbala2004@yahoo.co.in/Whatsapp - 9840917608

**Don't fall prey to fake traffic Challan payment scams**

BY DR. DINESH

A new form of online fraud appears to be emerging in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, involving fake or misleading traffic challan payment requests. According to complaints received from some vehicle owners, fraudsters appear to obtain vehicle-related information and contact people claiming that a traffic challan remains unpaid or that an earlier payment has failed. They then ask the vehicle owner to make the payment once again. Since the amount involved is often relatively small, some people reportedly make the second payment without realising that they may have become victims of a scam.

The matter deserves immediate public attention. Significantly, a few traffic personnel are already aware of such fraudulent messages and have reportedly advised vehicle owners to ignore suspicious payment requests and verify the status of

any challan through official channels before making any payment. This awareness at the field level is encouraging, but wider public awareness is equally essential. Vehicle owners should never make any payment merely because they receive a phone call, text message, WhatsApp message or payment link claiming that a challan is pending.

Before making any payment, the status of the challan should always be verified independently through the official government traffic or e-challan portal. Citizens should also avoid sharing vehicle registration details, personal information, OTPs, banking credentials or payment-related information with unknown

Received a
Traffic Challan
SMS?



persons.

The police and the concerned transport authorities should investigate such complaints and determine whether vehicle data is being misused to target unsuspecting citizens. If any organised fraud is detected, stringent legal action should

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LAST LAUGH

No Receipts, Only Blessings

By MANMOHAN SINGH 'DANISH'

People are always eager to create controversies. These days, the donation business seems to be their favourite target. A few devoted followers have resigned from a trust, and FIRs have reportedly been registered against eight "honest" devotees. What a tragedy!

After all, there are organisations that have functioned for over a century amid allegations of operating without registration, transparent donation accounts, or income tax payments. Yet few seem interested in questioning them. But these newcomers are suddenly under intense scrutiny.

These are deeply spiritual people, detached from worldly possessions. Gold, silver and money mean nothing to them. If silver bricks found

their way into a building, what is so surprising? To saints, precious metals are no more than dust.

And remember the famous temple where tonnes of gold allegedly turned into brass after lying in a vault for centuries?

Fortunately, no major inquiry followed. Otherwise, people would have turned that too into a national scandal.

Questioning the honesty of such devotees is almost a sin. God, we are told, may never forgive such disbelief.

Not long ago, a humble priest gifted his daughter ten kilograms of gold jewellery at her wedding. He had no idea where it came from—it



was simply God's blessing. Yet now the government wants temple trusts to produce accounts. Asking for financial records in matters of faith? What an insult!

We must all unite to protect this sacred tradition. If this dangerous habit of demanding accountability continues, the day is not far when every donor contributing meagre one or two crore rupees will start asking for... a receipt!

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Don't fall prey to fake traffic Challan payment scams

be taken against those responsible.

Equally important is the need for a sustained public awareness campaign. The police and transport authorities should regularly issue advisories through newspapers, television, radio and educating citizens on how to verify genuine traffic challans and identify fraudulent payment requests.

The relatively small amount demanded in such cases may prompt some people to pay without verification. However, when repeated across many vehicle owners, these small fraudulent collections can result in significant financial losses. Citizens must therefore

remain vigilant. Pay a traffic challan only after confirming its authenticity through an official government platform. Never make a second payment simply because someone claims that an earlier payment was unsuccessful.

Awareness, verification and caution remain the strongest safeguards against emerging forms of digital fraud. A few moments spent verifying a payment request can prevent unnecessary financial loss and help curb such fraudulent activities before they become widespread. (The author is a well-known Dental Surgeon and a Freelance Journalist)

OPINION

"Oka Court Case" is a film worth watching, brings a contemporary social issue to the screen

By DR. DINESH

Some films are made merely to entertain. Others attempt to hold a mirror to society. Oka Court Case, a Telugu film written and directed by Dr. Ganesh Pudi, belongs to the latter category. Though the film has been awarded an 'A' certificate because of certain scenes required by its subject, it is, at its core, a film that parents and young people should watch and discuss. The film explores a contemporary social reality, relationships, separation and break-ups, and the emotional and legal consequences that follow. A subject that was rarely discussed openly three decades ago has now become increasingly visible in society. The growing number of relationship-related disputes and court cases raises questions not only about individual choices but also about the emotional preparedness of young people and the responsibilities of families. It is in this context that Oka Court Case attempts to start a conversation.

