

# Borbora resolve to meet challenges

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Assam Chief Minister Golap Chandra Borbora has reiterated his Government's resolve to wipe out poverty, attain economic self-reliance, work for upliftment of backward classes and narrowing down the regional disparities and imbalances.

Admitting that the task before his 3-week old Government was quite formidable, the Chief Minister told Express News Service in an exclusive interview at Dispur that he was confident of meeting the challenge of development planning and growth with the co-operation of the people of Assam.

Mr. Borbora said that a proper climate for greater association of the people in the developmental activities of the Government had to be created. Grass root workers of the ruling Janata Party, he felt, would have to play a vital role in this matter.

The Chief Minister said that the Government decision to make education free up to class X, exempt revenue on agricultural holdings up to 10 bigas and to withdraw the 30 p.c. surcharge on land revenue imposed in 1972 had earned a great fund of public goodwill to his Government.

The gains, he added, would have to be further consolidated by effective implementation of these decisions within a reasonably short time. "People will judge us by our performance and not promises", he admitted.

The annual visitation of floods, influx of foreigners from across the borders with Bangladesh, immigration of Nepalese settlers, long outstanding border disputes with neighbouring states (Nagaland, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh), growing unemployment transport and communication bottlenecks, tardy growth of industries and spiralling prices of essential commodities are the main problems on the priority list of the new Janata Government, Mr. Borbora added.

The State Government, he said,

proposes to impress upon the Centre the necessity of undertaking long term and comprehensive flood protection measures whereby the Brahmaputra and Barak valley systems could be tamed and their potential utilised for generation of hydro-electric power and irrigation.

The security measures along the border with Bangladesh will be further strengthened and patrolling intensified to check influx of Bangladesh nationals into Assam.

The outstanding boundary disputes with adjoining States of Nagaland, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh, Mr. Borbora felt, could be resolved in a spirit of mutual give and take through bilateral discussions. If need be, the assistance of the Union Government could be sought to resolve the differences.

Mr. Borbora said his Government would give top priority to the removal of transport and communication bottlenecks to pave the way for speedy industrialisation.

The public distribution system would be streamlined and adequate reserves of essential commodities, particularly foodstuffs, would be built to curb the galloping prices, he added.