

CM Sonowal's First Major Test: Bodoland Council's Land Allotment for Patanjali Trust



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Ahmed Mohiuddin Siddiqui 26 May 2016 10933 views

Assam's newly sworn-in Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal is in for a major political test, which will gauge the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s resolve and claims of fostering development in Assam. The Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) has stirred a hornet's nest by allotting 3,800 hectares of land for Yoga Guru Ramdev's Patanjali Trust in the Bodoland. Bodos are now part of the Sonowal government. It will be a litmus test for Sonowal not to offend Ramdev and at the same time keep Ulfa and Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) in check. The Ulfa faction, which is opposed to dialogue and also the KMSS has gone hammer and tongs on the land allotment.

The Ulfa chairman, Dr Abhijit Asom senses an ulterior motive in Ramdev, who has bagged such a large tract of land for his Trust. 'We are not [against](#) yogic exercise, which leads to good health. A [Muslim](#) does not need any specific location to offer his prayer. Similarly, there is no need for any specific location for practicing Indian [yoga](#),' opined Dr Asom. The [Yoga](#) Guru actually wants to make money from the land by expanding his Ayurvedic [medicine](#) business to Assam, he added.

The KMSS, which has been opposing the land transfer [policy](#) through mass movements came down heavily on the move of BTC, a sixth scheduled area under the constitution, to allot land to the Patanjali Trust. Akhil Gogoi of KMSS has summed up the scenario thus: 'Ramdev wants to set up a dairy in the allotted land. Out of 3,800 hectares, only 400 hectares are without any habitation. And the rest is occupied. We will continue protesting [against](#) the allotment.' Going by the mood of the KMSS and Ulfa, it can be said that the land allotment issue will be the first major political test and may be a 'headache' for the newly-installed BJP government in Assam.

[Don Bosco](#)-educated Sonowal has not taken along [Muslims](#) as evident from lack of representation in the cabinet. BJP's lone [Muslim](#) MLA Aminul Haque Laskar from Sonai was also ignored. [Muslims](#) have voted for BJP in significant numbers in Western Assam and [Barak](#) valley. Can the [Muslims](#) go by the Chief Minister Sonowal's assertion that all sections of the society will be treated equally? Is this equal treatment?

The BJP and Chief Minister Sonowal will be under national and international media scrutiny [as](#) to how they conduct themselves after tasting power for the first time in a [state](#) that borders [Bangladesh](#)? How are the minorities treated will be keenly watched? [Development](#) will take place if there is peace and harmony. There is no [doubt](#) that funds from Centre will flow to Assam in the coming months. Let the journey to [development](#) begin in all earnest. People are the masters in a democracy. Five years will pass in no time. The Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and the BJP will have to answer for their deeds and misdeeds. People who give power also make the politicians bite dust, if their expectations are not met. The common man only asks for a change in life for the better! Change is the only constant in life.

Ahmed Mohiuddin Siddiqui

Dr Ahmed Mohiuddin Siddiqui is a senior journalist and political analyst based in the Gulf. He was mentored by his ex-boss and eminent journalist M. J Akbar during his stint in The Deccan Chronicle, Hyderabad. He is widely read as a columnist for many newspapers in Asia, Africa and Europe.

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