

Govt., Assam students mum

Express News Service

NEW DELHI, July 7.

Their earlier press statements on the progress of the talks having created some misunderstanding, the Assam agitators and the Union Government officials discussing the foreigners' issue here in New Delhi, decided today to keep their lips sealed while the talks are in progress.

The members of the All Assam Students Union and the All-Assam Gana Sangram Parishad delegations and the Government officials declined to say a word after today's;

80-minute meeting. A Home Ministry spokesman later clarified that the two sides had decided "not to give anything to the press while the talks are on, lest further misunderstandings arise". He said it was better not to make public the details of the daily negotiations on the "delicate" foreigners' issue.

The Union Law Secretary was present at this afternoon's meeting and he is reported to have clarified some legal points to the Assam agitation leaders. The Assam delegations demanded two meetings with the officials' committee on Wednesday while the Government has so far agreed to only one meeting. The agitators are obviously keen to be done with the discussions so that they can return to Assam with some face-saving formula.

The Assam talks have now narrowed down to the determination of who among those who sought shelter in the State in a difficult situation should be considered 'unauthorised' and offered incentives for resettlement elsewhere, PTI adds.

Union Home Minister Zail Singh today told Members of Parliament that the categorisation, authorised and unauthorised, would have to be made after checking whether they were allotted land or otherwise authorised to remain in the State.

Members of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee of the Home Ministry endorsed the view of Mr. Zail Singh that any solution should be consistent with the secular character of India and the national commitments, according to an official briefing.

The Assam movement leaders are

not satisfied with the clarifications given by the Government on the foreigners' issue yesterday, PTI adds.

The discussions were centred on the reservations of the movement leaders on the incentives plan as officially clarified.

The movement leaders are of the view that the acceptance of yesterday's clarifications would amount to the acceptance of 1971 as the cut-off year for detection and deportation of foreigners from Assam.

Mr. P. B. Venkatasubramaniam, Law Secretary, joined the talks today.

The other officers were Mr. S. M. H. Burney, Home Secretary, Mr. M. L. Kampani, Additional Secretary, Mr. K. M. L. Chhabra, Joint Home Secretary, and Mr. B. S. Sekhon, Joint Law Secretary.

At this afternoon's meeting, the movement leaders accepted the Government's clarification that the incentives would be granted to unauthorised foreigners after they resettle outside Assam, committee sources said.

They rejected all policy instructions issued by the Government from time to time insofar as these would permit grant of citizenship to all East Pakistani Hindus who entered Assam right up to 1971, according to these sources.

They demanded uniform policy instructions to foreign nationals in all the States of the Union and insisted that in any case they should be within the framework of the Constitution.

The movement leaders did not agree with the officials that it was for the State Government to remove the non-tribals who have settled in reserved tribal blocks in flagrant violation of the law.

Meanwhile, copies of judgements in two High Court cases cited by the Government side, yesterday as upholding the executive's discretion to grant citizenship, were made available to the movement representatives this morning. These were under study.

The Assam agitation leaders indicated that they might change their strategy of agitation without deviating from non-violence, if the foreigners problem continued without any solution, UNI adds.

Participating in a group discussion organised by the Delhi Study Group on 'Why we agitate' they said nothing could be said about the future strategy now.

The leaders who participated in the discussion were All-Assam Students Union president Profulla Mahanta, All-Assam Gana Sangram Parishad convener Atul Bora and another Parishad leader Nibaran Bora.

1.14 lakh infiltrators detected in Assam

NEW DELHI, July 7 (PTI).

About 1.14 lakh infiltrators have been detected in Assam and 1.09 lakh of them sent back from 1971 to May this year.

A note circulated at the Consultative Committee meeting of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs yesterday said the progress in identifying infiltrators had been hampered due to the law and order situation arising out of the movement on the foreigners' issue.

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