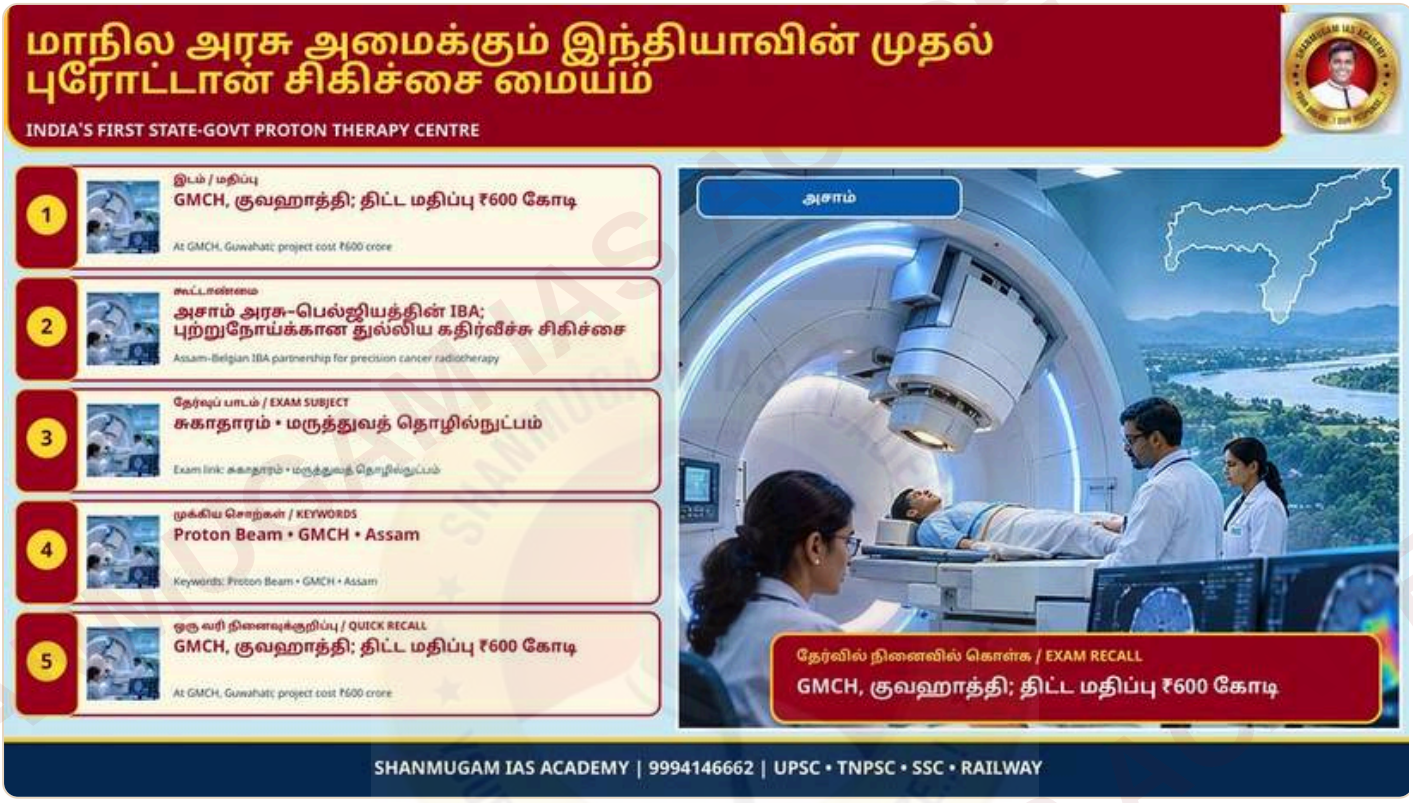
India's first State Government-established proton therapy centre: Assam signs pact for ₹600-crore unit at GMCH, Guwahati

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News

On 31 Oct 2026 the Assam Government signed an MoU with the Indian arm of Belgium's Ion Beam Applications (IBA) to set up a Proton Beam Therapy centre at Gauhati Medical College and Hospital (GMCH). CM Himanta Biswa Sarma announced it. The total cost is about ₹600 crore (machine, building, staff training) – ₹315 crore as a World Bank loan and ₹285 crore from the State. The State Cabinet approved it in August 2026; set-up will take at least 3 years. IBA's 'ProteusONE' system will be used. It will be India's third proton centre and the first set up by a State Government.

Key facts

MoU	31 Oct 2026 – Govt of Assam & IBA Particle Therapy India (arm of Belgium's IBA)
Site	Gauhati Medical College and Hospital (GMCH), Guwahati
Cost	≈ ₹600 crore: World Bank loan ₹315 crore + State ₹285 crore (World Bank-aided ASSIST project)
Timeline	At least 3 years; Cabinet nod Aug 2026
Other centres in India	Apollo Proton Cancer Centre, Chennai (2019 – private); Tata Memorial Centre ACTREC, Navi Mumbai (2023 – Dept of Atomic Energy)

Note	Not the 'first public-sector' centre – Central Govt's Tata Memorial Centre runs one since 2023; Assam's is the first by a State Govt

Background

- Science: conventional radiotherapy uses X-rays (photons), which pass through the tumour and also damage healthy tissue behind it. Protons are positively charged particles; accelerated in a cyclotron, they release most of their energy at a set depth – the 'Bragg peak' – and then stop. So tissue beyond the tumour is spared; it is especially useful for childhood cancers and tumours near the brain, spinal cord and eyes.
- Proton therapy in India: (1) Apollo Proton Cancer Centre, Taramani, Chennai – opened on 25 Jan 2019 by Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu; billed as 'South-East Asia's first proton therapy centre'. (2) Tata Memorial Centre's (TMC) Kharghar campus (ACTREC), Navi Mumbai – the 'National Hadron Beam Therapy Facility', dedicated to the nation by the PM on 11 May 2023, treating patients since 15 Aug 2023. As TMC works under the Union Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), it was the country's first public-sector centre.
- Polity: 'Public health and sanitation; hospitals and dispensaries' is Entry 6 of the State List (List II), so States can set up advanced hospitals themselves. In Assam, the 'Assam Cancer Care Foundation', a joint venture of the State Government and Tata Trusts, runs a three-tier network of cancer hospitals – 12 of the planned 17 are functional.
- Geography: Guwahati lies on the south bank of the Brahmaputra; Assam's capital Dispur is within Guwahati. Patients from the North-East will no longer need to travel to Mumbai or Chennai.

Tamil Nadu link: India's first proton therapy centre began in Chennai – the Apollo Proton Cancer Centre (Taramani), opened on 25 Jan 2019 by Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu in the presence of then CM Edappadi K. Palaniswami.

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