

Government To Thwart Assam 'Rasta Roko' Plan

SHILLONG, Nov. 22.—In a tough-line approach, the Government today announced its intention to thwart the Assam movement leaders' planned "rasta roko" agitation on November 30, reports UNI.

The announcement came from the Governor, Mr Prakash Mehrotra, who expressed his opposition to the agitators' new plan to press for a settlement of the foreigners' issue.

Mr Mehrotra, who is also the Governor of Meghalaya, told a Raj conference here that the Government had decided to keep the highways open.

The Shillong-Gauhati highway is the only road from Assam to Meghalaya. Highways from Assam also lead to other States in the north-eastern region.

The Governor said he had a feeling that negotiations would soon be resumed between the Centre and the agitation leaders because both the Government and some leaders preferred negotiations to confrontation.

Mr Mehrotra said: "Things are fairly under control in Assam" and "general realism" had dawned on a "large number of people" about the futility of an agitational approach.

The realism could be gauged from the response to the call for the 36-hour bandh on November 19-20 which did not evoke as much support as it had done in the past, he added.

Meanwhile, the All-Assam Students' Union and the All-Assam Gana Sangram Parishad today launched their week-long mass rally programme at block and sub-divisional levels throughout the State as part of the three-phased renewed movement to press for an early solution to the foreign nationals' issue.

AASU and the AAGSP leaders have fanned out to different parts of the State to address rallies and to apprise the people of the negotiations with the Union Government on the issue so far.

The situation in the State continued to be normal and peaceful for the second day today without any report of untoward incident from any region, according to official sources here.

Curfew was relaxed for 12 hours from 5 a.m. today in Dhing in Nowgong district, where one person was killed in police firing on Thursday.

AASU has called for observance of a mourning day tomorrow throughout the State in protest against the police firing in Dhing. Black flags will be hoisted in all educational institutions and AASU offices for a week up to November 29.

Leaders of seven Left and democratic party leaders in the State today expressed "grave concern" at the fresh spate of bomb blasts in the State.

In a joint statement here they condemned the "acts of violence" and expressed strong resentment over the failure of the Government to curb "anti-social activities". They also appealed to the people to be on guard against such attacks.

The leaders were Mr Golap Borbora and Mr Dulal Barua (Janata), Mr Hemen Das (CPI-M), Mr Sarat Sinha (Cong-S), Mr Promode Gogoi (CPI), Mr Banerwar Saikia (RCPI), Mr Ramesh Mohan Kouli (Lok Dal) and Mr Asit Bhattacharyya (SUCI).

The Governor told reporters that he would permit installation

of a Ministry in Assam only if the conditions of stability and "requisite majority" were met by any party, adds PTI.

The Governor said till today the various claims in this regard remained "unsubstantiated and unverified", having only a common concern that President's rule should be ended and popular Government installed.

Mr Mehrotra made it clear that strength of national parties only he would accept the numerical if it tallied with the Speaker's list and that any claim made by a local party supporting a group should be accompanied by letters signed by individual members.

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