

Cong. leader alleges 'injustice' to STs, OBC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Assam Congress Legislature Party leader Debabrata Saikia has written to the National Human Rights Commission alleging "gross injustice" to the people from some Sche-

duled Tribe and Other Backward Class communities.

He cited the examples of 1,300 families of "forest villages" facing eviction from Dibru-Saikhowa National Park and 1,500 families set to lose their farmlands in Mikir

Bamuni Grant because of a private solar power project.

In his petition to the NHRC, Mr. Saikia said the State government was going back on its promise of suitably rehabilitating the people and trying to evict them.

Congress leader seeks NHRC help for Assam families facing eviction

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

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CONGRESS leader Debabrata Saikia has written to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) alleging gross injustice being meted out to some 1,300 families who face the threat of eviction from a wildlife sanctuary in Assam.

These families were settled at Laika-Dadhia area of Dibru-Saikhowa Wildlife Sanctuary in Tinsukia district after the great earthquake of 1950. Angry over the Assam government's move, the locals have been staging a protest from a makeshift camp outside the DM's office for the past fortnight.

"Three protesters, including a pregnant woman and her unborn child, have died because they were unaware to bear the chill in the makeshift camp. Many other protesters are suffering from fever, nose-bleed etc," Saikia wrote to the NHRC.

Based on a report that he

claimed to have acquired from the DM's office, he said the families were living since 1950s long before the area was notified as a wildlife sanctuary.

The Congress leader also drew the Commission's attention to the government's move

to evict people belonging to ST and OBC communities from Mikir Bamuni Grant in Nagaon district for handing over the land to a private solar power company.

He said the affected families have been cultivating the land since 1981. "Many of them were given only one day's notice to file their objections. The simple ryots do not possess any documents regarding the land they and their forefathers have been

tilling for almost four decades. However, the Assam (Temporarily Settled Areas) Tenancy Act, 1971 provides for bestowing of ownership rights on ryots who cultivate a specific plot of land for three years in succession," Saikia wrote.

Protracted struggle

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Bamuni Grant because of a private solar power project.

In his petition to the NHRC, Mr. Saikia said the State government was going back on its promise of suitably rehabilitating the people and trying to evict them.

He also drew the NHRC's attention to the government's move to evict primarily Karbi (ST) and Adivasi (OBC) communities from Mikir Bamuni Grant. The land is to be handed over to a private solar power company.

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