

# Leftists' bid fails in Assam

By Our Special Correspondent

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THE governor of Assam and Meghalaya, Mr. Prakash Mehrotra, has rejected the claim of the 10-party left democratic alliance to form a popular ministry in the state now under President's rule.

The Congress (I), which is the largest single party in the 126-member Assam assembly (effective strength 118), is likely to form a government next week though it has yet to stake its claim. The position would be examined by the governor, if and when such a claim is made, according to a Raj Bhavan spokesman.

A communication from the governor rejecting the alliance claim was delivered to its leader, Mr. Sarat Chandra Sinha, at Gauhati this morning.

The alliance had staked its claim to form a popular ministry in the state when Mr. Sinha, accompanied by leaders of various constituents, called on the governor at Gauhati on November 16. Mr. Sinha had sought an invitation to form a government on the basis of his claim that the alliance had the support of 64 legislators in the 118-member assembly. But the alliance failed to substantiate its claim despite a lapse of 15 days.

The governor had asked the national parties—the Janata (27 members), the CPM (11), the CPI (six), the Congress (S) (three) and the Lok Dal (one)—the main partners in the alli-

ance, to indicate to him in writing which party would participate in the government and which other party would support it from outside.

While Mr. Golap Chandra Barbor, leader of the Janata party, the largest constituent of the alliance, told the governor in writing that his party would not participate in the government but support it from outside, the three-member Socialist Unity Centre of India (SUCI) made it clear to the governor that while their party was committed to keeping the Congress (I) out of power, they had not yet decided whether or not to participate in the alliance government.

The CPM and the CPI failed to inform the governor about their line of action. Only the three-member Congress (S) and the lone Lok Dal member was forthright in informing the governor about their decision to participate in the proposed alliance government.

Mr. Mehrotra is understood to have come to the decision that under these circumstances the stability of the alliance government could not be guaranteed.

## TIWARI MISSION

Meanwhile, the Union industries minister, Mr. N. D. Tiwari, who has been detailed by the Congress (I) high command to assess the situation in Assam and study the prospects of the party forming a stable government in the state, has almost completed his mission.

According to unattached top Congress (I) sources at Gauhati, Mr. Tiwari has arrived at the conclusion

that the Congress (I) with the support from prospective associates was in a position to form a stable government in the state.

Mr. Tiwari, who has met almost all the Congress (I) legislators and members of the prospective associates of his party in the move to form a government since his arrival at Gauhati on Sunday, is reported to have found "overwhelming opposition" to the continuance of Mrs. Anwara Taimur as the party leader.

Mr. Tiwari is scheduled to leave for New Delhi tomorrow to report to the party high command about his findings.

On receipt of his report, the Congress (I) command is likely to send an observer to supervise the election of a new leader in place of Mrs. Taimur.

Gauhati (UNI): Curfew continued today unrelaxed in a number of villages around Bheloguri in the Samaguri police station area, where it was imposed after police firing in which one person died yesterday during the "rasta roko" campaign of the Assam agitators.

The situation in the area was quiet but tense, official reports received here today said.

The body of the firing victim, identified as Lok Nath Saikia, has been given to his relatives, reports said.

Meanwhile, most of those arrested from different parts of the state before and during yesterday's 12-hour "rasta roko" agitation, have been released. Among those released are Mr. Bhriku Kumar Phukan, general secretary of the All-Assam Students' Union and Mr. Lalit Kumar Rajkhowa, AASU's adviser.

2 - December - 1981 - The Times of India.