Written and directed by Dr. Ganesh Pudi, who hails from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the film is also a story of personal determination. After completing his undergraduate and postgraduate studies, Dr. Ganesh went to Canada. Yet his interest in cinema and his desire to tell stories eventually brought him back to pursue his dream of filmmaking.

The film features Suryaansh Ayila, who has roots in Amalapuram and Rajahmundry,

in the lead role. Dr. Taanish Mishra, who has connections with Delhi and Warangal, is also part of the cast. The film brings together a young team that has invested considerable effort and personal commitment in the project.

The Andaman Islands form an important part of the film's visual identity. Nearly 70 per cent of the movie was shot in the islands, with locations in Andamans such as Flag Point, the areas near Corbyn's Cove and the Cellular Jail providing a distinctive backdrop. The District and Sessions Court, G.B. Pant Hospital and Hornbill Nest are among the other locations featured in the film. The remaining portions were shot in Hyderabad.

Shooting in the Andaman Islands, however, comes with its own challenges. The unpredictable weather for which the islands are known often disrupted schedules. Technical difficulties, logistical constraints and the limitations of a low-budget production added to the pressures faced by the team. The making of the film was itself a demanding journey. During the shoot, the team worked under extremely challenging schedules. On one occasion, after a gap of barely four hours, the team continued shooting for nearly 24 hours. In a single day, nearly 22 costume changes were required as part of the demanding schedule. The lead actor continued working despite suffering from fever.

The commitment of the team was



further demonstrated when Dr. Ganesh Pudi had to be admitted to a hospital in Bengaluru for three days. Suryaansh Ayila stayed with the director during his hospitalisation, reflecting the bond and camaraderie that had developed among the members of the team during the making of the film. The music by Harsha Prawin adds another dimension to the narrative and complements the film's emotional landscape.

The title itself has an interesting story. The film was initially considered under titles such as Oka Court Deal and Oka Court Judgement. However, respecting the observations of the Censor Board, the makers changed the title to Oka Court Case. The 'A' certificate may initially lead some viewers to assume that the film is unsuitable for families. But the certification must be understood in the context of the subject and

the scenes necessary to portray it realistically. The film's underlying message is not one of sensationalism.

Rather, it seeks to encourage a conversation about relationships, responsibility, consequences and the growing burden on the legal system.

In an age when parents often struggle to understand the changing emotional world of their children, and young people frequently confront complex relationships without adequate guidance, films such as Oka Court Case can serve as a starting point for dialogue.

Cinema cannot solve every social problem. But it can ask uncomfortable questions. It can encourage families to talk. It can make young people reflect on their choices and consequences. That is the larger value of Oka Court Case. The film has been released simultaneously in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana

and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, allowing audiences in the islands to see a story created partly in their own surroundings and by a filmmaker with roots in the region. For a young filmmaker from the Andaman Islands, bringing such a story to the screen is itself an achievement. The film deserves an audience not merely because it represents fresh talent, but because it attempts to engage with a social issue that is increasingly becoming part of contemporary life.

Parents and young people should watch the film, discuss its themes and engage with the questions it raises. Good cinema deserves a chance. And sometimes, a ticket is more than the price of admission, it is an encouragement to a young team that dared to tell a story. The author is a well-known Dental Surgeon and Freelance Journalist).

Campbell Bay needs wings: It's time for a comprehensive civil aviation roadmap for Carnic, Diglipur and Rangat as well

Port Blair: Reports suggesting that the Central Government may have shelved the proposal to extend the runway at the Indian Navy's INS Baaz in Campbell Bay have triggered fresh concerns over the future of civil aviation connectivity in the strategically important Great Nicobar Island. While there has been no official confirmation from the Government of India on the reported decision, the development has once again brought into focus the urgent need for a comprehensive aviation strategy for the Nicobar and North Andaman regions. For the residents of Campbell Bay and neighbouring islands, air connectivity is not a luxury—it is a lifeline. Medical emergencies, movement of government personnel, students, defence logistics, disaster response and economic activities all depend heavily on reliable air links. With Great Nicobar emerging as a key strategic and economic hub under the Holistic Development Project, the demand for regular civilian air services is only expected to grow.

If the runway expansion at INS Baaz is indeed off the table, the Centre still has several practical alternatives. The most immediate solution would be to operationalise scheduled regional flights using 19-seater or similar small fixed-wing aircraft under the UDAN scheme from Sri Vijaya Puram to Campbell Bay via Car Nicobar. Such services have already been proposed and would substantially reduce travel time while improving access to healthcare, education and government services.

