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Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR)

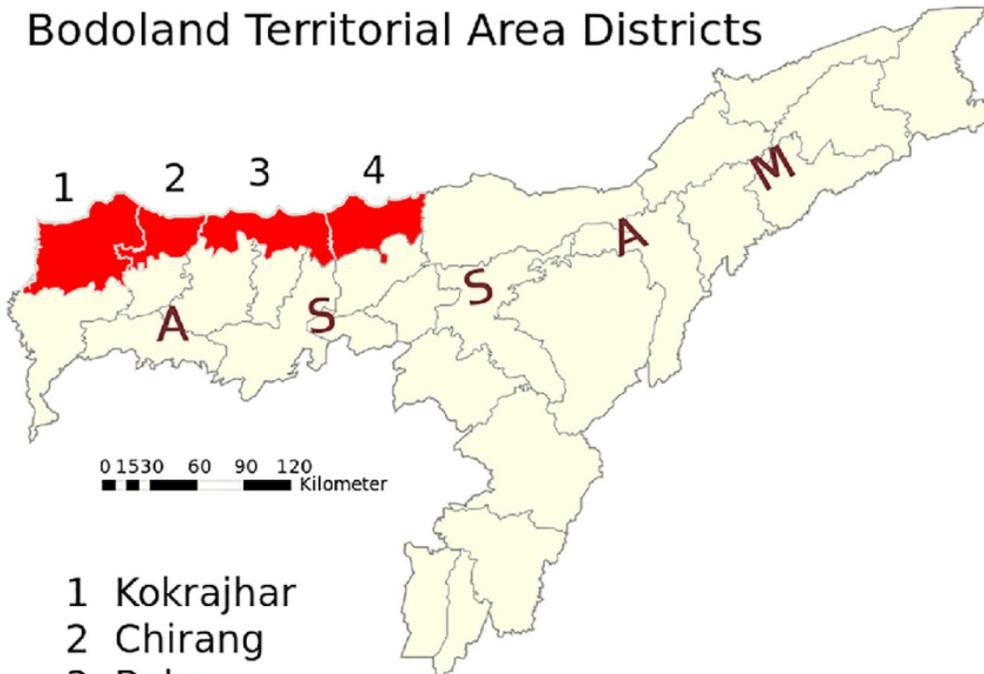
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Why in News

The people displaced by ethnic and communal riots in areas under the **Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR)** since 1996 are set to return to the homes they left behind.

The **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**, the **Assam government** and the **Bodo groups** signed a **tripartite agreement** to redraw, rename and change power-sharing agreement in the **Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD)** in Assam.

Bodoland Territorial Area Districts



- 1 Kokrajhar
- 2 Chirang
- 3 Baksa
- 4 Udalguri

Key Points

- **About:**

Population: Bodos are the **single largest community** among the **notified Scheduled Tribes in Assam**. They constitute about **5-6% of Assam's population**.

Kokrajhar, Baksa, Udalguri and Chirang districts in Assam constitute the Bodo Territorial Area District (BTAD) and are home to several ethnic groups.

- **Dispute:**

- **Demand of Separate State:** The **first organised demand for a Bodo state** came in 1967-68 under the banner of the political party called **Plains Tribals Council of Assam**.

- **Assam Accord:** In 1985, when the Assam Movement culminated in the Assam Accord, many Bodos saw it as essentially focusing on the interests of the Assamese-speaking community.

As a result of this, several Bodo groups led by the **All Bodo Students Union (ABSU)** and **National Democratic Front of Bodoland** have been demanding separate land for the ethnic community, a movement that has claimed nearly 4,000 lives.

- **Displacement of People:** Between 1993 and 2014, more than 970 Bengali-speaking Muslims, Adivasis and Bodos died in clashes triggered by indiscriminate shooting by extremist groups, primarily the **now-disbanded National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB)**.

Some of the 8.4 lakh people displaced by the violence have remained in shabby relief camps while others relocated to areas beyond present-day BTR. Over 2.5 lakh people were displaced in the Bodo-Santhal conflict.

- **Bodo Accord:**

- **First Bodo Accord:** After years of violent clashes, the first Bodo Accord was **signed with the ABSU in 1993**, leading to the creation of a **Bodoland Autonomous Council** with limited political powers.

- **Second Bodo Accord:** Under this, it was agreed to create a self-governing body for the Bodo Areas in the State of Assam.

In pursuance of this, the **Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC)** was created in 2003 with some more financial and other powers.

- **Third Bodo Accord:** The **agreement** was signed in 2020, it renamed the BTAD as **Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR)**.

- It promises more legislative, executive and administrative autonomy under the **Sixth Schedule** to **Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC)** and **expansion of the BTC territory** in lieu of statehood.

- It provides for alteration of the area of BTAD and provisions for Bodos outside BTAD.

- BTR includes the villages which are dominated by Bodos but are outside BTAD presently.

Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC)

- It is an **autonomous region** in the **state of Assam** in India.
- It is made up of four districts (**Kokrajhar, Chirang, Baksa and Udalguri**) on the north bank of the **Brahmaputra river**, by the foothills of Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh.
- The area under the jurisdiction of BTC, formed under the 2003 Accord, was called the **Bodo Territorial Autonomous District (BTAD)**.
- BTC is an area governed under the **6th schedule**. However, BTC is an exception to the constitutional provision under the 6th schedule.
 - As it can constitute up to 46 members out of which 40 are elected.
 - Of these 40 seats, 35 are reserved for the Scheduled Tribes and non-tribal communities, five are unreserved and the rest six are nominated by the governor from underrepresented communities of the BTAD.

Autonomous Districts and Regional Councils

- Along with ADCs, the **Sixth Schedule** also provides for **separate Regional Councils** for each area constituted as an autonomous region.
 - In all, there are **10 areas in the Northeast** that are registered as **autonomous districts** – three in **Assam, Meghalaya** and **Mizoram** and one in **Tripura**.
 - These regions are named as district council of (name of district) and regional council of (name of region).
- Each autonomous district and regional council **consists of not more than 30 members**, of which four are nominated by the governor and the rest via elections. All of them remain in power for a **term of five years**.

Source: TH