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Chief Minister Dr. Sarma launches Chief Minister's COVID 19 Widows Support Scheme

Scheme is an attempt to provide financial security to widows of low-income family: CM

Dispur, July 11: In a bid to provide social and financial security to all widows who have lost their husbands in COVID 19 pandemic, Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma today launched Chief Minister's COVID 19 Widows Support Scheme at a programme held at Srimanta Sankardev International Auditorium in Guwahati today.

Under the scheme, a one-time financial assistance of Rs. 2.5 lakh would be given to such women who lost their husbands due to COVID. It may be noted that in order to claim entitlement to the scheme, the beneficiary's husband should have died with a COVID positive status and the beneficiary must belong to low-income group with an annual income up to Rs. 5 lakh.

While launching the scheme, Chief Minister Dr. Sarma handed over cheque amounting to Rs. 2.5 lakh each to 176 beneficiaries belonging to eight districts namely Kamrup (Metro), Nalbari, Darrang, Baksa, Morigaon, Nagaon, Goalpara and Kamrup. As of today, 883 beneficiaries have become eligible under the scheme, as Dr. Sarma handed over the remaining cheques to the Guardian Ministers to distribute them (cheques) to the entitled beneficiaries across the state.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Dr. Sarma said, "The occasion we have all assembled here is not a happy one, as the government is equally sad as much as the widows who have lost their husbands. Losing the loved ones is always painful. However, our government in its bid to provide a little support at this testing time, has decided to assuage the sufferings of the family members of the deceased with financial support". Dr. Sarma also said that the scheme has been launched to help the beneficiaries to lead a life of dignity in spite of pecuniary hardship that fate might lead them to in view of death of the head of the family.

Chief Minister Dr. Sarma said that though Assam also bore the brunt of COVID 19 pandemic, the government is doing its level best to be with the affected people with its men and materials. He also said that the government has already launched Sishu Seva Scheme to secure the academic future of the children who have lost both their parents in COVID. He also said that to help other victims of the COVID 19 pandemic, the government is also creating budgetary support as he asked Finance Minister Ajanta Neog to make sizeable allocation of funds for the purpose.

Earlier, Health and Family Welfare Minister Keshab Mahanta while speaking on the occasion gave an account of the State government's line of actions to contain and control COVID 19 pandemic. He said that with the help of the Chief Minister, though the State government with

its timely intensive and extensive interventions, the spread of the pandemic has been controlled, still the Health Department is working unrelentingly to bail the state out of the pandemic.

It may be noted that besides, Chief Minister's COVID 19 Widows Support Scheme, COVID induced widow will also be entitled to the benefits of *Arunodoi* scheme along with monthly widow pension under the ongoing Indira Miri Universal Widow Pension Scheme.

Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Minister Ranjeet Kumar Dass, Transport Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary, Environment and Forest Minister Parimal Suklabaidya, Handloom and Textile Minister U.G. Brahma, Agriculture Minister Atul Bora, Information and Public Relations Minister Pijush Hazarika, Education Minister Dr. Ranuj Pegu, Chief Minister's Political Secretary Jayanta Malla Baruah, Guardian Ministers, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Samir Kumar Sinha and host of other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

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Brewery