

Assam bandh ends; stray incidents

Hindustan Times Correspondent

GAUHATI, Nov. 20 — The Assam bandh, which ended at 5 p.m. today kept life paralysed through out the day, although Government sources said the situation showed a marked improvement over that of yesterday.

Shops opened and cars started playing as soon as the bandh ended.

Over 600 persons were arrested

at different parts of the State since yesterday and the curfew imposed at Dhing in Nowgong District following a death in firing there was relaxed today for a few hours after 9 a.m.

Police sources said the fish plates were found removed last night at Hatiali station near Chabua in Upper Assam. Some portions of the branch railway line between Bebejia and Phulaguri in Nowgong District was found missing today, while an explosion took place in a railway employees' premises at Gotanagar adjacent to the North-east Frontier Railway headquarters.

Chief Secretary Ramesh Chandra said the overall situation in the Brahmaputra Valley was "peaceful today". Precautionary measures had been tightened and the army stood by to aid the civil authorities.

He claimed that the train, air and long-distance bus services operated today and the attendance of the Government employees at the Secretariat at Dispur and the district offices showed improvement over yesterday.

Mr Chandra said the oil installations were not affected by the bandh.

Meanwhile, the All Assam Students Union (AASU) leaders have appealed to the Centre to "see reason" and stop all "repressive measures like random arrests and punishment to the Government employees supporting the agitation." They also criticised the attempts of the authorities to "mislead the people by running trains and city buses with the help of para military personnel when most of the services had been abandoned by the people in response to the bandh.

PTI adds: An engine was derailed near Chabua Station 30 km east of Dibrugarh town due to removal of fish plates this morning, according to N.F. Railway officials.

An attempt to obstruct work at the Digboi oil refinery in Upper Assam by picketers was foiled by the police. The Bokajan cement factory in Karbi Anglong district did not function, according to a report received here.

AASU warns of shedding non-violence

GAUHATI, Nov. 20 (UNI)—The All-Assam Students' Union today said it would have to think for an alternative to its non-violent movement to face the government which "believes only in bullets and lathis".

Congratulating the people of Assam for making the 36-hour State-wide bandh a success, AASU president Prafulla Kumar Mahanta and General Secretary Bhriku Kumar Phukan in a joint statement said the foreign nationals were not only the problem of the student community of the State alone, but of every Indian citizen whose duty it was to demand the deportation of foreigners.

The two leaders alleged that a section of the Government officers both at Dispur, the State capital and in Delhi was out to destroy the language, culture and identity of Assamese people by giving protection to the foreign nationals.

They said at the directive of these officers, the police and para military forces had killed many who participated in the "mass movement".

The AASU leaders said such atrocities could not be tolerated for a long time and they would be compelled to appeal to the people of Assam to prepare themselves for giving a "befitting reply to naked force" of the Government.

Taking strong exception to Union Home Minister Zail Singh's reported comment that "good sense" should prevail on the leadership of Assam movement, the two leaders said by making such comment the Minister had insulted the people of Assam. He had no "moral right" to be in power being unable to prevent the inflow of foreign nationals and deport them, they said.

Mr Mahanta and Mr Phukan said the problem could be solved if the Home Minister understood the provisions of the Citizenship Act, though it was too late.

Assam College Teachers Association also condemned "the brutal killing of Mr Dhrubajyoti Nath" at Dhing yesterday and called for the observance of a mourning day in his honour on Nov. 23.

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