

Debabrata Saikia slams CM Himanta Biswa Sarma over Paresh Baruah remark



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NAZIRA, July 13, 2026 — Former Leader of the Opposition in the Assam Legislative Assembly, Debabrata Saikia, has strongly criticised Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma over his recent remarks on public wall art in Guwahati, describing them as "condemnable" and "unbecoming of a constitutional office-holder."

In a statement issued to the media on Monday, Saikia expressed concern over the Chief Minister's suggestion that if someone wished to paint portraits of revolutionaries, they should depict ULFA (Independent) commander-in-chief Paresh Baruah instead of figures such as Che Guevara. Saikia described the remark as "highly alarming" for the people of Assam.

He pointed out that ULFA has remained a banned organisation for decades under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), and that both the state and central governments have consistently designated it as a terrorist organisation. "Such a casual call by the Chief Minister to publicly glorify the leader of a banned militant organisation could create a dangerous situation in the state," Saikia said.

Raising further concerns, Saikia questioned what consequences an artist or student might face if they were to take the Chief Minister's statement at face value and paint Baruah's portrait on a public wall. He referred to an incident a few years ago in which a student was jailed for 63 days under the UAPA for posting a poem on social media.

"On one hand, the Chief Minister appears to invite such expressions, while on the other, the administration may arrest citizens under laws such as the UAPA or the National Security Act (NSA). Who, then, will be held accountable?" he asked.

Saikia further informed that he has written to the Governor of Assam, urging immediate intervention and seeking clarification from the Chief Minister regarding the intent behind his remarks. He stressed that the law must be applied equally to all and demanded that the Chief Minister apologise to the people of Assam for what he described as "provocative statements" and provide a clear explanation regarding his comments.

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