

Assam Govt ready to meet rasta-roko stir

Hindustan Times Correspondent

GAUHATI, Nov. 29 — Tension gripped the Brahmaputra valley as the scheduled "rasta-roko" programme of agitation from 5 a.m. tomorrow drew near against the backdrop of full mobilisation of the security personnel by the Assam Government to ensure uninterrupted movement of rail and road transport besides keeping the essential services going.

The operation to foil the "road blockade" programme of the leaders of the Assam agitation on the aliens' issue has been chalked

out on a war footing with elaborate deployment of armed personnel including Central Reserve Police Force and the army, to provide mobile escorts to Government transport services and other vehicles on the national highways and city roads all over the State. Civil police and army officials met at Dispute, the temporary Capital, yesterday and today to leave no stone unturned to tackle the situation which, according to intelligence sources, "seemed to be grim" especially in the vulnerable areas of North Kamrup, Dhubri and Upper Assam.

Arrangements to guard the oil installations in Upper Assam oilfields had been finalised while mobile patrolling by armed forces and static armed pickets were being arranged tonight all along the valley.

Meanwhile, official sources said that at least two Assam State Road Transport Corporation buses were damaged in a bomb blast at the Nowgong bus station about 11-30 a.m. today while a wooden bridge was damaged in another explosion near Misa in Nowgong district. The bomb was planted below the bridge on National Highway No. 37.

Forty-seven hostel boys of the Assam Agriculture University's veterinary campus at Khanapara, on the outskirts of Gauhati, were picked up by the police today on various charges, including possession of "some explosive materials and ammunition." The police had also taken into preventive custody a large number of persons all over the State since this morning.

In the Greater Gauhati Municipal Corporation area almost all private city buses besides road carriers and long distance rural bus services went off the road today following requisition of vehicles by the authorities.

Reports reaching here tonight from Sibsagar, Nowgong and Nalbari said that an unspecified number of college teachers, students leaders and advocates had been arrested there as a "preventive measure." All-Assam Gana Sangram Parishad sources here however, described the arrests as "provocative and based on concocted charges."

While the All-Assam Students Union (AASU) and the AAGSP leaders condemned the "repressive measures" of the Government against the students and supporters of movement in the State, the All-Assam Minority Students Union (AAMSU) has welcomed the stern steps.

The Assam State unit of the All-India Sikh Students Federation has pledged support to the Assam agi-

Tiwari has talks in Gauhati

GAUHATI, Nov. 29 (UNI)—Union Industry Minister N. D. Tiwari an emissary of the Congress-I High Command, arrived here today to assess the views of members of the Assam Congress-I Legislature Party about the formation of a Ministry in the State and to settle differences among them on the leadership issue.

Mr Tiwari met the members both individually and in groups this evening.

A senior Congress-I leader said that the party would be in a position to form a popular Ministry in the State, if the ACLP-I leader was replaced.

PTI ads: Meanwhile, Mrs Anwara Taimur, leader of the Assam Congress-I Legislature Party, today submitted a fresh list of 63 legislators to the Governor, Mr Prakash Mehrotra, in support of her claim to form a Ministry in Assam, now under President's rule.

The Congress-I strength in the Legislature had gone up from 61 to 63 with the support of Plains Tribal Council of Assam (PTCA) and independents, Mrs Taimur said tonight.

In her letter to the Governor, Mrs Taimur said the position of the Congress-I in the 119-member (effective) House had "further improved" and being the single largest party, "we are in a position to form a stable Government."

She hoped the Governor would examine her claim and allow her to form a "popular" Ministry.

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tation on the foreigners' issue and termed the police action against the people "barbarous".

The convenor of the federation Mr Gurdip Singh, in a Press statement tonight appealed to all sections of the people in the State to support the road blockade programme.

Meanwhile, several leaders of the Purbanchaliya Loka Parishad (PLP) and the All-Assam Jatiyavadi Yuva Chhatra Parishad constituents of the Gana Sangram Parishad are said to have reached different areas in Upper and Lower Assam sectors for what their sources described as "supervision" of the road blockade programme tomorrow from which almost all essential services, including police, military, medical services, water and power distribution and the Press have been exempted.

The Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam, Mr Ramesh Chandra, who returned to Gauhati today from New Delhi after apprising the Centre of the latest situation in the State, told this correspondent that he had not know of any fresh proposal from the Union Home Ministry to the Assam agitation leaders about resumption of talks on the foreign nationals issue sooner or later.

Meanwhile, the Government employees had been warned that absence from the post on November 30 would be treated under the prevailing set of instructions and orders regarding service conduct rules and other provisions of the law.