

Barpeta Blunder: Will Rahul-Gogoi pay heavy price?



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Never did Rahul [Gandhi](#) think that his statement targetting BJP and RSS would run into a hail of anger across Assam after the Barpeta monastery [controversy](#). But it has happened. That too four months before the assembly polls where his party pins hopes on four consecutive term with [Tarun Gogoi as](#) Chief Minister.

The simmering anger started bursting in the Vaishavite town [as soon as](#) the [Congress](#) vice president named RSS alleging to have faced hurdle to visit the monastery before an end to his two days visit to Assam. With this statement, [Gandhi](#) was trying to justify Chief Minister [Tarun Gogoi](#)'s accusation [against](#) RSS and BJP.

Basistha Deba Sarma, the head of the 16 century monastery straightly denied any presence of political elements inside it. " It is a religious place only meant for religious and cultural activities. Where Rahul [Gandhi](#) and [Tarun Gogoi](#) saw any political connection? It is unfortunate," said Deba Sarma.

He further said that the ancient site of Vaishnavite culture should not be dragged in to a paralyzing political [controversy](#).

Taking on the [Congress](#) vice president who claimed to have faced hurdle in his entry by some women, the monastery head had simple clarification. According to him, the women visit the Xatra twice. "They were waiting to see the scion of the Nahru-[Gandhi](#) family from a close range. What wrong goes with them?," said the septuagenarian.

BJP was quick to react. Newly inducted BJP [leader](#) Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma accused [Gandhi](#) and Gogoi of misleading the people with utter falsehood. "Let Rahul [Gandhi](#) kneel down before the nation to tender apology for it," said Dr Sarma who has been targetting the [chief](#) minister and the [Congress](#) vice president since he shifted his loyalty.

But Chief Minister [Tarun Gogoi](#) sticks to his stand on the presence of RSS in the monastery. He claimed to have possessed some intelligence inputs to substantiate his allegations. But these have failed to convince the people who hate interlinking of religion with politics.

Notably, [Gandhi](#) on Saturday visited the monastery just before leaving back to [New Delhi](#). Initially, he had no schedule to visit there on the way to take the [lead](#) of a harmony march at a 7km road near the town. But in response to the wishes of the local Vaishnavs, he halted there for [10](#) minutes.

[Political](#) analysts say that the entire episode will do more harm than good for the ruling party. How Gogoi will refurbish the image just 4 months before the polls?

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