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## Assam Authorities Rescue 27 Girls from Suspected Trafficking Attempt on Vivek Express

August 2, 2025

– Categories: Human Rights



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The Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Government Railway Police (GRP) have rescued 27 girls, including three minors, from a suspected human trafficking operation aboard the Dibrugarh, Kanyakumari Vivek Express. The operation, conducted at New Tinsukia junction

in Assam, also resulted in the arrest of five suspects allegedly posing as members of a private non-governmental organization (NGO).

The arrested individuals identified as Hemanta Saikia, Mitali Bailong, Swapna Hazarika, Pranjali Baruah, and Jitu Dutta are all residents of Tinsukia district. They were presented before a local court on Friday. According to the RPF, the group was allegedly transporting the victims to Tamil Nadu under the pretext of offering them jobs.

The incident began on Wednesday night at Dibrugarh railway station when RPF personnel observed a large group of young women traveling together, prompting further questioning. The women stated they had been promised employment in Tamil Nadu; however, inconsistencies between the company's details and the official passenger list raised suspicion. The RPF and GRP then intervened, debarking the group at Tinsukia for verification.

An RPF official from the New Tinsukia division reported that most of the rescued women are in their twenties and belong to tea garden communities and local Assamese families in Tinsukia and Dibrugarh districts. Authorities noted that the victims were taken without parental consent, with the minors immediately placed in protective shelter and arrangements made to reunite them with their families.

GRP Officer-in-Charge Probhat Saikia confirmed that legal proceedings have begun and that investigations are underway to identify and dismantle the larger trafficking network involved. "This rescue is part of an ongoing drive to curb human trafficking in high-risk transit areas, especially in the northeastern states," Saikia said.

Officials emphasized that the rescue aligns with broader efforts to protect vulnerable populations, particularly young women from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, from exploitation. Railway stations in the region are considered significant transit points for traffickers, making security checks and coordinated law enforcement operations critical to prevention.

The successful intervention highlights the importance of vigilance, inter-agency cooperation, and swift action in combating human trafficking in India's transport corridors, especially ahead of major national events such as Independence Day, when monitoring is heightened.