

ANDAMAN DAILY

by

NICOBAR TIMES

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Final Flight: The End of a Dream as Sri Vijaya Puram's Lone International Air Link is Cut Off



**TARUN
KARTHICK**

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In the afternoon of 10th April 2025, as the engines of AirAsia Flight AK-54 roared one last time at 12:25 PM, a quiet heartbreak swept across the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It wasn't just a plane lifting off the tarmac of Veer Savarkar International Airport—it was the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of thousands of Islanders taking flight and disappearing into the sky, uncertain if they will ever return.

Just five months ago, on 16th November 2024, the islands stood on the threshold of a new era. In what was hailed as a historic milestone, AirAsia Flight AK-55 landed from Kuala Lumpur, becoming the first-ever international commercial flight to touch down at Sri Vijaya Puram. That day was etched into memory as the beginning of a new dawn—an era where Islanders could, for the first time, fly out of the country directly from their home. Business leaders rejoiced, tourism stakeholders brimmed with excitement, and a sense of connection to the world beyond had finally become real.

But on Thursday, that dream came to a sudden and painful end.

Without much fanfare, without an explanation that could soothe the sting, the international flight service was withdrawn—quietly, abruptly, and without a roadmap for what comes next.

The Veer Savarkar International Airport, which had proudly worn the ‘International’ title, now returns to being one in name only. With the exit of AirAsia, the airport is left once again without a single operational international route.

For the people of the Islands, this isn’t just a lost route—it is a lost opportunity, a collective failure, and a gut-wrenching disappointment. The withdrawal has left the business community in shock and the tourism sector devastated. There was widespread hope that the Administration and the Government of India would intervene, step in, negotiate, or incentivise AirAsia to stay. But whatever efforts were made—if any—weren’t enough. And what truly went wrong remains unknown.

Could the route not have been salvaged with fewer flights per week—maybe two, or even just one? Could cargo transport have supplemented the revenue to keep the route viable? These are

questions that now linger in frustration and silence. The reality is stark: AirAsia walked away.

And we—the Islanders, the administration, and the government—failed to make them stay.

The launch of the international flight had ignited boundless optimism. Every tourism stakeholder that Nicobar Times spoke with back then was filled with hope—hope for new tourists, for cross-border partnerships, for global recognition. Some even went the extra mile, investing time and money to market the Islands in Malaysia, and to promote Malaysia to Island visitors in return.

Today, those investments lie in limbo. The marketing campaigns, the brochures—all of it, seemingly in vain.

The sense of being forgotten has returned. For a brief window, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands had a foot in the global doorway. That door has now been slammed shut.

This is not just about a flight. This is about what it represented—connectivity, ambition, global belonging, and most of all, hope. That hope soared

high with AK-55 on November 16. And now, it is gone.

What remains is a piercing question: When will we fly international again?

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Labourer Succumbs at G.B Pant Hospital Days After Electrocution at Campbell Bay; Supervisor Booked



**TARUN
KARTHICK**

[READ STORY ON WEBSITE](#)

In a tragic incident that has raised serious questions about workplace safety protocols, a 38-year-old labourer succumbed to injuries sustained in an electrical accident at the MES Compound in Campbell Bay. The victim, Samar Mondal, a resident of Loknath Colony, Dollygunj, was employed by M/s Delta Electrical and was working under the supervision of Muni Raj when the incident occurred.

According to the First Information Report (FIR No. 0014/2025) lodged at the Campbell Bay Police Station, the accident took place on April 2, 2025, at around 11:00 AM. Mondal was painting a two-pole transformer structure when he accidentally came into contact with a live electrical wire. The electrocution caused him to fall and suffer severe burns on his chest, abdomen, and hands.

Following the incident, immediate first aid was administered and he was rushed to the Primary Health Centre (PHC) in Campbell Bay in a vehicle from INS Baaz. Due to the critical nature of his injuries, Mondal was unable to provide a statement at the time and was subsequently referred to GB Pant Hospital in Port Blair for advanced treatment.

On April 5, 2025, Assistant Sub-Inspector Muthu Kannan recorded the victim's statement at the hospital. Mondal revealed that he had been brought to Campbell Bay on March 11, 2025, by Supervisor Muni Raj for the purpose of electrical pole painting. He began work the next day, and on April 2, while painting, the power supply was abruptly restored, resulting in the electric shock.

Sadly, Mondal succumbed to his injuries during treatment at around 1:30 PM on April 9, 2025. A subsequent inquiry determined that the accident occurred due to gross negligence on the part of Supervisor Muni Raj, who failed to implement adequate safety measures before allowing Mondal to work on the transformer.

