

# Assam Eviction Drive

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## Assam Eviction Drive : A Battle for Land, Identity, and Order

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### Context

The **Assam government's eviction campaign** targeting **encroachers on forestlands, wetlands, and religious lands** has had **regional implications**, especially for the **northeastern states bordering Assam**. These states have taken preventive measures to avoid the **influx of evicted individuals**, raising broader issues of **illegal migration, land encroachment, and inter-state tensions**.

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### Introduction

Assam has historically dealt with **demographic pressures**, particularly those stemming from **migration across its porous international border with Bangladesh**. The **Assam Accord of 1985** and subsequent legal measures laid the foundation for actions against illegal settlers. The current eviction drive is a continuation of this long-standing policy to protect **indigenous identity, land rights, and environmental integrity**, but it has also raised **humanitarian and geopolitical concerns** in the region.

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### Physio-Geography of Assam

- Located in the **northeast of India** and is the **most populous state in the region**
- **National borders:** Arunachal Pradesh (North), Nagaland and Manipur (East), West Bengal (West), Tripura, Meghalaya, and Mizoram (South)
- **International borders:** Bhutan (North), Bangladesh (South)
- **Physiographic regions:** Northern Himalayas (Eastern Hills), **Brahmaputra Plains**, and Deccan Plateau (Karbi Anglong)

- **Climate:** Tropical monsoon rainforest climate with **high humidity** and **heavy rainfall**
  - **Major rivers:** Brahmaputra and its tributaries
  - **National Parks:** Kaziranga, Manas, Dibru-Saikhowa, Nameri, Dehing Patkai, Raimona, Orang
  - **Indigenous communities:** Bodos, Mishings, Karbis, Rabhas
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## Reasons for the Evictions

- The drive primarily targets **illegal encroachers**, particularly those alleged to be **Bangladeshi-origin Muslims** often referred to as 'Miya'
  - **Assam Accord (1985)** provided a **cut-off date of 24 March 1971** for detecting and deporting illegal immigrants
  - **Religious encroachments:** Over **15,288.52 bighas** of satra (Vaishnav monastery) lands are illegally occupied across **29 districts**
  - **Forestland encroachments:** As of **March 2024**, **3,620.9 sq. km** of forest area was reported encroached (as per Environment Ministry)
  - **Wetland encroachments:** In **2022**, houses of **130 families** were demolished at **Silsako Beel**, a wetland in Guwahati
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## Eviction Process

- Based on the political promise of **protecting jaati (race), maati (land), and bheti (home)** (since 2016)
- **Gauhati High Court** ordered reclamation of encroached forestlands
- **First eviction drive** began in 2016 near **Kaziranga National Park**
- Between 2016 and July 2025, **1,080 families** were evicted from **135 hectares** in **Goalpara**

## district

- Government has committed to make Assam **encroachment-free by 2035**
  - Recent evictions in **June 2025** have allegedly targeted **Bengali Muslims**, but non-Muslims were also affected
  - **Tribal communities residing before 2005** (under Forest Rights Act) are exempted
  - At least **12 Ahom families** were provided **fast-track resettlement** after eviction from grazing reserves in **Lakhimpur district**
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## Challenges for Neighbouring States

- **Nagaland** reported that **200 vehicles** carrying suspected illegal migrants were intercepted before eviction began in Assam
  - Fears in **Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, and Meghalaya** over **cultural dilution** due to incoming Bengali-speaking migrants
  - Several of these states are protected under the **Inner Line Permit (ILP)** system, which restricts entry of outsiders
  - **Encroachment disputes** are central to boundary conflicts with **Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland**
  - These four states have allegedly occupied **83,000 hectares** of Assam's land since they were carved out between **1963 and 1972**
  - **Gauhati High Court** directed all five states to set up a **high-level committee** to address encroachments and facilitate coordinated action
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## Conclusion

A **collaborative and legally sound approach** is essential for resolving eviction-related tensions and **interstate disputes**. Maintaining **transparency**, ensuring **rehabilitation**, and respecting **indigenous rights** can help in preserving both **social harmony** and **ecological balance**. Effective coordination between northeastern states will be key in addressing the **complex**

**demographic and territorial issues** linked to illegal settlements.

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