

Janata rebels stake claim to Assam Govt

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Our Staff Correspondent
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MR KESHAB GOGOI, who resigned from the Assam Cabinet yesterday, said today that Chief Minister Golap Borbora had lost his majority in the Janata Legislature Party. He claimed that the number of dissidents was now 35, excluding the four who have joined the Janata (S).

Addressing a crowded press conference at his official residence this morning, Mr Gogoi said the dissident group would meet tomorrow and ask Mr Borbora to seek a vote of confidence from the JLP. If he does not agree, the dissidents will approach the Governor for sum-

moning a session of the State Assembly, he added.

Mr Gogoi disclosed that former Chief Minister Sarat Sinha and former Home Minister Hiteswar Saikia had called on him this morning and assured him that if the dissidents could form a Government, it would be supported by the Congress, Cong-I and the CPI.

A spokesman of the CPI, however, denied that his party had given any such assurance to anybody.

Mr Gogoi read out several letters he had addressed to Mr Borbora in the last few months expressing dissatisfaction with the functioning of the Government and requesting him for a

rapprochement with the dissidents.

He said after the allocation of portfolios of the reconstituted Ministry yesterday, he found that all the Ministers had been allowed to retain their original portfolios. Only the portfolios of Mr Gogoi—finance, sports and tourism—had been taken away. He took it as an expression of lack of confidence in him by the Chief Minister.

Mr Gogoi said two more Ministers might soon resign from the Cabinet.

Meanwhile, the Plains Tribals Council has decided to join the Government. Its representative, Mr Samar Brahma Choudhury, would be sworn in tomorrow, it was officially learnt.

The PTCA had strong objections to Mr Gogoi continuing as Minister. His resignation has removed the ground for the PTCA's non-participation.

Mr Borbora has been advised by some of his friends to call a meeting of the JLP to test his majority and step down if necessary to save the party and the Government from disintegration, it is learnt.

Former Minister Zehurul Islam said he expected some more resignations from the JLP by this evening.

Assam Congress leader Sarat Sinha, who was to have left for Delhi today to apprise the Congress High Command of the developments in the State post, postponed his departure till tomorrow. He told the press he was staying back to "watch the developing situation."

ANOTHER MINISTER

PTI adds: Mr Samar Brahma Choudhury, a former Minister of Borbora Cabinet, who was also included in the reconstituted Assam Ministry will be sworn in as a Cabinet Minister by Governor L P Singh here tomorrow, official sources here today said.

Mr Brahma Choudhury, a representative of the Plains Tribal Council of Assam, an ally of the Janata Party, did not take oath on Saturday last along with 16 Ministers as the PTCA had directed him to watch the political situation for some time more.

PTCA has now directed Mr Brahma Choudhury to join the Cabinet and strengthen the position of Chief Minister Borbora.

PTCA has four members in the Assam Assembly.

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