

ANDAMAN DAILY

News & Views from Andaman and Nicobar Islands

by **NICOBAR TIMES**

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Republic Day 2025 Brings Relief to Nancowry Group as CHC Nancowry Resumes Meal Service for In-Patients



Tarun Karthick

**Sri Vijaya Puram,
27 January 2025**

On the momentous occasion of the 76th Republic Day, the Community Health Centre (CHC) Nancowry delivered a much-needed relief to the residents of the Nancowry Group of Islands by resuming

meal services for in-patients. This critical service, which had been discontinued in early 2023, left patients and their families grappling with significant challenges for nearly two years. As the healthcare facility with the most advanced infrastructure in the Nancowry Group,

CHC Nancowry serves as a lifeline for residents from Katchal, Chowra, Teresa, and other neighboring islands. Patients often travel long distances to seek medical care unavailable in their respective islands. The unavailability of meals for in-patients compounded the difficulties faced by

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Brookshabad Tsunami Shelter Fire: A Wake-Up Call for Revisiting Shelter Allotment Clauses and Ownership Rights



Tarun Karthick

**Sri Vijaya Puram,
27 January 2025**

On the eve of the 76th Republic Day, a tragic fire engulfed two permanent tsunami shelters in Brookshabad, South Andaman, reducing them to ashes and leaving two families devastated as they lost all their belongings.

Nicobar Times visited the site on 26 January 2025 to speak with the affected families. However, the families could not confirm the cause of the fire.

The Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004 displaced thousands of families across the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Initially, these families were housed in temporary shelters made from corrugated roofing sheets, which were later replaced with permanent tsunami shelters.

While the permanent shelters were a step forward, they were constructed with a singular design across most areas. Each unit comprises two homes with wooden panels

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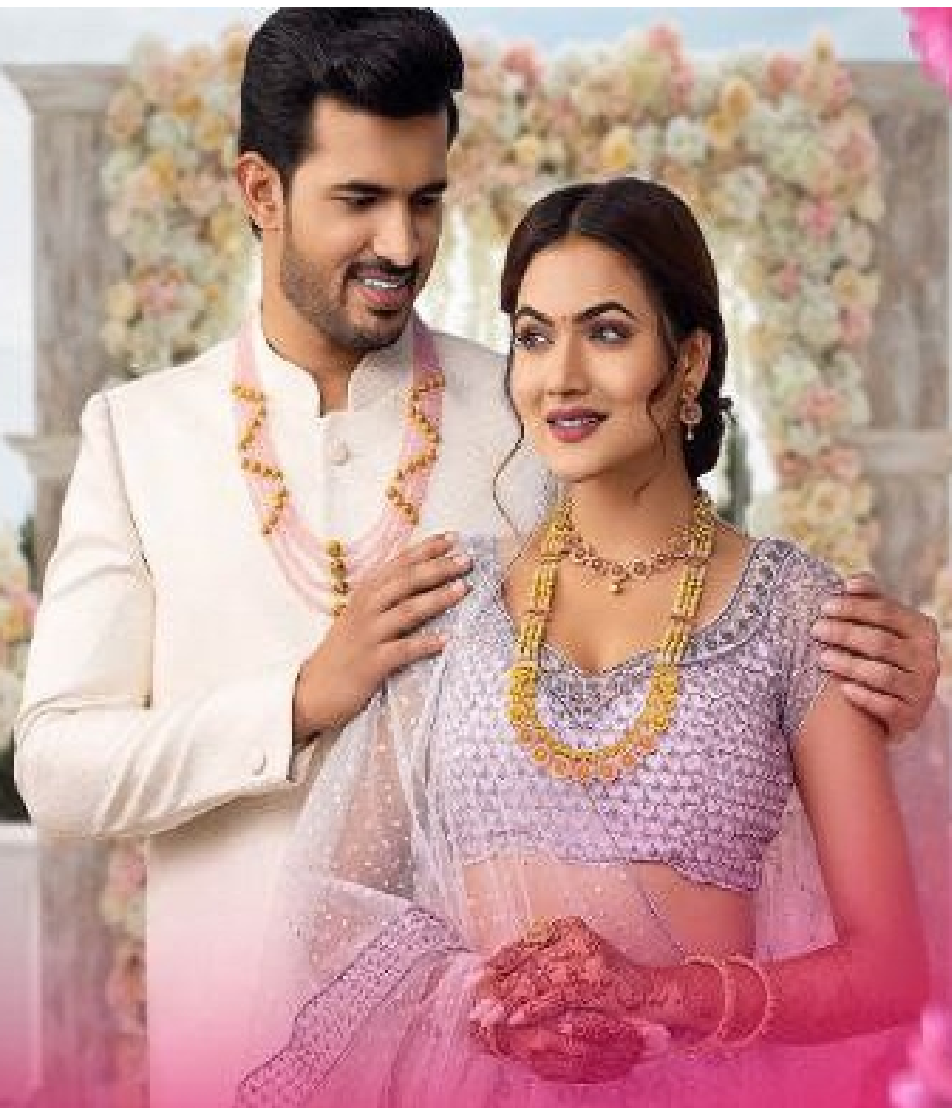
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13.455 Kg of Suspected Methamphetamine and Several Cannabis Plants Recovered by Diglipur Police



