

Demand for trust vote in Assam

PATRIOT

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Our Special Correspondent

A delegation of Janata Party dissidents in Assam, who claim majority support in the State Assembly, has requested the Central leaders to direct Chief Minister Golap Borbora to seek a vote of confidence in the Legislature Party.

A letter signed by 28 of the total of 60 party legislators was handed over to Janata Party General Secretary Ramakrishna Hegde by dissident leader Dr Tarni Mohan Barooa on Tuesday. The dissidents will meet Party President Chandra Shekhar on Wednesday and Prime Minister Morarji Desai on Thursday.

According to party circles, the Janata Parliamentary Board, which will meet on 19 April, will consider the dissidents' demands for the vote of confidence. Though the Assam issue had come up at the last meeting of the JPB, it had hardly any time to consider it. It had then directed Industry Minister George Fernandes to try to settle the issue after talking to both groups.

However, after some preliminary talks, Mr Fernandes is understood to have rejected the idea of a vote of confidence on the ground that such a trial of strength with a slim majority, would precipitate groupism in the State unit. Health Minister Rabi Ray had also supported this view at the last meeting of the JPB.

The dissidents, who later decided to go ahead with their demands, have said in their letter that the only way "to save the party from disintegration" was to ask the Chief Minister to seek a vote of confidence. They maintain that Mr Borbora had fully failed in fulfilling the party's promises to the people of the State. They also blamed him for mishandling the Assam-Meghalaya border troubles thereby losing the people's confidence in the Janata Government.

The letter is also understood to have disclaimed his contention that the 11-member CPM group in the Assembly was prepared to support only him. On the other hand, they said, the CPM's was a national policy to back the party.

The total strength of the State Assembly is 126 out of which the Janata Party has 60 members. It has also the support of

two independents who are associate members. Also, the four People's Tribal Conference MLAs also support the Janata Party.

A spokesman of the dissidents said in New Delhi on Tuesday that they had a support of 33 members. Twenty-eight MLAs have already signed the letter and another five members have informed their decision to back them to Party president Chandra Shekhar.

Prominent among the dissident leaders who are now camping in Delhi are Mr Azlur Rehman, Parliamentary Secretary in the Borbora Ministry, Mr G R Timung, Minister of State, Mr Nagen Sharma, Mr S R Gupta and Mr A H Majumdar.

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