The Assam government’s announcement allocating a fresh quota for certain new categories of candidates in the MBBS admissions in the state’s medical colleges from the current year has been received with mixed reactions across the state. According to one of the several decisions taken last Friday, the Cabinet approved the amendment to the MBBS/BDS admission rules and increased the reservations for six communities, these being Moran, Mottock, Tai Ahom, Chutia, Tea Tribes, and Koch Rajbongshi. The amendment also ensured ten percent of the total remaining MBBS seats after deduction of 15 per cent of the all-India quota central pool, NEC quota, and Royal Government of Bhutan quota seats to be reserved annually for NRI/NRI-sponsored students who have cleared NEET UG. The Cabinet also reserved ten per cent of the MBBS seats for the economically weaker section quota in the six medical colleges located at Guwahati, Dibrugarh, Silchar, Jorhat, Tezpur, and Barpeta. The official break-up of the MBBS/BDS seats in Assam however is not readily available in the website of the Director of Medical Education (DME) which does not appear to have been updated for several years. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had a few weeks ago stated that there are altogether 1500 seats for MBBS in twelve medical colleges which are currently functional in the state. Unofficial statistics doing the rounds on the other hand have shown that of these 1500 seats, 15 percent (225) are kept aside for all-India reservation, six for the Central pool, two for the Bhutan government and twelve for the North Eastern Council (NEC) quota, leaving 1255 seats for the state. Of these again, since the Assam government has kept aside 10 per cent (126 seats) for NRIs, the state is left with 1129 seats. Of these 1129 seats, 27 per cent are reserved for the OBCs (305 seats), seven per cent for the Scheduled Castes (79), 10 per cent for the Scheduled Tribes (113 seats), 30 for the Tea Tribes, seven each for the Moran and Mottock candidates, nine each for Tai Ahom and Chutia candidates, 12 for Koch Rajbangshis, four for Char areas, three for ex-Servicemen, two each for freedom fighters’ families, families which lost a member in militant attacks and families of martyrs of the Assam movement, five per cent for Divyangs (56 seats), 10 per cent for economically weaker sections (113 seats) and one for sports quota. This adds up to 1225 seats, thus

leaving 375 seats for the ‘General’ category candidates.