HC Sanjit Madhu, PC Bijoy Sarkar, PC Susen Das, PC Karuna Nidhan Singh, PC Neeraj Singh, PC Prabhakaran, PC Soma Dey and CT R C Rathore, with independent witnesses joining the team.

The raiding party then reached the residence of Dinabandhu Mondal. Upon arrival, his wife, Jyostna Kirtania, and son, Debash Mondal, were present, while Dinabandhu Mondal was reportedly out fishing. The police informed the family of their legal rights under Section 50 of the NDPS Act, 1985, and conducted personal searches. Debash Mondal was found in possession of a very small amount of suspected methamphetamine.

A thorough search was conducted inside the house and its premises. During the search, six cannabis plants were discovered. The plants

were confirmed to be cannabis after examination. Further searching of the property led to the discovery of 13.455 kilograms of suspected methamphetamine, concealed in mineral water bottles and polythene bags inside a temporary shed used for poultry farming.

The recovered substances were immediately sealed and marked with a brass seal for further investigation. The entire procedure was video-documented and photographed, following legal requirements. All recovered items, including the cannabis plants and suspected methamphetamine, were handed over to the PS Malkhana for safekeeping.

As per the FIR, Debash Mondal was detained for interrogation, while Jyostna

Kirtania, was not arrested due to legal provisions concerning female detainees after sunset, though she was kept under surveillance. Dinabandhu Mondal was absent during the raid. Preliminary inquiries indicated that Dinabandhu Mondal had brought the suspected methamphetamine from the coastal area of Durgapur, where he had been engaged in fishing activities.

The suspects have been booked under sections 20(a)(i) and 22(c) of the NDPS Act, 1985. Jyostna Kirtania has been charged under section 20(a)(i) of NDPS Act, 1985, while Dinabandhu Mondal is charged under sections 22(c) of the NDPS Act, 1985. The investigation is ongoing, and further actions are anticipated as police continue to probe the illicit drug operation.

Tarun Karthick

illegal activities.

Sri Vijaya Puram,
27 January 2025

In a major drug bust, the Diglipur Police seized 13.5 kilograms of suspected methamphetamine and cannabis plants from a residence in Durgapur, Ward No. 04, on 25th January 2025. The operation was carried out based on credible information, leading to the arrest and detention of individuals involved in the

The police received reliable intelligence that Dinabandhu Mondal, a resident of Durgapur, was cultivating cannabis plants at his residence. Acting swiftly, the police recorded the information in the General Diary and forwarded the information to SDPO Mr. Ankesh Yadav. A special raiding team was formed, including key officers Inspector Vijay Kumar (SHO), Sub-Inspector Mohd. Rafique,

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ICAR-CIARI Celebrates 76th Republic Day with Pride and Accomplishments



Rohit Kumar
Sri Vijaya Puram,
27 January 2025

ICAR-CIARI (Indian Council of Agricultural Research – Central Island Agricultural Research Institute), located in Sri Vijaya Puram, commemorated the 76th Republic Day with great patriotic enthusiasm on January 26, 2025. The event, held at the Institute's Garacharma campus, saw staff, students, and their families gather to celebrate the occasion.