Another option is to strengthen helicopter connectivity by



introducing daily or multiple weekly services with modern helicopters capable of operating in varying weather conditions. These services would be particularly valuable during emergencies and the monsoon season.

The government could also develop INS Baaz as a permanent civil enclave through a joint-use arrangement with the Indian Navy, similar to the model adopted at several defence airports across the country. This would avoid the need for major runway expansion while allowing civilian aircraft operations under defined security protocols.

With tourism in Great Nicobar expected to expand gradually, charter flights and seasonal air services could initially cater to visitors until passenger volumes justify regular commercial operations. The aviation roadmap should not be confined to Great Nicobar alone. North Andaman is equally poised for transformation. The naval air station at Shibpur (INS Kohassa) near Diglipur has already been prepared for dual-use operations, and authorities have repeatedly indicated that it is ready to handle civilian flights. Once operational, the airport will cut travel time between Sri Vijaya Puram and Diglipur from nearly twelve hours

by road to about one hour, opening up immense opportunities for tourism, trade, agriculture and medical evacuation. The airport is also expected to provide a major boost to tourism in North Andaman.

Middle Andaman, too, deserves attention in the long-term aviation master plan. Although road connectivity has improved through the Andaman Trunk Road, the region remains vulnerable during natural disasters and prolonged disruptions. A small regional airstrip or STOL (Short Take-Off and Landing) facility in Middle Andaman would significantly strengthen emergency response, medical evacuation and administrative connectivity while promoting tourism across Baratang, Rangat and Mayabunder.

Experts point out that island territories require multi-modal transport networks rather than dependence on a single mode of connectivity. For an archipelago spread over nearly 800 kilometres, shipping alone cannot meet future mobility requirements.

As the Great Nicobar mega infrastructure project gathers momentum and North Andaman prepares for enhanced tourism, aviation infrastructure must evolve in tandem. Whether through runway expansion, civil enclaves, regional aircraft, helicopter services or new short-runway facilities, the objective should remain unchanged—ensuring that every major island has dependable, year-round air connectivity. For India's southernmost frontier, the question is no longer whether aviation infrastructure is needed. The real question is how quickly it can be delivered.



Continued from page 02

Who is responsible for the decaying govt accommodation in Nicobar Islands?

the remote islands. The representation further points out that the housing shortage is affecting the functioning of several key government departments, including Health, Education, Police, Forest, Revenue, Electricity, Public Works and Rural Development. It warns that inadequate residential facilities are discouraging officers and staff from accepting postings in the Nicobar Group, thereby impacting service delivery in critical sectors.

To address the issue, LOTE has urged the Administration to undertake a comprehensive structural audit of all government quarters in the Nicobar Group, construct modern climate-resilient residential units, replace unsafe and

condemned buildings, earmark dedicated funding for housing infrastructure in remote islands, accord priority accommodation to frontline departments and prepare a long-term housing strategy to meet future requirements.

Despite the severe nature of the crisis outlined in the text, the LOTE representation concludes on a collaborative note. Mr. Kumar expressed firm confidence that under the current leadership of the Andaman & Nicobar Administration, this deep-seated issue affecting hundreds of frontline government employees will receive sympathetic, rapid consideration and the necessary corrective policy actions at the earliest possible juncture.

Continued from page 01

CJP Founder escalates student agitation with fresh demands

conclude with a ministerial resignation alone. According to him, justice for affected families, accountability for police action and complete withdrawal of criminal proceedings against students remain the non-negotiable demands of the campaign. With student

protests continuing to gather momentum across several parts of the country, Dipke's address is expected to further intensify pressure on the government, signalling that the movement's leadership is preparing for a prolonged struggle beyond the resignation of the Union Education Minister.

Continued from page 03

Premchand Classic brings curtain down on month-long NSD Theatre Workshop in Islands

which can flourish with proper guidance and structured training in theatre and other performing arts. Expressing gratitude to the NSD faculty members, she lauded their month-long commitment to mentoring local artistes and helping them refine their theatrical skills. She also distributed participation certificates to the trainees. The workshop was conducted under the guidance of Shri Surendra Sharma, Workshop Director from the National School of Drama, assisted by Shri Avinash Deshpande. Besides enhancing

their acting abilities, participants gained a deeper understanding of the discipline, creativity and collaborative spirit that form the foundation of theatre. Earlier, Assistant Director of Art & Culture Ms Kanak Radha Chatterjee welcomed the chief guest and the gathering. The successful culmination of the workshop reaffirmed the growing enthusiasm for theatre in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and highlighted the importance of sustained training initiatives in nurturing the region's emerging performing arts talent.

