

4 more killed in Assam firing

Hindustan Times Correspondent

GAUHATI, Jan. 1 — Four Assam agitationists were killed and a score injured today in police firing — one in Nowgong and the others in Darrang district, as the 36-hour "rasta roko" stir ended at 5 p.m. amidst alarming reports of confrontation between the security forces escorting the road transport and train services in the Brahmaputra valley.

Three persons were killed and 10 injured in police firing yesterday.

The police opened fire today at Muratelli, near Tezpur town, to disperse a huge crowd which was obstructing the Rangpara-Tezpur train. Three of the agitators were killed on the spot and 13 seriously injured in the firing, which preceded a lathi-charge and tear gassing against heavy stone-throwing from the crowd.

Government sources here told this correspondent that the driver of the train was hit by a gunshot believed to have been fired from amongst the crowd.

The police firing at Muratelli took place half an hour before the termination of the "rasta roko" stir. Those killed were Mr Rupak Nath, Mr Manjit Das, and Mr A. Kakati. The injured persons were rushed to the Tezpur Civil Hospital.

Other reports said the squatters on the railway track removed the wooden sleepers and set them on fire.

The army was called out and a flag march followed. An indefinite curfew was later clamped in the area.

One agitationist, Mr Banamali Muktiar, a student, was killed and three persons were injured in police firing at Singhia-Bhakatagaon in Newgong district.

Official reports from the Nowgong district administration said the police opened fire at about 11 a.m. following obstruction of the railway track by over 7,000 people there. The crowd, according to official accounts, did not disperse in spite of a lathi-charge and tear-gassing. Firing was ordered to keep the swelling crowd at bay. An indefinite curfew was clamped in the disturbed area.

The police also opened fire at Biswanath Charali about 100 km from Tezpur, to disperse an irate crowd from the railway track and at least five persons were injured in the firing.

Other reports said the police lathi-charged a crowd near Tezpur town to clear the railway track. The police also burst tear gas shells.

In the Greater Gauhati Municipal Corporation area, the police had to fire five teargas shells at Kamakhya railway station to disperse a 200-strong crowd which was attacking the CRPF personnel on duty. One CRP constable

was injured. Earlier a bomb exploded near the railway station, damaging about one foot of the track. Another explosion was reported last night from the road bridge on the national highway near Jalukbari.

Official Press release tonight said a magisterial inquiry had been ordered into today's police firing at Singhia-Bhakatagaon. A magisterial inquiry has already been ordered into yesterday's firing at Demow.

The release said several cases of attempted sabotage were reported from various parts of the State.

A bomb exploded on the Silghat-Chaparmukh railway line causing some damage to the track, while four other unexploded bombs were also found in the area.

Two explosive devices were found, one at Tangla Bazar and another near the railway station.

The army staged a flag march this morning in Demow village still tense after yesterday's violence and police firing in which three persons were killed and 10 injured.

The army was deployed yesterday on both sides of the national highway and curfew imposed for 500 metres between Bebajia and Raha including Dimow, as a precautionary measure.

Army and para-military personnel were maintaining a round-the-clock vigil in the tense areas. Armed pickets were guarding strategic places as a precautionary measure.

Over 400 persons were arrested from different parts of the State during the "rasta roko" stir, official sources said.

Seventy persons, including 35 women, were arrested from different parts of Gauhati today. Fifteen of them were taken into custody from a college hostel.

About 90 persons, 87 of them women, were arrested at Jalukbari, when they tried to prevent the movement of the Gauhati-Lucknow Express at noon.

The Government claimed that the national and state highways throughout the State were kept free from the blockade. However, the number of both public and private vehicles was "very much less".

The rail and ferry services were also "by and large normal".

Chief Secretary Ramesh Chandra said the blockade programme had no impact on the North Cachar and Karbi Anglong and in parts of Darrang, Nowgong and Goalpara districts.

Assam stir leaders fast in Delhi

Hindustan Times Correspondent

NEW DELHI, Jan. 1 — Assam agitation leaders, now here to apprise Opposition party leaders of their demands, today undertook a 12-hour token fast to focus attention on the problem of foreigners in the State.

The seven leaders, who said they fasted for 12 hours, complained of repression by the Government.