Dr. E.B. Chakurkar, Director of ICAR-CIARI, raised the National Flag during the ceremony, followed by his address to the attendees. He expressed immense pride in the Institute's achievements over the past year, which have brought recognition both nationally and across the islands. In his speech, Dr. Chakurkar highlighted significant milestones, including advancements in patents, commercialization, breed registrations, and technology certifications.

"This year, we have made great strides in our scientific endeavors,"

Dr. Chakurkar remarked, noting that the Institute had been granted five patents and industrial designs. These include an acaricide formulation for tick control, a sex determination kit for non-ratite birds, a cinnamon bark rubbing tool, and a closed water circulatory system, with three of these already commercialized. An additional seven patents were submitted, further emphasizing the Institute's growing innovation and research capabilities.

Two of ICAR-CIARI's technologies were also certified by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), namely the Dweep carp grower feed and an iron therapy module for controlling piglet anemia. In a major boost to the Island's agricultural and livestock sector, three livestock breeds—Andamani goat, Andamani pig, and Andamani duck—were officially registered. Furthermore, two coconut varieties, Dweep Haritha and Dweep Sona, have been gazetted by the Government of India for cultivation under island conditions. The Institute has also secured a

trademark for "Dweep," which will be used in all future research products and technologies.

Dr. Chakurkar went on to commend the recent visit of the Parliamentary Standing Committee from January 19-23, 2025, which provided valuable insights into the Institute's progress. Additionally, he mentioned several key infrastructure developments underway, including the solarization of office buildings, the creation of a biofloc unit, an agro-eco-tourism initiative, a modern dairy unit, and the establishment of an ornamental fish breeding unit. In Lakshadweep, a fish aggregating device has been installed at Minicoy to aid in sustainable fisheries.

The Republic Day celebrations also recognized the outstanding achievements of individuals in the community. Mrs. K. Chellamal, a progressive farmer supported by the Institute, was honored with the prestigious Padmashree award. Fishery entrepreneur Mr. C. Arjun was presented with recognition from the Hon'ble President of India for his

pioneering work in freshwater ornamental fish culture. Mr. Chintaharan Biswas, an innovative mango farmer from Shaheed Dweep, successfully registered his mango variety as "Chinta Mango" with the PPVFRA (Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority).

Dr. Chakurkar concluded his speech by congratulating the entire team of ICAR-CIARI—scientific, administrative, technical, and support staff—for their unwavering dedication and support in fulfilling the Institute's research, development, and extension goals. He also extended his appreciation to the KVKs (Krishi Vigyan Kendras) and Regional Station, all of which have been integral in driving the Institute's success.

The Republic Day celebrations at ICAR-CIARI were a powerful reminder of the Institute's continued commitment to agricultural innovation and community empowerment across the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep.

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Ration Rasheed Foundation Marks 76th Republic Day with Mega Cleanliness Drive



and segregate various forms of waste, including plastics, liquor bottles, and other debris, ensuring responsible disposal to preserve the coastal area's natural beauty.

This initiative was more than just an environmental campaign; it was a tribute to the values of the Republic, reinforcing the collective responsibility to foster a cleaner and greener India. The drive highlighted the urgent need for sustainable waste management and pollution control, encouraging others to adopt eco-friendly practices.

Both the Ration Rasheed Foundation and GD Goenka Health Care expressed sincere gratitude to all participants for their dedication and commitment to this important cause. They called for continued collective action in the pursuit of a sustainable and environmentally-conscious future.

Rohit Kumar

Sri Vijaya Puram,
27 January 2025

In celebration of the 76th

Republic Day, the Ration Rasheed Foundation, in partnership with GD Goenka Health Care, organized a significant cleanliness drive along the

seashore near Megapode Road.

The event saw an impressive turnout of over 50 volunteers, including

students and foundation members, all coming together to combat environmental degradation. Participants worked tirelessly to collect



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G Disha Meenakshi Becomes Youngest Girl from Andaman & Nicobar Islands to Earn Arena Candidate Master Title



(ACM) title is part of the FIDE Online Arena's series of online titles, designed to recognize and encourage chess players worldwide. Unlike traditional FIDE titles, these are earned exclusively through online play on the FOA platform. To achieve the ACM title, a player must excel in online games across one of three formats:

- 150 bullet games,
- 100 blitz games, or
- 50 rapid games,

all with a performance rating above 1100.