Spider-Man swings in as a favourite amid ‘Mega Blockbuster’ buzz

Moviegoers eager to catch Spider-Man:

Brand New Day on the big screen will have to dig deeper into their pockets, with theatres across India rolling out premium ticket prices under the “Mega Blockbuster” pricing model as advance bookings officially commence. According to sources, the studio has informed exhibitors that Spider-Man: Brand New Day is being positioned as “the most anticipated film of the year” rather than just the season’s biggest release. Citing the film’s scale, legacy and premium appeal, the studio has instructed theatres to adopt the special pricing category reserved for event films. The “Mega Blockbuster” pricing strategy, introduced in recent years, has previously been implemented for high-profile releases such as Pushpa 2: The Rule, War 2 and Dhurandhar: The Revenge, all of which witnessed exceptional pre-release demand. Following the directive, multiplexes and cinemas



have opened advance bookings with ticket prices soaring well above regular rates. Most theatres are charging upwards of ₹300 per ticket, while premium screens and 3D formats have pushed prices into four-digit territory at select locations. Business insiders, however, point out that while Spider-Man: Brand New Day falls under the same premium pricing bracket, ticket rates remain marginally lower than those for Dhurandhar: The Revenge in most theatres. The latter’s unprecedented pre-release frenzy had prompted exhibitors to set



even steeper prices. Despite the nationwide trend of premium pricing, a handful of iconic single-screen theatres, including Mumbai’s Gaiety-Galaxy and Maratha Mandir, continue to offer tickets for under ₹200, providing a more affordable option for cinema enthusiasts. With strong advance bookings and heightened anticipation, industry observers expect Spider-Man: Brand New Day to emerge as one of the year’s biggest box-office attractions, reaffirming the growing trend of premium pricing for marquee cinematic events.

From Cricket field to Khaki: Bihar honours Akash Deep, Mukesh Kumar with DSP Posts

