

## CENTRE SIGNS ACCORD WITH BODO GROUPS

Relevant for: Indian Polity | Topic: Issues and Challenges Pertaining to the Federal Structure, Dispute Redressal Mechanisms, and the Centre-State Relations

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the Assam government and Bodo groups on Monday signed an agreement to redraw and rename the Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) in Assam, currently spread over the four districts of Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri.

As per the agreement, villages dominated by Bodos that were presently outside the BTAD would be included and those with non-Bodo population would be excluded, Assam Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said. Bodos living in the hills would be granted Scheduled Hill Tribe status.

Mr. Sarma said as of now, the agreement had not addressed the issue of “citizenship or work permit” for non-domiciles in the BTAD, to be renamed as the Bodoland Territorial Region.

Several Bodo groups, led by the All Bodo Students Union (ABSU), have been demanding a separate land for the ethnic community since 1972, a movement that has claimed nearly 4,000 lives.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who presided over the event, said the signing of the pact would “end the 50-year-old Bodo crisis”. “Today, Assam is united. Around 1,500 cadres of NDFB (P), NDFB (RD) and NDFB (S) will be rehabilitated. They will surrender on January 30 on Bapu’s death anniversary,” he said. “No one will be called a militant now, they all are our brothers and sisters,” Mr. Shah said.

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