

Garos Council: Gogoi says Garos are deserving, points out Dr. Milton Sangma



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Saidul Khan 17 December 2013 9164 views

Garos in Assam have urged chief minister Tarun Gogoi once again to consider its demand for creation of a separate autonomous council. The Garo organisations have decided to approach Gogoi after holding consultation with a section of non-Rabha communities, who have filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court challenging the constitutional validity of the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council (RHAC) Act, 1995.

Pro Vice Chancellor of ICFAI University Meghalaya and a noted Garo activist Dr. Milton Sangma said, “Tarun Gogoi is of the view that Garos are deserving and their demand for autonomous council will be considered”.

Dr. Milton Sangma expressed Tarun Gogoi’s genuine interest for according council for the Garos. He also pointed out that the legal hurdle has come in with a section now filing a writ petition with the Supreme Court challenging the validity of the RHAC Act, 1995.

According to Dr. Milton Sangma, Tarun Gogoi has asked the Garo organisations to be patient, as the demand for the council has been brought to the notice of the government just about five months ago. The Garo delegation was making an attempt to give an impression to the government that Garos in Assam have become 'impatient' and the council is an only solution.

The legal hurdle can pose a difficulty for the Garos as the writ petition questions the constitutional validity of the RHAC Act, 1995. "So the Garo organisations have decided to approach the petitioner to withdraw the case. After which we shall meet Tarun Gogoi", said Dr. Milton Sangma adding, "We will try to request Gogoi for signing an accord to end the impasse arising out of the demand".

The writ petition was filed by non-Rabhas, which included Garos and other non-tribal communities from rural Kamrup district in Assam led by petitioner Umesh Tamuli. Toward this end, the Supreme Court has already issued notices to Assam government.

Dr. Milton Sangma echoed that Garos residing in rural Kamrup and Goalpara district continues to remain firm on their stand and is seeking exclusion of their villages from the purview of the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council.

It may be noted that the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council was created under the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council Act, 1995, whereas the different organisations, including the Garos are demanding creation of the autonomous council under Article 244(1) and Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

The RHAC was established under the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council Act, 1995. The Act was amended from time to time, the first in 2002 and 2005 . According to the amended Act, the General Council consists of 40 members, out of which 36 are directly elected.

Elections to the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council under the Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council Act was held for the first time this November, despite protest and opposition by the non-Rabhas and the Garos. Infact, Garos had boycotted the polling in both rural Kamrup and Goalpara district.

Saidul Khan

Based in Tura, Meghalaya

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