Adequate funds for women’s safety in State budget demanded

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, July 10: As the State government prepares to present its first budget on July 16 in the State Assembly, women’s rights activists in Assam have demanded adequate fund allocation for women’s safety in Assam. The State tops the chart in crimes against women, with such crime rates here three times more, compared to the national average.

The North East Network, which has submitted a representation to the State Finance Minister Ajanta Neog responding to the government’s initiative towards public engagement on the budget, has stated that a multi-dimensional unified response to eliminate all forms of violence against women is needed for both public and private spaces. The organisation pointed out that this approach has to be developed within the framework of good governance and budgetary dimensions.

“Low public spending is a constraint to achieve the highest safety standards for women and to achieve successful development plans. A higher magnitude of public spending with State policy on women’s safety and protection is the crucial need of the hour,” it stated.

For the upcoming State budget 2021-2022, the organisation demanded allocation of appropriate budget for implementation of a State policy for women on safety and protection with a State-level task force comprising members of government, court and legal services, women’s organisations, women’s commission, women’s helpline number and public sector undertakings. It also advocated allocation of an adequate budget for appointment of full time ‘Protection Officers’ or ‘Assistant Protection Officers’ under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence (PWDV) Act.

Allocation of adequate budget for the state nodal agency to ensure effective implementation of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act for both formal and informal sectors was also demanded along with equal distribution of fund to establish Swadhar Greh and Ujjwala homes especially in districts, which do not have these services to ensure long term housing and shelter facility for women.