The ACM title represents an important stepping stone in the competitive chess journey. It is an indicator of a player's strategic understanding, speed, and consistency in high-pressure situations.

Disha's achievement is a testament to her dedication, talent, and disciplined practice. Her success also marks a proud moment for the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, inspiring young chess enthusiasts in the region to aim for similar heights.

Rohit Kumar

Sri Vijaya Puram,
27 January 2025

Sri Vijaya Puram's young chess prodigy, G Disha Meenakshi, has

achieved a remarkable milestone awarded by the World Chess Federation.

Arena Candidate Master (ACM).

Disha is now the youngest girl A Class V student of PM SHRI KV 1, Sri Vijaya Puram, Disha and Nicobar Islands to attain this was conferred the ACM title

FIDE Online Arena (FOA) title, recently in recognition of her

outstanding performance in the FIDE Online Arena. She currently holds a Classical FIDE rating of 1416, highlighting her immense potential and skill in the sport.

The Arena Candidate Master

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President Murmu Presents Best Electoral Practices Award to South Andaman Deputy Commissioner Arjun Sharma



triumph, overcoming geographical isolation and challenging terrain. Extensive manpower planning ensured polling stations were set up across remote islands, including areas inhabited by Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs),” he said.

He emphasized the inclusion of the Shompen tribe in the election process, marking a historic milestone. “Members of the Shompen tribe actively participated in the polling process, and for the first time, the Jarawa tribes were included in the electoral roll during the recent Special Summary Revision. The Election Commission’s SVEEP campaigns were pivotal in raising awareness among indigenous communities, fostering their democratic participation,” Mr. Sharma added.

Despite transportation hurdles, Mr. Sharma noted that polling materials and officials reached all locations on time, enabling a peaceful and transparent election.

The award, instituted by the Election Commission of India, highlights the fair and inclusive electoral process executed in the A&N Islands Parliamentary Constituency. A one-minute video showcasing best practices during the 2024 General Elections in the region was also presented during the event.

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands were recognized alongside 10 other States and Union Territories in the General Category for their outstanding contributions to the democratic process.

President Murmu lauded the efforts of all awardees, emphasizing the importance of inclusive elections in strengthening India’s democratic fabric.

Tarun Karthick
Sri Vijaya Puram,
27 January 2025

The President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, graced the 15th National Voters’ Day celebrations held in the capital on 25th of

January 2025. In a ceremony commemorating the spirit of democracy, the President presented the prestigious Best Electoral Practices Awards to State and District officials for their exceptional efforts in ensuring smooth and inclusive elections.

Mr. Arjun Sharma, IAS, Deputy

Commissioner and Returning Officer, South Andaman, was conferred the ‘Best Electoral Practices Award, 2024-25’ for his exemplary management of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The award recognizes his efforts in overcoming logistical challenges and integrating remote tribal communities into the

electoral process.

Speaking to PTI after receiving the honour, Mr. Sharma highlighted the complexities of conducting elections across the geographically isolated and diverse terrain of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. “The Lok Sabha polls in the Islands were a logistical

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Three Andaman Representatives Attend Republic Day Celebrations in New Delhi on Invitation from Ministry of Jal Shakti for Role in Enhancing Rural Water Supply



Day celebrations, at the invitation of the National Jal Jeevan Mission, Ministry of Jal Shakti. Ms. Jyoti and Ms. Yasmeen were honored as "Water Warriors" for their outstanding contributions to the operation and maintenance of water supply schemes and water quality monitoring in their respective regions.

Ms. Jyoti is the only Pradhan in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands who operates and maintains the water supply within her panchayat, a model of success. Under her leadership, Sippighat's water supply system has been running smoothly, benefiting the local community.

Similarly, Ms. Tapashi Saha played a crucial role in the development of ponds at Badmash Pahar and Bachra Pahar in Chouldari, which serves as major water sources for the area. Her efforts have led to the successful development of four ponds, three of which are fully operational, resolving the area's water shortage issues. Thanks to these initiatives, Chouldari now receives regular water supply, unlike before, when it would be available only once every 4-5 days.

Ms. Yasmeen, who works in the water testing laboratory at Kamsarat Nallah under RCD Wimberlygunj, ensures rigorous monitoring of water quality in Ferrargunj Tehsil. Her tireless efforts include uploading water quality reports to the Water Quality Information Management System (WQIMS) of the Ministry of Jal Shakti.

