

AAGSP wants political talks

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, July 8.

LEADERS of the All-Assam Gana Sangram Parishad today demanded a discussion at the political level with the home minister, Mr. Zail Singh, on the foreigners' issue "having exhausted all arguments on the legal and constitutional questions involved."

A meeting between the home minister and the full delegations of the agitation leaders was tentatively agreed upon for tomorrow at the conclusion of the three-hour committee-level talks at which all the AAGSP and only one AASU representatives were present.

"You may say that we have reached the third and final stage of the discussions," Mr. Nibaran Bora, AAGSP leader, said.

He referred to the home minister categorising the talks into three parts: the administrative matters, the legal and constitutional questions and the political issues. "We have exhausted all arguments relating to the first two categories. Only the home minister is competent to deal with the political aspect."

The AAGSP leaders apparently feel

Flood situation in Assam improves

GAUHATI, July 8 (UNI & PTI).

THE flood situation in Assam slightly improved today as the Brahmaputra along with its tributaries continued to recede for the third day. However, the rivers were still flowing above the danger level at different points, official reports received here said.

An unconfirmed report said three people died when their boat capsized in the flood waters near Mangaldoi in Darrang district on Monday. With this the total number of deaths in the current flood rose to four.

Earlier, an employee of the railway workshop at Dibrugarh was washed away by the flood water.

Road communication continued to be disrupted in different parts of the state with several roads breached and bridges washed away.

The season's first wave of floods has wrought extensive damage to the standing crop in the state and thousands have been rendered homeless.

The worst affected areas were the Ajuli river island in Sivasagar district and the Jonai sub-division of Lakhimpur district and in Kamrup district, the Hajo, Chaygaon, Palaspari and Boko circles and the Barpeta sub-division, the reports said.

The situation in Mazuli island and the Kaziranga national park in Upper Assam continued to be "serious" as floods of the Brahmaputra still engulfed vast areas affecting road communication.

Meanwhile, the Assam government has geared up rescue and relief operations in the worst-affected areas with the help of the police and Home Guard personnel.

Temporary relief camps have been opened in school and college buildings where several flood victims have been lodged. Free food has been distributed to the flood victims and fodder to cattle.

that only a decision at the political level can bring about a solution to the vexed problem, there being a wide gulf in the interpretation of the legal and constitutional aspects between the two sides.

Mr. Bora said that there was nothing left now for discussion on the legal and constitutional questions. He claimed that the discussions so far with the home and law ministry officials had been held within the framework proposed by the government. "We have been placing our arguments only to clarify the position further. That exercise is now complete."

He thought that the stage was now set for the home minister to take a political decision in consultation with the Prime Minister and bring the talks to a conclusion.

Mr. Prafulla Mahanta, AASU president, who did not take part in today's discussions, said that as far as his organisation was concerned, there would be no shift from its stand that all "foreigners" who entered Assam during the decade 1961-71 should be removed from the state.

He claimed that the AASU's acceptance of the government's proposal for regularization of aliens who came to Assam between 1951-61 was conditional upon the government agreeing to move out all "foreigners" who migrated during the subsequent one decade. Any backsliding by the government on this understanding would not be acceptable by the AASU.

Both the AASU and the AAGSP were not prepared to accept any suggestion for allowing a section of the "foreigners" of the 1961-71 period to stay in Assam.

THE ILMES OF INDIA.

9-JUNE-1981.