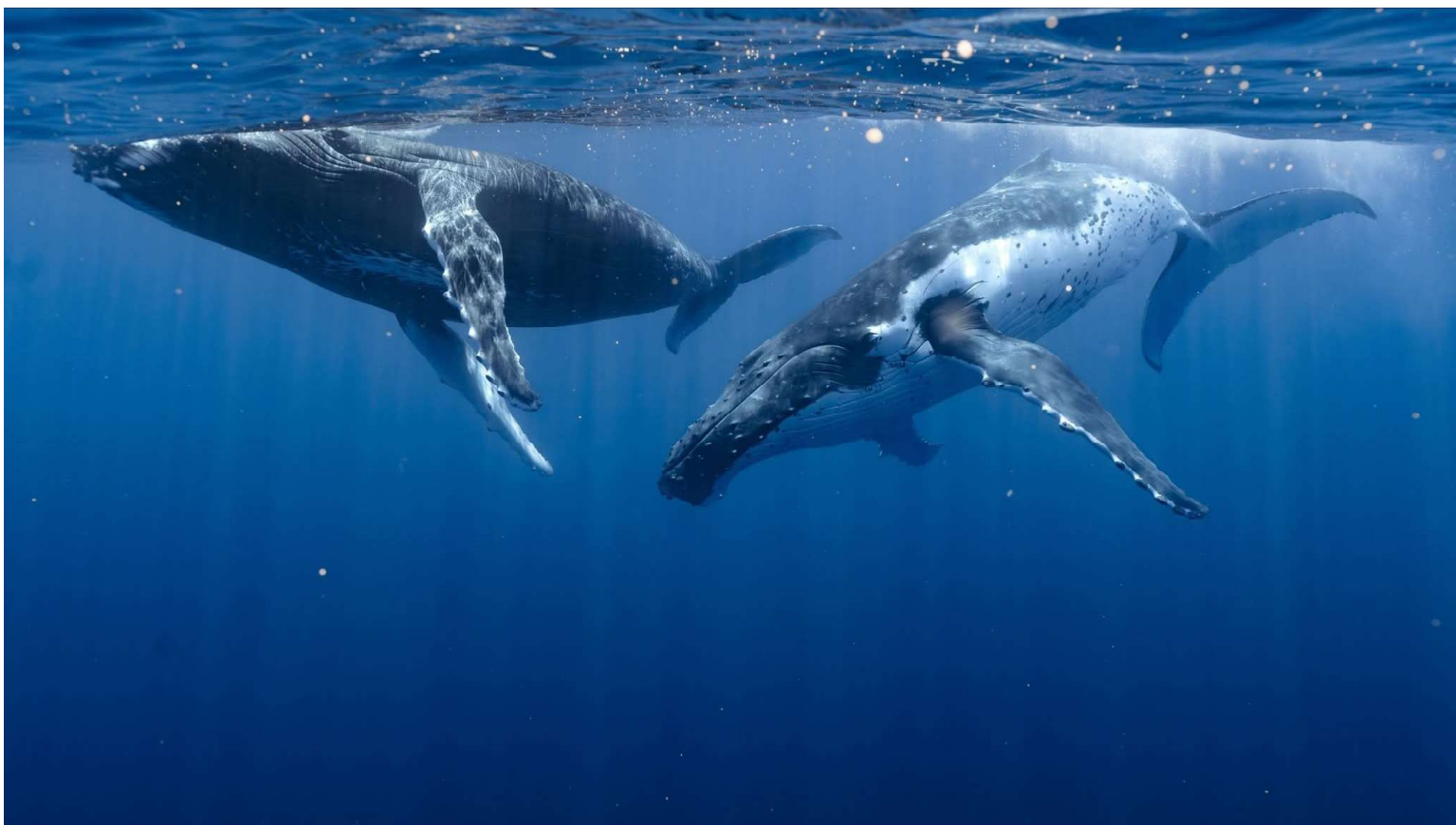


Patna: India’s pace duo Akash Deep and Mukesh Kumar have added another feather to their cap, this time off the cricket field. The Bihar Government on Friday appointed the two international cricketers as Deputy Superintendents of Police (DSPs) under its sports incentive scheme, recognising their outstanding contribution to Indian cricket. The appointment letters were handed over by Bihar Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary at a ceremony in Patna under the state’s ‘Medal Lao, Naukri Pao’ policy, which rewards athletes bringing laurels to the state and the nation with government employment. Expressing gratitude, both cricketers said the recognition

would inspire aspiring sportspersons across Bihar to pursue excellence. Akash Deep described the appointment as a “big responsibility”, while Mukesh Kumar said the state’s initiative would motivate young athletes to work harder and dream bigger. Interestingly, although both players represented Bengal in domestic cricket before breaking into the Indian team, they hail from Bihar and have emerged as role models for the state’s budding cricketers. The Bihar Government said the move reflects its commitment to recognising sporting excellence and encouraging talented youth by providing them with meaningful career opportunities alongside their achievements in sports.

Ocean Giants: A tale of Survival and Evolution

The Sea Whales have come into being/evolved 50 million years ago from four-legged land mammals into fully aquatic giants. Modern baleen whales expanded in size around 4.5 million years ago as ocean cooling altered food distribution. They lead a migratory life, traveling up to 5,000 miles each way between nutrient-dense polar feeding areas in summer and warm tropical breeding waters in winter. Fifty million years ago, the ancestors of modern whales walked on four legs. Today, humpback whales rule the high seas as massive ocean engineers. These gentle giants lead a migratory lifestyle, traveling thousands of miles along oceanic “superhighways”. During summer months, humpbacks gather in cold, nutrient-rich waters to feast, using cooperative



The photo captures humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) cooperative feeding—likely lunge-feeding or surfacing from a bubble-net trap.

techniques like bubble-net feeding to gulp tons of fish and krill into their expanding throat pleats. In winter, they travel to

warm tropical shallow waters to mate and nurse their calves, relying purely on stored fat reserves. Once hunted to near

extinction, international conservation efforts have sparked a remarkable recovery. Today, these majestic mammals

continue to shape marine ecosystems, serving as a vital symbol of oceanic resilience and evolutionary wonder.

► **Charity Begins at Home:** The Andaman Police deserve applause for their campaign against drugs and substance abuse. Officers have been visiting schools, Panchayats and public places, urging people to stay away from addiction and save their families from its devastating consequences.

A commendable initiative.

Only, the Grapevine insists the campaign would have packed a greater punch had the department first conducted a little "awareness drive" within the khaki fraternity.

Incidentally, this has absolutely no connection whatsoever with the newly opened bar at the Officers' Mess at Atlanta Point.

Pure coincidence. Cheers!



** Disclaimer: The pieces above are a work of satire. Any resemblance to anyone is purely coincidental.*

Toxic fruit ripening practices threaten consumer health; FSSAI tells States, UTs to intensify raids

Port Blair: In a major crackdown on unsafe food practices, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has directed all States and Union Territories to intensify surveillance and launch special enforcement drives against the illegal use of hazardous chemicals for artificially ripening fruits.

