

# Assam agitators may seek SC decision

Hindustan Times Correspondent

NEW DELHI, July 8—Sharp differences appear to have surfaced between the Central Government and the leaders of the Assam agitation at the long drawn-out official level talks today over the applicability of Sections 5(1)a and 5(1)e of the Citizenship Act.

Since the two judgments on the issue by the Rajasthan and Allahabad High Courts were being hotly debated at the discussions and did not seem to be furthering the search for an acceptable solution, the Assam leaders are likely to press for a Supreme Court decision on the subject.

At the discussions today, Law Secretary P. B. Venkatasubramanian provided further elucidations on the legal questions raised by the Assam leaders.

The official team explained at length the complexities of the problem, historical facts, Government policies and national commitments.

Since talks with the full delegations of the All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad and the All Assam Students' Union comprising 27 members, with their insistence on using interpreters, become a cumbersome procedure, the official team today demanded revival of the small negotiating committee with about five members of the Assam movement for more businesslike negotiations.

The AAGSP, which comprises several regional organisations participating in the movement, is how-

ever insisting that all of them would be present at the negotiating table.

The Assam students apparently have seen merit in the Government's suggestion for a committee level meeting and fielded only one person today—their general secretary Bhriku Phukan.

The Assam leaders today asserted that the Government must take out of the State all those who immigrated between 1961 and 71—regardless of whether it chose to call them "authorised" settlers or "unauthorised".

The leaders told senior officials at the two-and-a-half-hour meeting that their (the officials) arguments on retaining the Hindu refugees in the State did not have legal sanction of the Government policy and the Constitution, add the agencies.

They pointed out that they had already offered to accept 1951-61 aliens, irrespective of their being authorised or not.

The Government should reciprocate and move out of the State all 1961-71 foreigners without any distinction.

The leaders of the All Assam Students Union (AASU) and All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) told the officials that there was no point in continuing discussions with them if the Government did not change its stand on retaining the Hindu refugees under "executive instructions".

The agitation leaders conveyed their desire to have a meeting with the Home Minister in view of the stalemate at the official-level discussions.

The officials told the agitation leaders they would consult the Minister and let them know his response.

Informed sources said Mr Zail Singh has a busy schedule tomorrow and might be able to meet the Assam delegation only on Friday.

The movement leaders contended that the High Court judgments cited by the officials as upholding the executive's discretion to issue citizenship certificates did not invalidate other High Court rulings that this should be based on reciprocity, adds PTI.

Under the principle of reciprocity, persons of Pakistani origin can be granted Indian citizenship only if people of Indian origin enjoyed a similar facility in Pakistan.

The movement leaders also challenged an official media report that detection and deportation of foreign infiltrators into Assam after 1971 have been completed.

They said the number on the electoral rolls of Assam had gone up by 28 lakhs after 1971. This compared to an increase of only 20 lakhs in 20 years between 1951 and 1971.

The movement leaders also demanded that Assam Rifles should replace the Border Security Force on the border with Bangladesh.

## Zail's assurance to Tripura CM

AGARTALA, July 8 (PTI) — Union Home Minister Zail Singh has assured Tripura Chief Minister Nripen Chakrabarty that no final decision will be taken by the Centre in regard to the deportation of foreign nationals from Assam without consulting the Tripura Government.

Disclosing this, the Tripura Chief Minister told newsmen here last night that the assurance was given by the Union Home Minister during Mr Chakrabarty's visit to Delhi.

Mr Zail Singh had also assured the Tripura Government that the Centre would bear the expenditure incurred by the State for running the relief camps for the tribal evacuees from Chittagong hill tracts of Bangladesh who had crossed into Tripura recently, Mr Chakrabarty added.

HINDUSTAN TIMES

9 - JULY - 1981.