Based on the findings, Campbell Bay Police have registered a case under Section 106(1) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, which pertains to causing death by negligence.

This incident serves as a grim reminder of the importance of enforcing safety protocols, particularly in high-risk electrical work environments.



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Online Nominations Open for Padma Awards 2025



Padma Awards



**TARUN
KARTHICK**

[READ STORY ON WEBSITE](#)

The Government of India has opened the online portal for nominations and recommendations for the prestigious Padma Awards 2025. Citizens can submit nominations for Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Shri awards from March 15, 2025, to July 31, 2025.

The Padma Awards, announced annually on the occasion of Republic Day, are among the highest civilian honours in the country. They recognise "work of distinction" and are awarded for exceptional achievements and distinguished service across a wide range of fields, including Art, Literature and Education, Sports, Medicine, Social Work, Science and Engineering, Public Affairs, Civil Services, Trade and Industry, among others.

Nominations can only be submitted online via the official portal — www.padmaawards.gov.in — developed by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). Anyone can nominate an individual, and all Indian citizens, regardless of race, occupation, position, or gender, are eligible for consideration.

Each nomination must include comprehensive details as specified in the format provided on the portal, along with a narrative citation of up to 800

words outlining the nominee's exceptional achievements or contributions in their respective field.

Guidelines, statutes, and steps for submitting nominations are available on the same website. Nominators are advised to ensure that all required information is accurately filled in.

Departments or individuals intending to forward nominations through official channels are requested to submit them to the Office of the Assistant Secretary (GA) by July 4, 2025, to allow time for further necessary action. (Story Based on PR)



Two-Day Bank Linkage Camp Empowers SHG Women Towards Financial Independence



**TARUN
KARTHICK**

READ STORY ON WEBSITE

In a significant step toward promoting women’s financial empowerment and rural livelihood development, the Community Development (CD) Block Ferrargunj organized a two-day Bank Linkage Camp aimed at strengthening financial inclusion and supporting credit access for Self-Help Group (SHG) members. The initiative particularly focused on identifying and empowering “Lakhpati Didis” – women entrepreneurs who are building successful livelihood ventures with the goal of earning at least ₹1 lakh annually.

The camp commenced at the Community Management and Training Centre (CMTC), Ferrargunj, where Block Development Officer Ms. Lalita Tigga welcomed participants and highlighted the crucial role SHG-bank linkages play in uplifting women and boosting grassroots economies.

Branch Managers from the State Bank of India’s Wimberlygunj and Ograbraj branches, along with the Branch Manager of Canara Bank, Ferrargunj, were present to guide SHG members through the bank linkage process. A total of 53 potential Lakhpati Didis from various Panchayats attended the first day of the camp. Of these, eight SHG members expressed intent to expand their

livelihood activities by submitting loan applications to the participating banks.

The second day of the camp was conducted at Stewartgunj Gram Panchayat, focusing on financial literacy and the role of bank linkages in scaling income-generating efforts. Twenty-seven SHG members took part in the session.

Bank officials detailed the SHG loan application process, required documentation, and emphasized the importance of maintaining sound financial practices. Additionally, the CRISIL Foundation team held awareness sessions on government pension schemes available to SHG members. Seven women successfully completed the bank linkage process by submitting all necessary documents.

The two-day event marked a meaningful step in empowering women through financial support and capacity building, reinforcing the administration's commitment to inclusive and sustainable development at the grassroots level. (Story Based on PR)



