

Assam Minister Faces Backlash for Using Derogatory Term Toward Scheduled Castes



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Assam Minister Ranjit Das has sparked outrage after allegedly using a caste-based slur during an election campaign, prompting protests and a police complaint.

The controversy erupted while Das, a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader, was campaigning for a ruling coalition candidate in the 30-Bamunigaon constituency of the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council on March 18. During a public speech, he referenced India's four main social groups—"the poor, women, farmers, and youth"—but also used a derogatory word for Scheduled Castes in Assam.

The All Assam Scheduled Caste Youth Students' Union filed a complaint against Das at Dispur Police Station under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. The group's president, Sanjiv Das, accused the minister of "insulting marginalized communities despite taking a constitutional oath."

Minister Das later apologized, calling the remark unintentional. "The word slipped out inadvertently. I regret it and will be more cautious," he told reporters.

However, Sanjiv Das dismissed the apology, stating, "Such words don't come out unless they're ingrained in one's mind." He also accused the BJP-led government of being "anti-Dalit," citing cuts to welfare schemes for Scheduled Castes.

The group plans to escalate the matter to the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, the president, and the prime minister.

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