Reiterating its zero-tolerance policy, FSSAI has warned that the use of calcium carbide, commonly known as 'masala', for ripening fruits remains strictly prohibited under the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Regulations, 2011. The chemical, the food regulator said, poses serious health hazards, including vomiting, difficulty in swallowing, skin ulcers and other complications.

The Authority has also expressed concern over reports of certain Food Business Operators (FBOs) using ethephon solutions to hasten the ripening of fruits, particularly bananas. Clarifying the legal position, FSSAI stated that fruits and vegetables must never come into direct contact with ethylene in liquid or powder form. Only the controlled use of ethylene gas in accordance with prescribed safety standards is permitted.

To curb the malpractice, FSSAI has instructed Commissioners of Food Safety, Regional Directors and licensing authorities across the country to step up inspections at fruit markets, wholesale mandis, warehouses, storage facilities and distribution



centres. Special emphasis has been laid on seasonal fruit markets, where illegal ripening practices are more prevalent. The Authority has further directed enforcement agencies to launch dedicated drives against the use of banned ripening agents, including calcium carbide, as well as non-permitted ripening chemicals, wax coatings and synthetic colours used to enhance the appearance of fruits. It has cautioned that the presence of calcium carbide at storage or sale points may itself be treated as circumstantial evidence for initiating prosecution under

the Food Safety and Standards Act.

As part of the intensified enforcement strategy, officials have also been advised to use strip paper tests to detect acetylene gas in warehouses and ripening chambers, a key indicator of the illegal use of calcium carbide. The nationwide directive is aimed at safeguarding public health and ensuring that fruits reaching consumers are safe, naturally ripened and free from harmful chemicals, reinforcing FSSAI's commitment to food safety and consumer protection.

DID YOU KNOW?



Nearly 43 species of true mangroves thrive in this archipelago, predominantly belonging to the families Rhizophoraceae, Acanthaceae, and Lythraceae.

Mangrove Forests: The Emerald Shields

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands account for roughly 12% of India's total mangrove cover, spanning over 600 square kilometres. Unlike many mainland mangrove zones that suffer from industrial runoff, the mangrove ecosystems here are among the densest, tallest, and most pristine in South Asia.

Mangrove roots create a sheltered maze where juvenile fish, crabs, mudskippers, and prawns hide from open-water predators before venturing onto coral reefs.

RECIPE CORNER

Island Style Prawn Coconut Masala

A rich, aromatic and flavourful island delight with a coconut twist

This Island Style Prawn Coconut Masala combines succulent prawns with freshly ground coconut, aromatic spices and curry leaves. A perfect balance of taste and spice – best enjoyed with hot rice or soft chapati.

INGREDIENTS

- 500 gm prawns (cleaned)
- 1 cup grated coconut
- 1 onion (finely sliced)
- 2 tomatoes (chopped)
- 2 green chillies (slit)
- 1 sprig curry leaves
- 1 tsp ginger-garlic paste
- 1 tsp turmeric powder
- 1 tsp red chilli powder
- 1 tsp coriander powder
- 2 tbsp coconut oil
- Salt to taste

PREPARATION

- Step 1** Grind grated coconut with a little water to make a smooth coconut paste.
- Step 2** Heat coconut oil in a pan. Add ginger-garlic paste and sauté until the raw smell disappears.
- Step 3** Add sliced onions and curry leaves. Sauté until onions turn golden brown.
- Step 4** Add chopped tomatoes, green chillies, turmeric powder, red chilli powder, coriander powder and salt. Cook until tomatoes soften and oil separates.
- Step 5** Add the coconut paste and mix well. Cook for 2–3 minutes on medium flame.
- Step 6** Add prawns and cook for 6–8 minutes until prawns are cooked and the masala turns thick and flavourful.
- Step 7** Simmer for another 2 minutes. Serve hot with steamed rice or chapati.

HEALTH NOTE

- Prawns are an excellent source of:
- lean protein
 - omega-3 fatty acids
 - selenium & zinc – supports immunity and metabolism

SERVING SUGGESTION

- Best served hot with:
- steamed rice
 - neer dosa
 - chapati



FOOD FACT

Coconut adds healthy fats and natural sweetness to the dish, while curry leaves aid digestion and enhance the flavour naturally.



Try this recipe and share your feedback with us! Your kitchen stories inspire our island community.



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