

Cong.-I woos Janata: Assam

NEW DELHI, November 7 (PTI).

THE Congress (I) today sounded the Janata Party leadership on whether it would be agreeable to form a coalition ministry with it in Assam, now under President's rule.

The proposal was made by the Union home minister, Mr. Zail Singh, during talks with the Janata Party president, Mr. Chandra Shekhar here. It is learnt.

Mr. Chandra Shekhar is understood to have told the home minister that while a decision, if necessary, would have to be taken by his party, the proposal, however, could be discussed only if the ruling party was really keen on finding a solution to the wider problems of the state. If the ruling party's intention was only to be in power somehow, the Janata Party was not interested in it, Mr. Chandra Shekhar is believed to have said.

While Mr. Zail Singh is understood to have assured the Janata Party chief of his party's eagerness to find an early solution to state's problems, the latter expressed his unhappiness

on the way the government has been handling the foreigners' issue.

In the 126-member state assembly (seven seats are vacant) the Congress (I) has 45 members and the Janata 27.

It is not known whether Mr. Zail Singh will discuss his proposal further. The Janata chief is leaving for Bombay tomorrow and will be away for three days.

What surprised opposition circles here is the timing of the proposal. The combined opposition is scheduled to meet the governor tomorrow in Shillong or Gauhati, to stake its claim to form a ministry.

Mrs. Anwara Tahmur, leader of the Congress (I) legislature party in Assam, has been claimed that as the single largest party it could form the ministry with the support of a few from other groups.

Before returning to Assam today the governor, Mr. Prakash Mehrotra, is understood to have apprised the Central leaders of his assessment of the situation in the state. He is said to be averse to any proposal which would encourage instability in the state.

The party position in the state assembly is: Congress (I) 45, Janata 27, CPM 11, CPI 6, RCPI 4, PTCA 4, Assam Janata Dal 4, Congress (S) 3, SUOI 2, Lok Dal 1, CPI (ML) 1, BJP 1 and Independents 7 (seven seats are vacant).

GAUHATI, (UNI): The Union government has invited the leaders of the All Assam Students Union (AASU) and the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) for the next round of talks on the foreigners issue in New Delhi on November 19, according to the chief secretary, Mr. Ranesh Chandra.

Mr. Chandra told UNI that a communication received from the Union home secretary, Mr. D. N. Chaturvedi, was delivered to the AASU president, Mr. Prafulla Kumar Mahanta and the AAGSP convener, Mr. Atul Bora, through a special messenger today.

The letter was addressed to Mr. Mahanta and Mr. Bora, requesting them to come to Delhi with their representatives for the talks and confirm it before the proposed date.

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