

Assam Dissidents in Disarray

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FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

GAUHATI, Aug. 3.

The Assam Chief Minister, Mr. Golap Borbora, is firm in not holding further talks with the dissidents unless they first withdraw their declaration forming the separate 'Assam Janata Party'.

The Chief Minister, who returned here yesterday after holding discussions with the party high command has made his stand quite clear to the Central party leaders.

Mr. Borbora reportedly told the high command that he would not yield to any further threats and not at all to the unreasonable demands of dissidents, who now call themselves as pro-changers. This might be his last visit to New Delhi in this connection, he told them.

The dissidents first demanded radical changes in the portfolios of Ministers and then a change in the leadership nine months ago. Since then there had been as many as 15 rounds of talks between them and the Central leaders. But all these proved to be futile exercises.

During discussions this time in New Delhi, held at the instance of the party President, Mr. Chandra Shekhar, both the pro-changers and the Chief Minister explained their respective viewpoints but there was no settlement.

Mr. Borbora said here that he was prepared to face any eventuality, even to sit in opposition rather than to give up his principles. But he expressed his confidence that such a situation would not arise.

According to Mr. Borbora there had been a gradual erosion in the strength of dissidents who now number only 17. Even among those, these eight had already started a dialogue with the Chief Minister and pledged their loyalty to Janata Party, Mr. Borbora claimed, adding "he has overcome the difficult situation."

The whole issue would be discussed at the JLP meeting on August 6 and 7 and he would not allow the dissidents who had formed a separate party.

The pro-changers now find themselves in an awkward position. However a spokesman of the pro-changers pointed out that they had not formally separated from the Janata Party, but would certainly do so if "Mr. Borbora is too stiff."

Meanwhile, a faction of the pro-changers, who have decided to stay with the Janata Party, will meet at Dispur on August 5 to decide their future course of action regarding their demand for a change in JLP leadership. They are for strengthening the party.

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