Assam Accord 1985

Why in news?

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- All Assam Students' Union (AASU) met Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh along with Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal. It was the first tripartite discussion on the Assam Accord since May 2005.
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- Thirty-two years after it signed the Assam Accord with the Centre and the Assam government in 1985, **the AASU is still upset** that major issues mentioned remain unresolved.
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What is Assam Accord?

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- The Assam Accord (1985) was a Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) signed between representatives of the Government of India and the leaders of the Assam Movement in New Delhi on 15 August 1985.
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- The accord **brought an end to the Assam Agitation** and paved the way for the leaders of the agitation to form a political party and form a government in the state of Assam soon after.
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- **Some of the key demands were** – All those foreigners who had entered Assam between 1951 and 1961 were to be given full citizenship, including the right to vote.
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- Those who had done so after 1971 were to be deported; the entrants between 1961 and 1971 were to be denied voting rights for ten years but would enjoy all other rights of citizenship.
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- A parallel **package for the economic development** of Assam, including a second oil refinery, a paper mill and an institute of technology, was also worked out.

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- The central government also promised to provide '**legislative and administrative safeguards** to protect the cultural, social, and linguistic identity and heritage' of the Assamese people.
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- Though the accord brought an end to the agitation, some of the key clauses are yet to be implemented, which has kept some of the issues festering.
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What was discussed during the tripartite talk?

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- While describing the talks as "positive" and "encouraging", Gogoi said the AASU would oppose any move by the Centre to pass the Citizenship Amendment Bill that proposes to grant citizenship to Hindus from Bangladesh.
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- Gogoi said, "The Constitution of India, as also the Assam Accord, **does not differentiate among illegal migrants and foreigners on the basis of religion.** We made it clear before the home minister that we will stiffly oppose any such move."
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- The AASU leader said Rajnath assured them the Centre would not do anything that would "dilute" the accord.
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- The AASU says that since 1985, when the Assam Accord was signed, **nothing concrete has been done by the Centre** for providing constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the indigenous communities of Assam.
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- AASU and the Asom Gana Parishad have also been expressing concern over the growing clout of illegal migrants and people of that descent in the state's political arena.
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- The Union home minister has assured the AASU that the Centre was committed to a flawless exercise for updating the National Register of Citizens and providing constitutional and economic safeguards to the indigenous people.
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Source: The Indian Express

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