

‘NO PANCHAYAT SYSTEM IN ASSAM TRIBAL AREAS’

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Rights & Welfare of STs, SCs, and OBCs - Schemes & their Performance, Mechanisms, Laws Institutions and Bodies

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) informed the Lok Sabha on Tuesday that “presently, there is no proposal to implement Panchayat system in Sixth Schedule areas of Assam”.

The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution protects tribal populations and provides autonomy to the communities through creation of autonomous development councils that can frame laws on land, public health, agriculture and others. As of now, 10 autonomous councils exist in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.

Union Minister of State for Home G. Kishan Reddy said the specified tribal areas are the North Cachar Hills, Karbi Anglong and the Bodoland Territorial Area in Assam, Khasi Hills, Jaintiya Hills and Garo Hills in Meghalaya, Tribal Areas in Tripura, Chakma, Mara and Lai districts in Mizoram.

Mr. Reddy said, “There is no Panchayat system in Sixth Schedule areas of Assam. Presently, there is no proposal to implement Panchayat system there.”

On January 23, 2019, the Union Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi had approved amendments to increase the financial and executive powers of the autonomous councils.

The Constitution (125th Amendment) Bill, 2019 was subsequently introduced amid din in the Rajya Sabha on February 6, 2019 that provides for elected village municipal councils. The Bill that is still active proposes that The State Election Commissions will hold elections to the autonomous councils, village and municipal councils. The Bill was introduced in the Upper House so that the legislation remains active even as the House was adjourned sine die before the 2019 general elections. The Bill would have lapsed if it was introduced in the Lok Sabha as its life would have been co-terminus with that of the Lower House.

END

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