**Assam counters girls’ early marriage with stipends**

The Assam government has announced a fiscal scheme for girl students in a bid to prevent them from being married off before they come of age. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday said the State Cabinet had approved the Mukhya Mantri Nijut Moina scheme as an “admission assistance” to help increase the enrolment of girls in institutes of higher studies. According to the scheme, girl students enrolled in Class 11, the first year of a degree programme, and the first year of a postgraduate programme in government-run schools, colleges, and universities will be provided with a monthly stipend.