

Tuliram Under Fire: Allegations of Land Deals and a Council in Crisis



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Wahidur Rahman 26 August 2025 14366 views

The political theatre of Assam's hill districts has once again turned turbulent. At the centre of the storm stands **Tuliram Ronghang**, the powerful Chief Executive Member (CEM) of the **Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC)**. Once hailed as a strongman who consolidated the Bharatiya Janata Party's base in Karbi Anglong, he now faces the gravest allegations of his political career — charges that he has mortgaged the very council he was entrusted to protect.

The accusations were made on Monday by **Ratan Engti**, President of the Karbi Anglong District Congress, at a press conference held at **Rajiv Bhawan in Guwahati**. Surrounded by a battery of former legislators and executive members, Engti painted a grim picture of a council sinking under **debts of more than ₹200 crore**, its contractors unpaid, its employees disgruntled, and its funds allegedly siphoned off into private coffers.

But the heart of Engti's attack was not financial mismanagement alone. It was something deeper, something that strikes at the roots of Karbi political identity: **land**.

The Land Question

Land in Karbi Anglong is not merely a resource — it is history, identity, and survival. Protected under constitutional provisions, it cannot be transferred to non-tribals without the consent of the council. Yet, armed with documents procured through the **Right to Information Act**, Engti alleged that **over 1.53 lakh bighas of land** have been handed over to corporate houses from outside the district.

The names are among India's most powerful business groups: **Adani, Ambani, Ramdev, Godrej**.

According to the Congress leader, **18,000 bighas** were allotted to Adani for solar projects, **13,000 bighas** to Ambani for Napier grass cultivation, **6,000 bighas** for other solar ventures, **1,395 bighas** to the Assam Power Distribution Company Limited, and a staggering **1,16,250 bighas** for palm oil cultivation to Ramdev and Godrej.

“These are not stray allocations,” Engti declared. “They are part of a conspiracy to strip the Karbi people of their land, their dignity, and their future.”

The Shadow of Nepotism

Engti’s charges went further. He accused Ronghang of **misusing over ₹100 crore** earmarked for afforestation schemes, allegedly withdrawing funds in violation of the Central Government’s direct bank transfer norms. Contracts, he claimed, were handed out to the CEM’s **brother, son, and close relatives**, while the family quietly amassed property within and beyond India under **benami names**.

What was once whispered in the villages of Karbi Anglong — about favours, intimidation, and silenced voices — was now being spoken aloud in Guwahati. Engti alleged that **media freedom in the hills has been throttled**: “No channel dares to broadcast the truth. If anyone does, the news is stopped from being aired.”

A Leader’s Transformation

Engti used an image that immediately stuck with the reporters present: **Tuliram as an ATM**. Once described as Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma’s “cash ATM,” Engti claimed Ronghang had now become a “land ATM,” dispensing not currency but territory.

Behind this metaphor lies a wider charge: that the ruling BJP, in partnership with state leaders such as Sarma and Minister Pijush Hazarika, has allowed illegal hill-cutting, stone mining, and corporate land grabs to flourish in Karbi Anglong, reducing the council to a pawn in state-level power games.

The Political Stage

Engti was not alone in his accusations. By his side were seasoned Karbi politicians — **former MLA Jagatsing Engti, former EM Viddyasing Rongpi, former MLA Hemsing Tisso, and Charisma Rongpipi.**

Together, they sought to project the charges not as isolated grumblings but as a collective indictment of the present dispensation.

The matter has already been escalated to the national stage. Complaints have reportedly been submitted to **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** and **Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi**, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha. Whether these allegations will be pursued legally, or remain within the sphere of political mudslinging, remains to be seen.

A Council at the Crossroads

The Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council was born out of decades of struggle, designed to give the Karbi people control over their land, culture, and future. Today, it faces accusations of being run as a fiefdom, its autonomy undermined not by distant powers but by its own elected leadership.

For Tuliram Ronghang, the stakes could not be higher. For the Karbi people, the question is even more profound: is their land — once the anchor of their autonomy — being quietly sold off, one allotment at a time?

As the controversy deepens, one truth emerges clearly: **Karbi Anglong is at a political crossroads, and what is decided now may shape its destiny for generations to come.**

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