

Tribal Groups Call 36-Hour Bandh Against Assam Government's "Politically Motivated" Land Rights to Nepali Community



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GUWAHATI, August 20: Three major tribal organizations have announced a 36-hour bandh in Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts on August 23-24, coinciding with Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's scheduled visit to Margherita, in fierce opposition to the state government's decision to grant protected class status to the Nepali community in the Tirap Tribal Belt.

Constitutional Violations Alleged

The Indigenous Peoples of Maung-Doon-Choon-Kham, United Tribal Organization of Assam, and Tirap Autonomous District Council Demand Committee jointly condemned the cabinet decision granting land rights under Section 160(2) of the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation, 1886, calling it a direct threat to indigenous tribes including Singpho, Naga, Bodo, Sonowal Kachari, Mech-Kachari, Mising, Rabha, Tangsa, and Tai communities.

"RSS Influence" Claims

Pallav Shyam Bailung of the Tirap Autonomous District Council Demand Committee directly accused the BJP government of making "politically motivated decisions under RSS influence," warning that no decision undermining the interests of 24 tribal groups would be accepted. The organizations demanded immediate formation of the long-promised Tirap Autonomous District Council, as committed in Union Home Minister Amit Shah's presence.

Base Year Controversy

Anup Arandhara, representing Indigenous Peoples of Maung-Doon-Choon-Kham, demanded February 24, 1826 (Yandabo Treaty date) as the constitutional base year for defining indigenous peoples, rejecting the 1971 Assam Accord framework. He called for 1951 as the citizenship base year and invoked the Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act, 1950, demanding deportation of all illegal foreigners regardless of religion or caste.

Constitutional Demand Escalated

In a significant escalation, the organizations demanded formation of an autonomous state under Article 244A instead of mere autonomous councils, citing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) 2007.

The bandh timing appears strategically planned to coincide with CM Sarma's Margherita visit, setting the stage for a major political confrontation over indigenous rights versus government policy in sensitive border regions.

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