



JANASANYOG, ASSAM  
CHIEF MINISTER'S PUBLIC RELATIONS CELL, DISPUR

PRESS RELEASE

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### **Raksha Mantri felicitates war veterans of 1971 War**

#### **CM Dr. Sarma reiterates government's commitment to welfare of war veterans, their family members and ex-servicemen**

**Dispur, April 23:** In the true spirit of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' to show the gratitude to the committed war heroes of Assam, who played an invaluable role in the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971, Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh in presence of Governor Prof. Jagdish Mukhi and Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma felicitated the veterans of the 1971 Indo-Pak war at a function held in Sankardev Kalakshetra here today.

It may be noted that on this occasion State government honoured nine war widows with Rs 10 lakh each, eight number of battle casualties with Rs 5 Lakh each, two number of war prisoners with Rs 2.5 lakh each and 86 number of war veterans with Rs 2 Lakh each.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma while paying his tributes to the bravery of the war veterans of the Indo-Pak War of '71 and offering his deep tribute to all the soldiers who laid down their lives in the line of duty, said that the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971 was a landmark event in the history of the Indian sub-continent. He said that the valour and sacrifice of the war heroes not only registered historic victory of India over Pakistan but also played a decisive role in realizing the dream of an independent Bangladesh.

Thanking Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh for his presence on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that the fact that Raksha Mantri himself was present on the occasion is indeed a recognition of the importance Government of India places on the war heroes and their sacrifices.

Pointing to the Indo-Pak War of '71 which culminated into signing of "Instrument of Surrender" of Pakistan Eastern Command on 16th December 1971, Dr. Sarma said that the war witnessed an unconditional surrender of 97,368 defence personnel of the Eastern Command of Pakistan, which was the 2nd largest surrender of the heavily armed military personnel, since World War-II. This simple fact was a testimony of the indomitable spirit and courage of Indian Army, Dr. Sarma added.

The Chief Minister also said that Assam's role in that war was not confined to the battlefield alone. Some of the police officers from Assam trained and equipped freedom fighters of the Mukti Bahini to take on the Pakistani Army. He also expressed his gratitude to Jnanananda Sarma Pathak and Biraja Nanda Choudhury, belonging to the Special Security Bureau (SSB) who played an important role in the Liberation War. He also paid his tributes to D. N. Sonowal and Hiranya Kumar Bhattacharyya, both belonging to the Indian Police Service for their roles in the operation. Dr. Sarma also paid his tributes to Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhupen Hazarika, whose songs had an electrifying effect on the liberation army. His song "Joy Joy Nobjato Bangladesh; Joy Joy Mukti Bahini" written as triumphal salutations to the newly sovereign Bangladesh and to the freedom fighters still fresh in everybody's heart.

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The Chief Minister said that while the brave hearts kept everybody secured, it is the bounden responsibility for the government to stand by them and their families. He, therefore, informed that fulfilling its commitment, government of Assam has initiated a number of steps including ex-gratia of Rs. 50 lakhs to the next of kin of deceased army personnel, job for ex-servicemen, reservation of seats for their wards in medical colleges. He also said that the government is also planning several other initiatives for their welfare. He however conceded that no matter how much the government takes care of the armed forces that will never commensurate the sacrifices they make to protect national interest and keep everybody secured.

Raksha Matri Rajnath Singh, Governor Prof. Jagdish Mukhi also spoke on the occasion. Lt Col (Retd) Quazi Sajjad Ali Zahir, a Bangladeshi veteran of 1971 war who was awarded with a Padma Shri also spoke on the occasion. Synchronizing with the event a booklet named 'The Bravehearts of 71' was also released.

Over 300 war veterans, Veer Naris and their families attended the felicitation ceremony. Some of the veterans of the 1965 war were also in attendance. Several Ministers, MPs, MLAs, senior government officers from civil and defence forces and people from all sections were present on the occasion.

SD/ April 23, 2022.

