

AASU counters Govt stand on foreigners

NEW DELHI, July 14 (UNI)—The Assam agitation leaders have confronted the Union Home Ministry with a 1963 Central Government document which rejects possession of a ration card by an immigrant or his having voted in an election as evidence of being an Indian national.

The document was prepared by the External Affairs Ministry to counter the Pakistani propaganda that India was pushing its own nationals into East Pakistan.

The document was shown to the Home Ministry by the All-Assam Students Union (AASU) representatives when the officials stated that holders of ration cards or school certificates could not be considered foreigners in Assam.

The Ministry paper describes as "spurious" a number of grounds the Pakistani authorities had ad-

vanced in support of their stand.

Among them are: The Alien's mother is buried in Tripura, he was cultivating land in Assam, he held ration cards, he had a few rent receipts and could produce some property documents, he held a receipt for house rent and municipal taxes, he paid subscription to a mosque or a political party, he carried documents of Muslim marriage, his children studied in Indian schools and that he voted at an election.

The document clarifies that "foreigners in temporary residence in India can hold ration cards, admit their children to schools, enter subscriptions to mosques and societies, even bury their mothers on Indian soil. Documents concerning Muslim marriages can be made to order anywhere in India or Pakistan. House rent and several municipal taxes are payable by foreign and Indian nationals alike."

The document says: "A mother's grave, a patch of land, a rent receipt, a school certificate is no evidence of nationality. Nationality is based on more substantial and fundamental considerations."

Rights of citizenship and nationality are governed by the India's Constitution and the Citizenship Act. Articles five six and seven of

the Constitution and Sections three four five and six of the Citizenship Act clearly define and prescribe who an Indian citizen is.

"The immigrants on whom notices to quit India had been served were not able to produce any evidence that they satisfied any of the provisions of the Constitution or the Citizenship Act in regard to citizenship."

The document says Pakistani propaganda then sought to make much of the fact that the name of a few of the illegal immigrants were to be found on Indian electoral rolls. "The fact is that enlistment of foreigners in the voters' lists has at times taken place at the instance of politically interested persons or parties. Political parties have been known to take dubious steps to inflate the number of their supporters at election time and some undoubtedly used the illegal settlers from Pakistan towards this end."

It goes on: "But all this has no relevance to the question of establishing that a person's name is, rightly or wrongly, inscribed on the voters' list does not prove or confer Indian nationality or citizenship. This legal position has been confirmed by decisions of the Supreme Court of India."

The document says: "There is sufficient fool-proof evidence to show that land-hungry immigrants from Pakistan sneaked through the border, dispossessed innocent tribesmen of their forests and lands, cultivated these and even paid land revenue until their ownership of the land was discovered to be fraudulent. Through these questionable means with occasional connivance of petty local officers, some of the illegal immigrants armed themselves with dubious documents of registration of property. A great majority of the illegal immigrants encroached and took over Government land."

It continues: "Many Pakistani nationals who left Tripura themselves stated on return that they had helped, worked and voted for

candidates of a political party. These foreigners were no doubt assisted, through questionable practices, to have their names put on the voters' list."

The document adds that the aliens' effort has been to accumulate subsidiary or circumstantial "evidence" since they lacked primary and essential proof of Indian nationality.

The document concludes by stating that hunger for land brought them to Tripura and Assam. To satisfy their hunger, they misled innocent tribesmen, forged documents and invented the so-called "evidence" of Indian nationality.

Assam leaders agree to meet officials

Hindustan Times Correspondent
NEW DELHI, July 14—Home Minister Zail Singh today calmed the frayed tempers of the leaders of the Gana Sangram Parishad and the All-Assam Students Union and averted a break-down of the dialogue over the future of people who migrated to Assam between 1961 and 1971.

He persuaded them to meet officials in the representative committee again tomorrow to continue the discussion to evolve a solution. Emerging with a broad smile on his face, Mr Zail Singh told waiting newsmen: "Some way will be found out... they will agree."

An official spokesman said subsequently that "efforts to find a solution will continue."

It is understood that the leaders of the Assam movement pressed the Home Minister today to fix principles for detection of foreigners, their deletion from the electoral rolls and distribution to other States for re-settlement.

They insisted that this be done in the presence of the negotiating official team comprising Home and Law Ministry officials and the full delegations of AASU and AAGSP, who participated in today's meeting.

According to the Assam leaders, the Home Minister evaded stipulating the principles and indicated that this could be discussed at the committee meeting tomorrow.

They claimed that Mr Zail Singh had agreed in principle to the seven-point demand submitted by them in February 1980, regarding detection of foreigners, their deletion from electoral rolls and re-settlement outside Assam or deportation.

But they felt thwarted that Mr Zail Singh was not prepared to give this to them in writing.

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