

Hegde says Assam rift 'exaggerated'

Hindustan Times Correspondent

GAUHATI, May 31—Janata Party general secretary Ram Krishna Hegde said here today that he was happy to find an increasing awareness among the party members in Assam of the need to consolidate the State unit.

He told newsmen after addressing the Janata Legislative Party that the situation here had reached the present stage "perhaps because sufficient attention was not given earlier to resolve the differences among the legislators".

A section of the legislators have been demanding a change in the leadership.

Mr Hegde said: "I shall submit my report to the high command and I am sure everybody will accept and abide by his decision".

He said he had come to Gauhati to meet the JLP members with a view to ascertaining their views on certain differences that had developed in the party. He had talked to practically all the members of the party individually since yesterday and met the Council of Ministers today.

Asked to comment on the differences, Mr Hegde said they had not only been exaggerated but given "undue importance". "Everybody in our party here realises the difficult position the party is in and his individual and collective responsibility in solving many important problems of the State, the party and the Government".

Regarding the demand for elec-

tion of the president and the executive of the State Janata Party, Mr Hegde said the election was to have taken place last year, but many difficulties came in the way.

He said while at the lower level the newly elected committees were functioning, the apex body remained ad hoc with Chief Minister Golap Borbora as its chairman. This was an "anomalous position" and "personally I feel that the elections should be held now".

Chief Minister Borbora said his Cabinet colleagues had unanimously backed him at the meeting addressed today by Mr Hegde.

The pro-~~changers~~ in the JLP, however, declined to say anything at this stage.

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