The participation of these leaders at the Republic Day event has inspired other Pradhans in the region to take an active role in water asset management and raise public awareness about the importance of safe and sustainable water supply in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Their efforts are a testament to the success of the Jal Jeevan Mission in empowering local communities to manage their water resources effectively.

Rohit Kumar

Sri Vijaya Puram,
27 January 2025

In a significant recognition of their dedication to rural water supply management, three representatives from the Andaman and

Nicobar Islands were invited to attend the Republic Day celebrations at Kartavya Path, New Delhi, on January 26, 2025. The invitees were specially nominated as part of the Central Government's Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) to honour their efforts in ensuring safe, sustainable, and adequate water supply to rural

Jal Jeevan Mission, a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Jal Shakti, aims to extend 100% Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) coverage in rural areas across India. The mission also empowers local Panchayati Raj Institutions, with a special focus on involving women in water supply management. The three invitees from A&N Islands included

Ms. Jyoti, Pradhan of Sippighat and Chairperson of the Village Water Sanitation Committee, Ms. Tapashi Saha, Pradhan of Chouldari, and Ms. Yasmeen, a laboratory staff member at RCD Wimberlygunj, under the Andaman Public Works Department (APWD).

Their participation was part of the Republic



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National Voters Day Celebrated in A&N Islands with Walkathon to Promote Voter Participation



The Walkathon was flagged off by Ms. Jyoti Kumari, IAS, Secretary (IP & T), A&N Administration, with the presence of Mr. Vinayak Chamadia, IAS, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. Abhishek Gulia, Officer In-Charge (Elections), and senior officers from the A&N Police and District Administration. During the event, the Chief Guest addressed the participants, emphasizing the significance of National Voters Day and encouraging everyone to actively participate in the electoral process.

The Walkathon served as a platform to engage citizens and promote inclusive voter participation, underscoring the importance of every individual's vote in shaping the democratic process.

Tarun Karthick
Sri Vijaya Puram,
27 January 2025

The 15th National Voters Day was celebrated across the Andaman and Nicobar Islands with the theme "NOTHING LIKE VOTING, I VOTE FOR SURE." The event, aimed at promoting voter participation and raising awareness about the importance

of voting, was marked by a Walkathon that began from the historic Cellular Jail and concluded at Flag Point.



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A&N Islands Celebrates 15th National Voters' Day, Encourages Youth to Exercise Their Right to Vote



the democratic process. Dr. Kumar further highlighted that voting is a fundamental right in any democracy, and each vote matters in shaping the nation's future. He urged the eligible voters to exercise their franchise without hesitation or external influence.

In a ceremonial gesture, the Chief Secretary administered the Voters' Day pledge to the gathering, which included newly enrolled voters. Dr. Kumar also presented e-EPICs (Electronic Electoral Photo Identity Cards) to newly registered electors, including a Divyang voter.

The celebration featured a skit by JNRM students, emphasizing the power of the vote and the importance of voting in elections. In recognition of their exceptional efforts in voter registration and awareness, Ms. M. Radha, BLO of Ward No. 9-5, Sri Vijaya Puram Tehsil, and Mr. C.H. Tripat Rao, BLO of Shore Point-2, Ferrargunj Tehsil, were felicitated for their dedication to ensuring accurate voter records and encouraging voter participation.

A documentary on the General Election 2024 was also screened during the event, offering insights into the electoral process.

The program began with a warm welcome by Mr. Vinayak Chamadia, IAS, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, A&N Islands. In his address, he emphasized that National Voters' Day is an important occasion for raising electoral awareness and inspiring citizens to take an active part in the democratic process. The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Ms. Anuja Trivedi, IAS (P).

The celebration of National Voters' Day in A&N Islands was a reminder of the vital role every voter plays in the country's democracy, encouraging participation and promoting an informed electorate.

Rohit Kumar

Sri Vijaya Puram,
27 January 2025

The 15th edition of National Voters' Day was celebrated in the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands on January 25, 2025, with the theme

"Nothing like voting, I vote for sure." The event, organized by the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, A&N Islands, took place at the auditorium of TGCE, with Dr. Chandra Bhushan Kumar, IAS, Chief Secretary of A&N Administration, as the chief guest.

