

Tension Escalates Along Assam-Nagaland Border Amid Renewed Land Dispute



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Despite repeated claims by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and other BJP ministers that the long-standing inter-state border dispute with Nagaland has been resolved, fresh tensions have erupted along the border, particularly in the Merapani Seed Farm area under Golaghat district. Local Assamese residents continue to live in fear, alleging that the state government, administration, and police remain silent and inactive.

The epicenter of the recent unrest is the Merapani Seed Farm, a 1300-acre tract of land well within Assam's geographical territory. On 10 April, thousands of Assamese citizens rallied at Merapani, staging an intense protest demanding protection of Assamese land from what they claim is aggressive encroachment by Naga individuals. The Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) and local farmer groups had issued a seven-day ultimatum for the eviction of illegal Naga settlements in the area, including temporary huts and semi-permanent structures like concrete bridges.

However, instead of diffusing the situation, a provocative visit on 16 April by Nagaland MLA Achumbemo Kikon, accompanied by top officials of the 7th Naga Police Battalion, members of the Lotha Lower Range Public Organisation, Lotha Lower Range Student Union, and Nagaland's border magistrate, reignited tensions. The Naga delegation reportedly entered the seed farm secretly and claimed the entire area belonged to Nagaland. Kikon openly declared that not an inch of the land would be handed over to Assam, warning Assamese farmers of possible eviction.

In response, KMSS, local farmers, and villagers have resumed protests, accusing the Nagaland government of illegal encroachment and the Assam administration of failing to act decisively. On the same day as the visit, the Nagaland Agriculture Department allegedly ordered fencing around the seed farm and directed that land allotments and documents provided to Assamese farmers be declared void.

Speaking to the press today, KMSS General Secretary Bidyut Saikia expressed outrage over the unfolding developments. "The Merapani Seed Farm lies clearly within Assam as per all official maps. Any activities by Nagaland here are illegal," Saikia said. He reminded that even the border magistrate of Golaghat publicly acknowledged the seed farm's location within Assam during the 10 April protest.

Frustration is mounting, especially since the Golaghat district administration failed to take action within the seven-day ultimatum period. KMSS has now issued a fresh deadline — 22 April — demanding immediate intervention by the state government. "If the government continues to ignore the people's rightful claim, we will be compelled to launch a massive agitation," Saikia warned, even stating that people are ready to lay down their lives to reclaim their land.

Meanwhile, the Nagaland government has reiterated its claim over the Merapani Seed Farm, further deepening the crisis. The visiting Naga delegation reportedly surveyed the site at Bhelouguri in Merapani, solidifying their territorial claim.

As the Bihu festivities draw to a close in Assam, the region finds itself once again entangled in the complexities of a border conflict that refuses to fade away — fuelled by political silence, administrative inaction, and competing narratives over land and identity.

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