

Civil Disobedience

Crowds Teargassed, Lathicharged

BY A STAFF REPORTER
GUWAHATI, DEC. 14—
POLICE AND CRP
BURST TEARGAS SHELLS AND MADE LATHICHARGE ON A "STONE THROWING" CROWD AT NOWGONG, 123 KMS. FROM HERE, ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE 36-HOUR CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE THAT BEGAN AT 5 THIS MORNING AND WILL END AT 5 IN THE AFTERNOON TOMORROW. BARRING A FEW INCIDENTS OF POLICE AND CRP BEATING UP UNARMED PEOPLE, THE SITUATION WAS PEACEFUL AND NORMAL IN THE STATE.

According to Sri Ramesh Chandra, Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam, about 300 people including Sri Lalit Chandra Rajkhowa, Adviser of AASU were arrested as preventive measures all over the State. This figure included those people who were arrested while attempting to travel without ticket. The Chief Secretary said that a crowd gathered in the premises of the State Transport bus station at Nowgong and indulged in pelting stones on ST buses. After sufficient warning, tear gas shells were burst and lathicharge resorted to.

At South Salmara in Goalpara district, a bus coming from Dhubri to Guwahati was stoned by a crowd causing injury to one person. The injured person was removed to the South Salmara Primary Health Dispensary, the Chief Secretary said.

Sri Chandra further said that a crowd was chased

away by police and CRP when it tried to stop a train at Bebeja in Nowgong district. All State Transport buses ran according to schedule but there were fewer passengers, he admitted.

The 36-hour programme was the first phase of the civil disobedience movement when volunteers will travel in Government buses, ferries and train without tickets. The call for the civil disobedience has been jointly given by the AASU and the AAGSP after resumption of the two-year-old agitation with a 36-hour Assam Bandh on November 19-20. The sponsors resumed the agitation on foreign nationals issue following the infructuous 14 rounds of talks with the Government of India. At Guwahati, strong CRP pickets were posted in rail and bus stations to prevent entry of unauthorised persons and prevent their journey without ticket. The ST city buses ran with CRP escorts. There were very few passengers in buses as well as in trains. Students, except examinees, stayed away from their classes.

Most of the office-goers and others who regularly avail of the ferry services to come to the city from the north bank of the Brahmaputra crossed the river today in small country boats, as the ferry station near DC's office remained closed.

The State Transport buses on the Church Field-Dispur-Khanapara route in the city service carried very few passengers.

Our correspondents adds:

LANKA: Lanka police today arrested 28 people in con-

nection with Civil Disobedience programme from a State Transport bus which came from Omrangsu to Guwahati on receiving complaint from the conductor. In the morning a State Transport bus left Lanka with 34 passengers without ticket but none was arrested as there was no complaint. No transport bus entered Lanka from any route till noon.

NALBARI: Not a single ticket was sold at Nalbari station of ASTC today. The normal daily sale in this station is about Rs. 3,000. Some volunteers including women and girls who wanted to travel without ticket in transport buses were brought to the police station and released later on. From Nalbari Railway station several batches of volunteers travelled without tickets in both up and down trains.

BONGAIGAON: The first phase of civil disobedience programme started here today with groups of volunteers of the AASU and AAGSP peacefully assembled at ASRTC bus and local railway stations. Strong security measures were taken to guard both ASRTC and Railway station and no passenger made demand for ticket. Three empty ASRTC buses with truck load of security escort left Bongaigaon in the morning. The up Tinsukia Mail departed New Bongaigaon with strong armed security men which outnumbered the passengers. No local passengers travelled in that train. Passengers were prevented from travelling in ASTC buses and train thinking them perhaps to be volunteers.

DERGAON: The first day of the civil disobedience programme was successfully observed here today. The State Transport bus station at Dergaon look deserted today for want of passengers though a few buses of both up and down service with few passengers under police escort passed through Dergaon.

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JORHAT: The civil disobedience programme passed off peacefully at Jorhat today. Thirty persons including seven females were arrested today in different areas of Jorhat town including campus of the State Transport bus station. All long route and short route State Transport buses with few passengers were plying in scheduled timings.

All trains—mails and passengers in the mainline including Jorhat-Furkating and Sib-sagar-Moranhat are moving in time with bonafide passengers.

GOLAGHAT: The civil disobedience at Golaghat passed off peacefully and no passenger travelled in the State Transport buses. Transport services were maintained usual with less number of passengers.

ARREST CONDEMNED

The Assam Agricultural University Teachers' Association in a statement condemned the arrest of Dr. G K Roychoudhury, Professor and Head of the Department of Medicine today without any specific charge. The statement urged the Government for his immediate and unconditional release and at the same time, warned the Government not to take such steps for harrasing the innocent people in the name of maintaining law and order in the State. It also demanded the University authority to give adequate protection to its employees so that normal academic atmosphere and serenity of the institution was not disrupted.

The Khanapara Sangram Samity condemned the arrest of Dr. Gunindra Kumar Roychoudhury, President of the Khanapara Sangram Samity and a senior most professor of the College of Veterinary Science, Khanapara.