

Parleys on Assam

BJP, Janata spurn offer

NEW DELHI, November 8
(PTI).

TWO major opposition parties, the Janata and the BJP, are not attending tomorrow's government-opposition meeting on Assam, saying that they had not been taken into confidence on this issue — a charge rejected today by the government.

The Janata Party followed the BJP in announcing that it would not participate in the meeting with the home minister, Mr. Zail Singh, who will represent the government along with some other Union ministers. The meeting would be an "exercise in futility", it said, adding that opposition had not been taken into confidence on Assam.

The minister for parliamentary affairs, Mr. Bishma Narain Singh, rejected a similar BJP allegation, but urged it to reconsider its decision not to join tomorrow's meeting.

Gauhati (UNI): The Assam agitation leaders today reaffirmed their intention to hold a rally here on Tuesday despite the government's denial of permission.

The All-Assam Students' Union president, Mr. Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, and the union general secretary, Mr. Bhriku Kumar Phukan, in

a joint statement, reiterated their decision to hold the rally.

They appealed to the people to join the rally and conduct the proceedings "with supreme discipline" to give, what they called, a "fitting reply to the malicious propaganda of the mercenaries of democracy."

The Assam government has refused permission for the rally in the public interest.

PTI adds: The non-Congress (I) opposition alliance parties in Assam will approach the governor, Mr. Prakash Mehrotra, directly for an appointment with him on Tuesday to stake their claim for forming a government in the state.

The parties, which were scheduled to meet the governor on Sunday to submit their lists of supporters, could not do so as Mr. Mehrotra was away in Delhi.

The opposition parties will meet in Gauhati on Monday to discuss their strategy on ministry formation, a spokesman of the alliance told PTI on Sunday.

Meanwhile, the Janata Party on Sunday clarified that it had no intention of being a partner with the Congress (I) in any coalition government in Assam. Nor would it support that party in forming the government in the state.

Steps for economic development of N-E states

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, November 8: The Centre's commitment to give a fillip to economic development to the north-eastern states is showing its impact since the setting up of the special ministerial committee and more especially with the Union deputy minister, Mr. P. A. Sangma, being given the powers to cut through red-tape.

The expected boom may take some time to materialise because the successful lack of infrastructural facilities has to be overcome, but the first steps have been taken. The subsidy offered to the transport industry in the region has been raised from 15 per cent to 20 per cent and the upper limit of financial availability from 15 lakhs to 20 lakhs.

VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

Understandably, it has been decided to lay emphasis on small-scale and village industries based on locally available raw materials with this end in view, a standing committee has been set up with Mr. Sangma as the chairman and local MPs and industries ministers of the states of the region as members. Associations of small-scale industries and entrepreneurs have also been associated with the committee.

One important decision taken is that corporations and co-operatives involved in small-scale industries would also be entitled to the enhanced subsidy. The Reserve Bank of India has been associated in the matter of procurement of raw materials. The state governments have been directed to formulate projects and take the assistance of the RBI.

The government has also liberalised the licensing policy, and quite a few entrepreneurs have been given licences to set up industries in the region with locally available raw materials. The ministry will soon convene a conference to take stock of the latest position in regard to the availability of raw materials.

Decisions to set up mini-steel plants, re-rolling steel mills, mini-cement plants, especially in the Garo Hills, the bifurcation of the Hindustan Paper Corporation are some of the other steps taken for industrial growth in the region. The STC and the SAIL offices in the region are being strengthened.

9-november-1981 - The Times of India.