

Journos happy with budget sops



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[North East](#) Union of Working [Journalists](#) appreciated Assam finance minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for allocating various financial provisions for the benefit of scribes and media houses in the State. Placing the annual budget in the State legislative assembly on [7](#) February, Sarma proposed to launch the pension scheme for scribes and journalist family [welfare](#) funds from 2017-18 onwards.

Pointing out that many journalists dedicated their lives to the public service in the field of journalism and they need financial security after their retirement, the State finance minister proposed to constitute the journalist pension scheme in the line of litterateur, artist/artiste and sportspersons' monthly retirement benefits.

Recognizing the critical role of professional journalism in social advancement, Sarma also proposed for a journalist family [welfare](#) fund for providing suitable financial assistance to the bereaved family members of journalists losing their lives while in service due to various reasons.

He also announced a media fellowship of rupees 50,000 to the interested journalists for pursuing higher studies in relevant fields of journalism. Twenty such fellowships would be awarded in the year 2017-18, guidelines of all these schemes would be prepared by the State Information & Public Relations department.

Asserting that the government has already released around rupees 22 crore till 31 January 2017 to clear the huge pending advertisement bills in various media outlets, Sarma announced to streamline the mechanism of making payment of advertisement bills regularly. “Expressing happiness [over](#) the proposals, we urge the Information & Public Relations department to formulate the guidelines properly. We would also like to appeal to the department to include all working journalists, irrespective of IPR recognition, with few years of uninterrupted experience in the [State](#),” said a statement issued by the NEUWJ.

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