

Janata Team Unable to Meet Assam CM

FROM OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, March 17.

The threat facing the Assam Chief Minister, Mr. Golap Borbora, appears to have blown over, at least until the budget session of the State Assembly next month.

Various allegations of rampant corruption, nepotism and gross inefficiency have been levelled against the Ministry by members of the ruling Janata Party, especially by some of those belonging to Mr. Borbora's own Socialist faction.

Mr. Borbora's detractors are of the view that the Ministry headed by him is utterly incapable of delivering the goods. The Government, they maintain, lacks dynamism, with the result that large sums of Central assistance remain unutilised.

They have mounted pressure on the Janata High Command that Mr. Borbora should be directed to seek a fresh vote of confidence.

The demand was voiced in a memorandum signed by 22 Janata MLAs, which was presented to the Party President, Mr. Chandra Shekhar, some time ago.

Mr. Chandra Shekhar, sent the Janata General Secretary, Mr. Ramakrishna Hegde, and the Union Minister of State for Education, Mrs. Renuka Devi Barkataki who hails from Assam), to conduct a probing mission.

Mr. Hegde was, however, not able to draw any conclusions about the actual state of affairs in the party and the Government as the Chief Minister as well as a vast majority of the Janata legislators, including other Ministers, were out of town the day he was at Gauhati.

It is stated that Mr. Borbora left Gauhati the very morning Mr. Hegde arrived there under the impression that the High Command had accepted his plea that Mr. Hegde's visit should be postponed. Only a handful of legislators—16 in all—not favourably disposed towards the Chief Minister were on

hand to apprise Mr. Hegde of their grievances.

Mr. Hegde is stated to have not been impressed by the Chief Minister's plea that he had to go out of Gauhati to fulfil prior engagements, and has given Mr. Chandra Shekhar his tentative assessment of the turmoil in the Assam Janata Legislature Party.

It is now expected that Mr. Hegde will once again visit Gauhati soon after the budget session of the Assembly is over, and a decision on issuing a directive to the Chief Minister to seek the vote of the party legislators would be made after his return.

The Janata Party has a tenuous majority in the Assembly. The admission of three independents has raised its strength to 63 in the 126-member house. Four MLAs belonging to the Plains Tribal Council are allied to Janata.

Observers are of the view that if discussion in the party is not dealt with in time, the stability of the Government will be endangered.

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