

Barkataki may be candidate for CM

From Sachin Borooah

GAUHATI, March 2—The first-ever non-Congress Government in Assam will be installed before the next week-end

The Janata Party's State executive is meeting here tomorrow to pave the way for a smooth transformation of power on the heels of the sixth general Assembly elections. Emerging as the single largest group in the State, the Janata leadership is faced with the hurdles of mustering support from amongst at least 10 inde-

pendent winners to have an absolute majority in the 126-member legislature.

Having had an electoral alliance with the Plains Tribal Council of Assam, the Janata Party had finished with 57 seats. (PTCA won four seats). There are 11 independents in the winners list, four of them being Janata rebels. The re-entry of the rebels into the party is inevitable and indications are that a decision will be announced on or before March 6 when the Janata Legislature Party will meet here to elect a leader.

There are at least four aspirants for the leadership and the Central leadership is in touch with its counterpart here to reach unanimity in the choice of the leader.

Union Minister of Mines Biju Patnaik and party's general secretary Ramakrishna Hegde are scheduled to be here for the legislature party's meeting on Monday. It is mentioned in Janata Party circles here that the Central observers, in case of no unanimity on the leadership issue, may induct Union Minister of State for Cultural Affairs Renukadevi Barkataki as a "compromise candidate for leadership." Mrs Barkataki, however, was reported to have not been favourably disposed to such a proposal.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Sarat Chandra Sinha tendered his resignation from the Council of Ministers today, according to an official release.

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