

# **An Open Letter to My Young Friends**

**My dear young friends,**

For more than four decades, I have dedicated myself to students, teachers, and the cause of educational reform. I have always believed that a strong, inclusive, and forward-looking education system is the foundation of a strong nation.

I deeply respect the aspirations, emotions, and legitimate expectations of the youth of our country. Fulfilling the dreams of India's younger generation has always been a moral commitment in my public and political life. I am grateful to the Hon'ble Prime Minister for giving me the opportunity to serve the nation under his visionary leadership.

However, the irregularities that came to light in the NEET-UG examination held on 3 May 2026 have been deeply painful. The Government of India acted immediately by handing over the investigation to the CBI, cancelling the examination, and announcing a fresh examination. It was also decided that from next year onward, the examination would be conducted in the Computer-Based Test (CBT) mode.

During this period, our foremost priority was to ensure that the examination for more than 2 million students was conducted smoothly. A whole-of-government approach was adopted, with the active cooperation of the Central Government, State Governments, particularly district administrations, as well as students, parents, and guardians. As a result, the re-examination was successfully completed on 21 June 2026.

From the very first day, I accepted responsibility and never turned away from the situation. I remained committed to ensuring that no deserving student would lose an opportunity because of examination mafias and that no student would be subjected to injustice.

The NEET-UG results declared on 16 July were satisfactory, and many meritorious students from economically weaker backgrounds also achieved success.

Even during this period, however, certain individuals occupying responsible positions attempted to mislead people and create obstacles. This caused me deep anguish.

I have always had unwavering faith in the strength of our democracy and have consistently respected the aspirations, dreams, and expectations of our youth. They are not only India's future but also the builders, creators, and architects of a new and developed India.

The events of the past ten days have saddened me deeply. For me, this has never been a matter of personal prestige.

The youth of India are the nation's greatest strength.

It is my resolve that our young people must not become trapped in a web of confusion and misinformation.

Considering the situation that has unfolded at Jantar Mantar and across the country, and to ensure that anti-national forces do not exploit these circumstances, that national unity remains intact, that not a single student's future becomes entangled in prolonged legal proceedings, and that our children remain focused on their studies and careers, I have submitted my resignation to the Hon'ble Prime Minister.

I express my heartfelt gratitude to the Hon'ble Prime Minister for his guidance, trust, and constant support. I also thank all my esteemed colleagues in the Council of Ministers, the officers and staff of the Ministry, and everyone with whom I had the privilege of working. Service to the nation has always been the highest priority of my life, and I shall remain devoted to it.

With the blessings of Lord Jagannath, I will continue to dedicate myself in every possible way to serving Mother India, the people of Odisha, and fulfilling the aspirations of the youth of our nation.

Yours sincerely,

**Dharmendra Pradhan**