

NATIONAL

Assam launches 'School on Wheels' project for economically weaker kids

The Assam government has launched a school on wheels project to bring the economically-disadvantaged children under the ambit of the conventional education system. According to official sources, the "Vidya Rath: School on Wheels" envisaged imparting elementary education to such children for 10 months. Subsequently, the sources added, that the government will integrate them into the conventional system of education. Under the project, the students will be given free mid-day meals, uniforms and textbooks. After launching the project at the Gauhati High Court on the occasion of Independence Day, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma expressed optimism it would help bring the children from poor families under the ambit of formal education. "The India of our dreams cannot be achieved without the uplift of the socio-economically disadvantaged sections. The project Vidya Rath: School on Wheels will go a long way in imparting education to the economically-challenged children and helping them to empower academically," he said. "Our children are the future of the nation. It is extremely painful to see many of our children, who should be in schools framing the foundations for a bright future, are instead engaged in begging on the streets, at bus stops, railway stations or picking up garbage, bottles," he said. Sarma expressed concern that many children drop out of school owing to the financial difficulties of their families and take to substance abuse. He said despite the best efforts of central and state governments, a chunk of the children were outside formal education.

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'Govt tapping tech to reduce pendency in courts'

With the number of pending cases nearing the 5-crore mark, Law Minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday said if a judge disposes of 50 cases, 100 new litigations are filed as people are more aware now and approach courts to settle disputes. Addressing the seminar on the functioning of the Armed Forces Tribunal in the presence of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Rijiju said the Government is tapping technology to reduce pendency in courts. Responding to a question during Parliament's monsoon session, the law minister had said that over 4.83 crore cases are pending in courts across the country. While over 4 crore cases are pending in lower courts, the Supreme Court is burdened with a pendency of over 72,000 cases. The minister said the proposed law on mediation will also help bring down the number of litigations in courts with a renewed focus on alternate dispute resolution mechanism. Rijiju also felt that there should be "no comparison" between pendency of cases in India and other countries as "we have a different set of problems". He said there are some countries that do not even have a population of 5 crore when the number of pending cases in India is nearing the 5-crore mark. He assured the law ministry is willing to offer any help to the Armed Forces Tribunal in quick delivery of justice.

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