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Four Scheduled Caste bodies in Assam to merge

From Our Staff Correspondent

GAUHATI, MAY 9.—All the four existing organisations of the Scheduled Castes people of Assam are to merge in a new organisation, which will be formed and given a name in a convention to be held at Gauhati in the first week of June.

This was decided in a two-day meeting, which was attended by about 150 representatives of the All-Assam Scheduled Castes Association, the Assam branch of the All-India Depressed Classes League, the Scheduled Castes Development Council and the All-Assam Scheduled Castes People's Welfare Association. The meeting, which concluded at Dispur yesterday, had been convened and presided over by Mr Nagen Barua,

deputy leader of the state Janata Legislature Party.

According to the 1971 census, the Scheduled Caste people of Assam, divided into 16 clans, number 9,12,557 and constitute 6.24 per cent of the state's total population.

Mr Barua told newsmen that the meeting resolved to set up a new non-political, social organisation, covering all the 16 Scheduled Caste communities, in the place of the existing four organisations.

There would, however, be no bar against its members having different political allegiances. In fact, the representatives attending the two-day meeting included, he said, some members of the Janata, the two Congresses and even the CPI(M).

A 35-member preparatory committee was set up at the meeting to frame a draft constitution for the new organisation and place it before a general convention of the Scheduled Caste People, to be held at Gauhati on a suitable date in the first week of the next month. Mr Anil Das, a Parliamentary Secretary to the Government of Assam, Mr Biren Hazarika and Mr Nagen Barua himself were elected as chief conveners of the preparatory committee.

It was also decided to invite Mr Ramdhan, President of the All-India Depressed Classes League, and Mr Dhanik Lal Mandal, a Union Minister of State, to attend the proposed convention.