All-Assam Students Union general secretary Bhrigu Kumar Phukan, its vice-president, Mr Nurul Hussain and its executive committee members, Mr Digen Bora and Mr Arun Sharma, and All-Assam Gana Sangram Parishad convener Bira Sharma and AAGSP executive committee members, Mr Chandra Mohan Patwari and Mr Arup Bordoloi, joined the fast.

In a statement, Mr Phukan expressed regret that the Government had "let loose a reign of terror to suppress the Assamese people," who were fighting for a just cause. The Government, which had adopted a "colonial attitude to the Assamese, celebrated the New Year with a bloodbath by killing innocent people," he said.

Mr Phukan said his team had met Bharatiya Janata Party president Atal Behari Vajpayee and its general secretary, Mr L.K. Advani, and Janata Party president Chandra Shekhar and its general secretary, Mr Ravindra Varma. It had also met Lok Dal leaders Madhu Limaye and Biju Patnaik, Forward Bloc leader Chitta Basu and Communist Party of India (Marxist) member of Parliament Samar Mukherjee.

Asked about the Opposition leaders' reaction to their demands, Mr Phukan said all of them, barring those of the CPI-M and the Forward Bloc, had expressed their sympathy with the AASU cause.

Call for protest day on Jan 4

GAUHATI, Jan. 1 (PTI) — The All-Assam Students Union (AASU) and the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP), at an emergency meeting tonight decided to observe a protest day on Jan. 4 against "inhuman and barbarous" killings of people in police firings in Nowgong and Darrang district during the 36-hour road blockade movement.

Mr Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, president of the AASU, and Mr Atul Bora, convener of the AAGSP, in a statement urged the traders to close their shops and markets on that day as a mark of respect to the memory of the deceased.

Hindustan Times,

2/Jan/1982

arrested yesterday were released along with today's arrests at the end of the Path Bandh. Several people, including women, young girls and boys were arrested near Bhangagarh, following wild lathi charges by the CRPF personnel. The arrests included Sri Keshab Bora, a prominent citizen and businessman of the City and Sri Baldev Sarma, Superintending Engineer.

With the conclusion of the 36-hour 'Path Bandh' at 5 this evening, the city-life came back to normal with all vehicles back on the roads. However, the people are indignant and shocked at the barbarous firings and inhuman behaviour of the law-enforcers on the peaceful agitators in different parts of the State.

Bongaigaon : Police created virtual reign of terror today in and around Bongaigaon. At New Bongaigaon Railway station police chased away and brutally beat up large number of lady picketers. Twentysix picketers were arrested. Police compelled the truck drivers to ply bus on National Highway. No vehicle even bicycle were seen on the road.

PATHSALA: The 36-hour road blockade passed off successfully here today. All vehicles, bicycles including State buses were off the roads. The CRPF were seen chasing student volunteers taking part in Path Bandh during the blockade period. The CRPF allegedly beat up innocent persons and several indiscriminate arrests were made by police.

DERGAON: The Path Bandh programme peacefully concluded at Dergaon. All sorts of vehicles including Transport buses during the entire blockade period and trains did not move. The Government and Semi-Government service holders of distant places attended duty on foot.

NALBARI: At Nalbari all private buses rickshaws pull-carts bicycles etc. were off

roads. No tickets were sold at Nalbari station of State Transport during blockade period except one bus that was taken to Guwahati in a convoy yesterday. No transport buses originating at Nalbari ran. Ten students were arrested yesterday.

DIPHU: In response to the call given by AASU and AAGSP 'Path Bandh' programme in Karbi Anglong district successfully observed. No plying of State Transport and private buses from Diphu to other parts of the State is reported. Selling of tickets in State Transport buses is totally nil.

DIBRUGARH: Road communication between Dibrugarh with rest of the country remained disrupted during the 36-hour road blockade launched by AASU and AAGSP on foreigners issue. All modes of road transport including bicycles remained off the roads in Dibrugarh while only a few State Transport buses left Dibrugarh yesterday under heavy police escort but without any very few passengers.

The Government today claimed that the National and State Highways throughout the State were kept free from the blockade. However, the number of both public and private vehicles were very much less. Particularly all modes of private transport including bicycles and auto rickshaws were off the road.

The rail and ferry services were also by and large normal.

An official Press release tonight said that a Magisterial enquiry had been ordered into today's police firing at Singla Bhakatgoon village under Samoguri police station