In his address to the gathering, Dr.

Kumar extended his greetings to the islanders on the occasion and emphasized India's status as the world's largest democracy. He reminded the audience of every eligible voter's right to vote and underlined the significance of National Voters' Day, which aims to encourage youth participation in elections and raise

awareness about the importance of voting nationwide.

"The day also marks the foundation of the Election Commission of India (ECI) in 1950," he stated, adding that the observance of the day since 2011 focuses on empowering citizens to vote and strengthening their involvement in

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CONTD Pg 1...Republic Day 2025 Brings Relief to Nancowry Group as CHC Nancowry Resumes Meal Service for In-Patients

families, many of whom travel from villages located far away from the CHC. The issue of meal services at CHC Nancowry had been a pressing concern for the local community. Tribal leaders, community members, and even the media—particularly *Nicobar Times*—consistently raised this issue with the Andaman and Nicobar Administration. Persistent efforts by various stakeholders have finally borne fruit, as the meal service resumed on this Republic Day,

bringing respite to patients and their families. According to sources, the revival of the meal service was spearheaded by Dr. Solomon Mark Paul, Medical Officer In-Charge of CHC Nancowry. Encouraged by senior officials within the Andaman and Nicobar Administration, Dr. Paul worked tirelessly to address this critical need and ensure the well-being of the community. Providing balanced and nutritious meals

is essential for a patient's recovery. The absence of proper meals can delay recovery and exacerbate the burden on families, who are often ill-equipped to provide regular food for their loved ones during hospital stays. While this development is a significant step forward, challenges remain in other healthcare facilities across the region. PHC Katchal and PHC Teressa, also under the Nancowry Group, still lack meal services for in-patients. Efforts are

reportedly underway to extend meal services to these facilities, ensuring that patients throughout the Nancowry Group receive the care and support they need. In Great Nicobar Island, similar issues persist at PHC Campbell Bay, where the meal service remains limited to a repetitive menu of rice and dal. This has been the norm for years, leaving much to be desired in terms of nutrition and variety. The Andaman and Nicobar

Administration must address these gaps urgently and prioritize the provision of nutritious meals for all in-patients across the islands. The resumption of meal services at CHC Nancowry is a beacon of hope for the community, symbolizing the power of persistence and collaboration. However, more work remains to ensure equitable healthcare access for all residents of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

CONTD Pg 1...Brookshabad Tsunami Shelter Fire: A Wake-Up Call for Revisiting Shelter Allotment Clauses and Ownership Rights

hooked to steel frames, thin plywood interior walls, corrugated sheet roofing, and electrical wiring running between the walls and through the roof. The families in Brookshabad revealed they were allotted the shelters around 2008 or 2009. After 15 years, these units are showing signs of aging, especially the electrical wiring and wooden structures, which pose significant fire risks. Adding to the problem, the allotment orders prevent residents from

making modifications or alterations to the shelters. A clause explicitly states: "Beneficiaries shall not incorporate any alterations, modifications, or additions to the shelter structure." This restriction leaves residents unable to replace ageing wooden panels with safer, more durable materials or upgrade to modern and safer electrical systems which would need alterations. Attempts to use alternative materials like hollow blocks for

any repairs have reportedly been stopped by the authorities, citing another clause that allows the administration to cancel allotments if terms and conditions are violated. The Brookshabad fire is not an isolated incident but a symptom of a larger, systemic issue. Tsunami shelters across the islands—from Campbell Bay to South Andaman—face similar risks due to the restrictive allotment conditions and the aging infrastructure. Without ownership

rights, families feel reluctant to invest in the upkeep or modernization of the shelters, further compounding the problem. The use of combustible wooden panels, coupled with outdated wiring, makes these shelters highly vulnerable to fire and other hazards. The administration must act swiftly to prevent future tragedies. Granting full ownership of the shelters to the occupants would empower them to make necessary modifications and invest in safety

upgrades. At the very least, the government should amend the allotment clauses to allow residents to use alternative materials for repairs and modifications. If these issues remain unaddressed, the Brookshabad fire will not be an isolated event but a recurring tragedy in tsunami shelters across the islands. The time to act is now—before more families are left to rebuild their lives from the ashes yet again.