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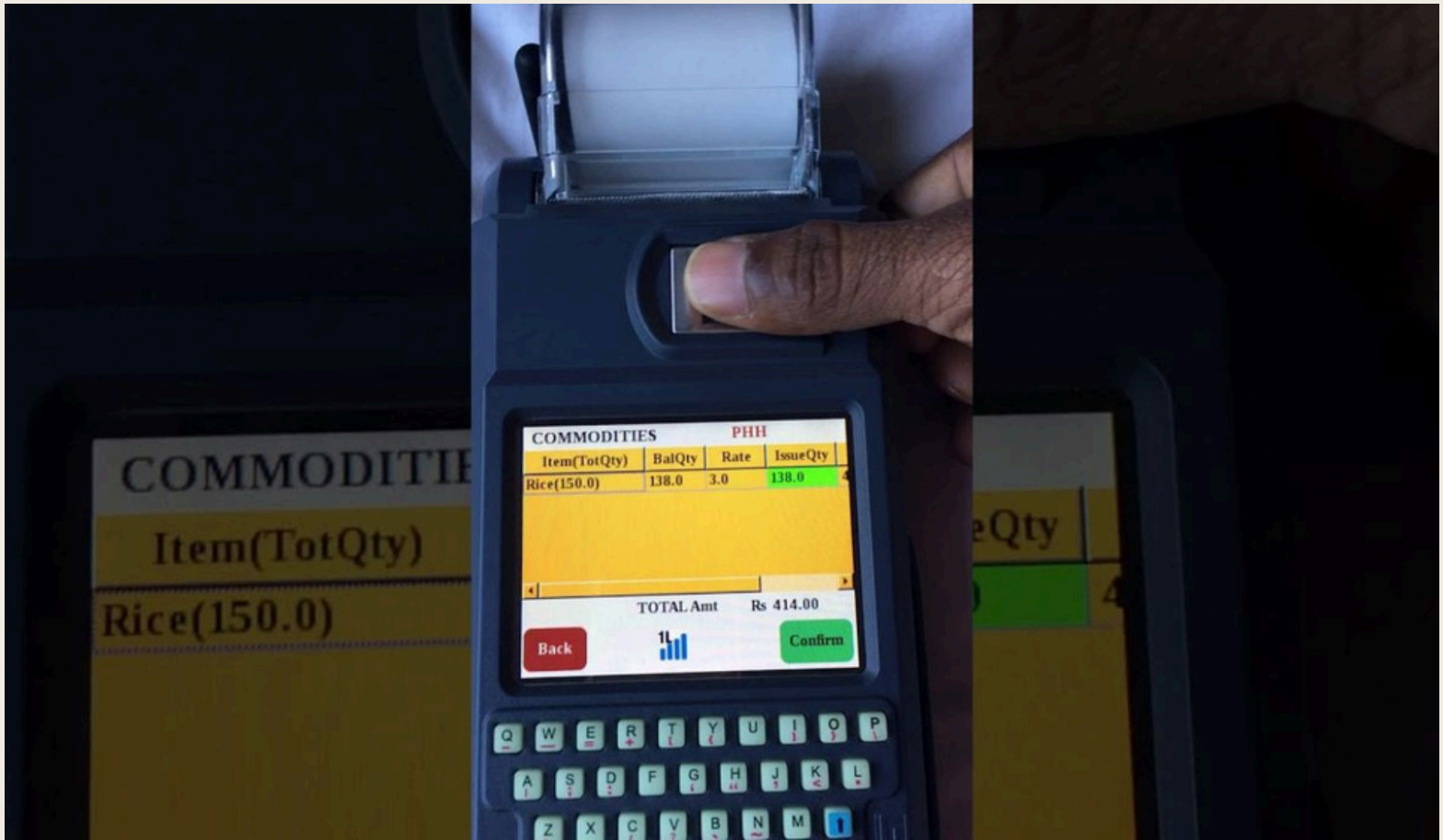
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Ration Card Services Temporarily Unavailable Amid Transition to SMART PDS System



**VIKAS
KUMAR**

[READ STORY ON WEBSITE](#)

The Department of Civil Supplies has informed the public that all Ration Card-related services will remain temporarily unavailable due to an ongoing system upgrade. The migration from the existing ePDS system to the more advanced SMART PDS system is currently underway.

The transition aims to streamline and modernize the public distribution system, enhancing transparency and efficiency. However, during this migration period, citizens will not be able to access any Ration Card services.

The department expects the migration process to be completed by April 20, 2025, after which normal services will resume.

Residents are advised to plan accordingly and are requested to bear with the temporary inconvenience caused during this essential system upgrade.



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ICDS Urban Project Observes Second Day of 7th POSHAN Pakhwada at Haddo With Recipe Competition



**TARUN
KARTHICK**

READ STORY ON WEBSITE

The ICDS Urban Project, under the Directorate of Social Welfare, observed the second day of the 7th POSHAN Pakhwada-2025 with a community-focused event held at the hall attached to Shree Krishna Temple, Haddo.

The event featured a recipe competition based on the theme 'Nutritional Food', aimed at promoting healthy eating habits through traditional recipes. The competition saw enthusiastic participation from members of the general public and Anganwadi Workers.

Mr. Someshwar Rao, Councillor of Ward No. 2, graced the occasion as the chief guest. In his address, he highlighted the key provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and stressed the importance of personal hygiene in safeguarding the health and well-being of children.

Ms. Zarina Bibi, Child Development Project Officer (Urban Project), spoke on the objectives of the ongoing POSHAN Abhiyan, which is being observed across the country from April 8 to 22. She emphasized the role of a balanced diet in ensuring proper nutrition, especially for children and mothers.

Adding to the informative session, the Community Health Officer (CHO), Haddo, delivered a compelling talk on the significance of the first 1000 days of a child's life. The speech underscored how this critical window plays a pivotal role in shaping a child's physical growth and cognitive development.

