



Important Cabinet Decisions

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Merger of Vijaya Bank, Dena Bank, and Bank Of Baroda

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the merger of state-run **Vijaya Bank, Bank of Baroda and Dena Bank.**
- This marks the first-ever **three-way merger** in the country's banking sector. The merged entity will become the **third largest bank** in the country, after government-owned State Bank of India and private sector lender ICICI Bank.
- Bank of Baroda will be the transferee bank while the other two public sector banks will be transferor banks. That means the **businesses of Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank will be transferred to Bank of Baroda.**
- The board of Bank of Baroda will ensure that the interests of all transferring employees and officers of the transferor bank are protected.
- The merger will come into **force on April 1, 2019.**
- In September 2018, the 'Alternative Mechanism' (AM) headed by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had decided to merge Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank with Bank of Baroda.

National Health Authority

- The Union Cabinet has approved the restructuring of existing **National Health Agency as "National Health Authority"** with an aim to efficiently implement **Pradhan Mantri – Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY).**
- The National Health Authority will be an **attached office to the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare** and shall have full autonomy, accountability and the mandate to implement PM-JAY through an efficient, effective and transparent decision-making process.
- The NHA will be responsible for its operational guidelines, fixing the ceiling of premium amounts, and developing mechanisms for strategic purchase of healthcare from the private sector. It is also tasked with building a health information technology platform, and working with the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority.
- The post of the National Health Agency, CEO will be **upgraded** to that of a **Secretary**

to the **Government** of India with full financial powers.

High-Level Panel to Safeguard Assamese Identity

- The Cabinet has approved the setting up of a High Level Committee for implementation of **Clause 6 of the Assam Accord** (provides for protection of the rights of indigenous people of the state).
- The panel will recommend how to provide constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards to the indigenous people of Assam, including by reserving seats in the state assembly.

Background

- The government is facing criticism in Assam over the **Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016**, which proposes to make **minority (non-Muslim) immigrants** from three neighbouring countries — Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan — **eligible for Indian citizenship**.
- But as per the Assam Accord, any person who came to the state after the midnight of March 24, 1971, will be identified as a foreigner.
- So the proposed Bill is seen to violate the Assam Accord by **differentiating between migrants on the basis of religion**.

Assam Accord

- The historic Assam Accord was **signed in 1985** to end a six-year-long mass movement demanding detection and deportation of illegal immigrants, mostly from Bangladesh, who threatened the culture, identity and economic future of the indigenous people of Assam.
- Successive central and state governments have failed to implement key clauses of the agreement.
- The accord was signed between the **central and Assam governments on one side and the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and the now defunct All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP)**, who spearheaded the movement, on the other, in the presence of then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.
- According to the accord, all those foreigners who had entered Assam between **1951 and 1961 were to be given full citizenship, including the right to vote**; the entrants between **1961 and 1971 were to be denied voting rights for ten years** but would enjoy all other rights of citizenship; and those who had **done so after 1971 were to be deported under the provisions of the Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order, 1964**.
- However, it has been felt that Clause 6 of the Assam Accord has not been fully implemented, and therefore the Committee shall examine the **effectiveness of actions since 1985** to implement Clause 6 of the Assam Accord.

This high level committee will **also look into issues of the Bodo people**, especially the measures mentioned in the Memorandum of Settlement signed between the Government of India, Assam government and the Bodo Liberation Tigers Force in 2003.

The Cabinet also approved the establishment of a **Bodo Museum-cum-language and cultural study center**, modernization of existing All India Radio Station and Doordarshan Kendra at Kokrajhar and naming a Superfast Train passing through BTAD as **ARONAI Express**.

Bodo Accord

- The **Bodo Accord** was signed in **2003** which resulted in the establishment of an **autonomous administrative unit- Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) under Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India**.
- The Bodoland Territorial Council has been divided into **four districts viz. Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baska, and Udalguri**.
- The sixth schedule of the constitution provides provisions for the administration of Tribal Areas in the States of **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram**.