

India: Millionaires dominate election in Nagaland

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One of India's poorest states, Nagaland has almost no industry and a long-running armed rebellion. The state budget heavily depends on central government subsidies and military spending. Most residents are very poor. But the proportion of millionaires among election candidates has risen from 27% in 2008 to 59% in the state election to be held on 27 February.

Nagaland: 114 of the 193 candidates in the February 27 assembly polls are millionaires

In terms of per capita income, Nagaland may be one of the poorest states of the country. A look at the assets declared by the candidates contesting the February 27 assembly elections in the state, however, points at a different picture – that the wealth in the state is concentrated among a select few.

According to the details furnished by 193 candidates, 114 of them have declared themselves to be millionaires.

The figure has emanated from an analysis conducted by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR). It found that 59% of those in the fray have mentioned assets worth crores. The richest candidate contesting the polls is the Janata Dal (United)'s Ramonga Lotha (at Rs 38.92 crore), followed by BJP's K. L. Chishi (at Rs. 38.2 crore) and former chief minister Neiphiu Rio of the newly formed Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party at Rs 36.41 crores. State chief minister T. R. Zeliang announced assets worth Rs 3.52 crore.

With no industry, and an ingoing insurgency, the state budget is mostly dependent on the Central government. The population is about 20 lakh (2 million) people. In such a scenario, the steady rise of the assets of the candidates is noteworthy. The ADR report said while in 2008 only 27% of the candidates declared their assets in crores, the figure rose to 45% in the 2013 polls. It has now escalated to 59%.

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