The event reinforced the message of POSHAN Abhiyan—ensuring holistic nourishment through community engagement and awareness.



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Five-Day Free Prosthetic and Orthotic Camp Begins at CRC Brookshabad



**TARUN
KARTHICK**

[READ STORY ON WEBSITE](#)

A five-day free Prosthetic and Orthotic Camp, organized by Rotary Club, Port Blair, in collaboration with Mahaveer Seva Sadan and Composite Regional Centre (CRC) for Skill Development, Rehabilitation and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, A&N Islands, commenced on 10th April 2025 at the CRC premises in Brookshabad.

The initiative marks a major step forward in promoting inclusivity and enhancing mobility for persons with disabilities across the islands.

A specialised team of prosthetic and orthotic technicians from Kolkata has arrived to provide high-quality, personalised care. The team, led by Mr. Gautam Roy, Chief Prosthetist & Orthotist at Mahaveer Seva Sadan, is offering custom fittings for artificial limbs and orthotic devices. On the first day around 50 beneficiaries from various parts of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands received professional assistance.

The services provided include prosthetic limbs for upper (arms, hands) and lower limbs (legs, feet, toes), and orthotic devices such as ankle-foot orthoses for conditions like foot drop, cerebral

palsy, and stroke, as well as knee-ankle-foot orthoses for individuals affected by polio and muscular dystrophy.

The inaugural event was attended by Mr. Sagar Khurrana, President of the Rotary Club, along with other club members, Ms. Raj Mahajan, Founding Member of Mahaveer Seva Sadan; and Ms. Sumithamol S, Director of CRC A&N Islands.

The camp will conclude on April 14, 2025, with a valedictory function during which the prosthetic devices will be formally handed over to the beneficiaries. Individuals in need of these services are encouraged to register before the deadline on April 13. For more information, interested persons may contact Mr. T.Y. Abid, Lecturer in Physiotherapy at CRC, Brookshabad, at 9632490149.



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Government Offices in A&N Islands to Remain Closed on April 14 for Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Birth Anniversary



**TARUN
KARTHICK**

READ STORY ON WEBSITE

The Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Andaman and Nicobar Islands has announced that all government offices across the Union Territory, including industrial establishments, will remain closed on Monday, April 14, 2025.

The closure is in observance of the birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and is in line with the instructions issued by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Department of Personnel and Training, Government of India, through Office Memorandum No. 12/4/2020-JCA2 dated March 27, 2025.

Dr. Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution and a prominent social reformer, is commemorated nationwide for his contributions to the upliftment of marginalized communities and his enduring legacy in the realm of social justice.



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Ten-Day Andaman Nicobar Book Fair Concludes with Enthusiastic Participation



**TARUN
KARTHICK**

READ STORY ON WEBSITE

The ten-day Andaman Nicobar Book Fair, organised by the Department of Art & Culture, A&N Administration, in collaboration with the National Book Trust (NBT) of India, concluded on a high note at the ITF Ground, Sri Vijaya Puram, on Wednesday. The event aimed to promote reading habits and literary awareness, particularly among students and young readers across the Islands.

Dr. Chandra Bhushan Kumar, IAS, Chief Secretary of the A&N Administration, graced the valedictory function as the chief guest. In his address, he extended heartfelt gratitude to the National Book Trust for its partnership in bringing the Book Fair to the Islands and commended the visiting publishers for their enthusiastic participation.

“The presence of publishers from the mainland reflects their affection for the people of these Islands,” said Dr. Kumar. He emphasised the collective responsibility of society in nurturing reading habits among children and youth. Highlighting the presence of libraries, including in schools throughout the Islands, he stressed the importance of fostering a culture of reading across all age groups.

During the event, the Chief Secretary also felicitated NBT officials, resource persons, and artists for their contributions in making the Book Fair a meaningful and enriching experience.

Earlier in the evening, Ms. Jyoti Kumari, IAS, Secretary (Art & Culture), welcomed the guests and acknowledged the support of the Chief Secretary and NBT in organising the fair. She noted the enthusiastic participation in educational sessions conducted by local resource persons, the popular Children's Corner by NBT, and the immersive VR show presented by the Department of Information, Publicity and Tourism (IP&T).

In her vote of thanks, Ms. Priyanka Kumari, Director of Art & Culture, expressed appreciation to all stakeholders, particularly the National Book Trust, for their role in the smooth execution of the event.

The Book Fair featured 31 stalls showcasing approximately 30,000 books spanning a wide array of genres and authors. Visitors had the opportunity to explore and purchase titles directly from publishers, making the event a vibrant celebration of literature and learning.



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