

Assam leaders want minutes of talks recorded

Hindustan Times Correspondent

NEW DELHI, Dec. 26—Assam agitation leaders who have agreed to take part in tripartite talks on the foreign nationals issue want the deliberations to be formal and their minutes recorded.

A six-member delegation of the All-Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) and the All-Assam Students Union (AASU) now here to meet Opposition leaders and the media and take them into confidence because it feels that the Government wants to provoke the agitation leaders "so that we refuse to participate in the talks and can be blamed for continuing the present impasse."

In a strongly worded letter addressed to the Central Government on Nov. 28 and released here today, AASU leaders said the anti-people activities of "some of the senior officials of the Government of Assam" had been constantly eroding the people's faith in the Government of India.

They warned the Centre that the "dangerous portents" should not be ignored and credibility restored by "taking immediate and irrevocable steps to remove such despotic officers." They demanded that the "atrocities" on the people must be stopped and underscored the fact that the people of Assam were deeply anguished that even after 14 rounds of negotiations no solution was in sight.

There was no indication as to when the tripartite talks between the Assam agitation leaders, representatives of the Opposition and the Government of India would begin. But the deliberations were expected to be held soon.

The delegation consists of Mr Arun Sharma, Mr Nurul Hussain and Mr Digen Bora (all of AASU) and Mr S. Patwari, Mr Braj Sharma and Mr Arup Bordoloi (all of AAGSP). AASU general secretary Bhriгу Phukan is due to arrive here tomorrow.

Mr Arun Sharma said the delegation had already met some Opposition leaders, including Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee (BJP), Mr Ravindra Varma (Janata) and Mr Bhola Paswan Shastri (Cong-S).

Explaining why they want the talks to be formal, they said the agitation leaders did not want to be accused of changing their position. The leaders said the agitation would not be suspended before the tripartite talks unless all repressive measures in Assam were brought to an end.

PTI, UNI add:

Mr Nurul Hussain alleged that on Dec. 23 when the AAGSP executive committee members were meeting to take a decision to participate in the tripartite talks, their office was raided by CRPF personnel. The members had to jump over a fence and gather at "somebody's" residence to continue the meeting.

He and Mr Sharma said, "We have a feeling the Government wants to provoke us so that we refuse to participate in the talks and can be blamed for continuing the present impasse. That is why

we have come here to take the Opposition leaders and the Press into confidence."

Mr Patwari alleged that over 700 supporters of the movement had been "disabled" by lathis and bullets by police in this international year of the disabled. They would be given reception at different places in Assam on Dec. 28 in recognition of their sacrifices.

In its letter to the Union Home Secretary, the AASU said "There is always a limit to everything and the people of Assam cannot be expected to tolerate the uncivilised and oppressive activities of such arrogant Chhanghis Khans and Nadirshahs. The Government of India must not ignore these dangerous portents and should restore credibility of the establishment by taking immediate and irrevocable steps to remove such despotic officers," they said.

"The police and CRP atrocities which had been unleashed in Assam during the movement have vitiated the cordial and congenial atmosphere built, brick by brick, in 1980 and has pushed the people to a point of no return," they said.

"Any further atrocities will be counter-productive and probably the Government of India has realised the unflinching commitment of the people to sustain their sacrifices in the face of heaviest odds."

The union said the Government had been unmasked through its "stance" towards their mass rally held at Gauhati on Nov. 10.

"We must congratulate the Government for holding the CRP rally on the same date in the Judges Field," they said.

The AASU said the warlike preparations of the administration to thwart the holding of rallies at different places from Nov. 21 to Nov. 29, depriving the citizens of the provisions under Article 19 and following a policy of appeasement and surrender before the declared secessionist movement of Khalistan, had exposed its plan of "dichotomy."

The AASU also said that all these had raised one fundamental question before the Assamese, "Are the Assamese not bona fide citizens of India? If they are, then why this imperialistic administration and colonial exploitation?"

They demanded that "all these atrocities must stop forthwith, if the Government still retains some semblance of sincerity and means business."

The AASU said the people of Assam were deeply anguished that even after 14 rounds of negotiations, no solution was in sight.

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AASU poster campaign

GAUHATI, Dec. 26 (UNI, PTI)—The All-Assam Students Union and the All-Assam Gana Sangram Parishad will jointly launch a two-day poster campaign tomorrow to start a month-long agitation in their new phase of foreign nationals movement.

In a counter move, the State Government today directed the district authorities to ban posters in public places and issue Sec 144 CrPC orders, if necessary, to firmly prevent posters being put up by the agitators.

The State Government, in its directive to the district authorities, said the posters which might lead to a breach of the peace should not be allowed to be put up.

Chief Secretary Ramesh Chandra said full security arrangements had been made to maintain law and order.

Meanwhile, AASU today urged the State Government to immediately stop land settlement proceedings in Gaspara district bordering Bangladesh.

A three-member AASU delegation, led by its president Prafulla Mahanta, met the State's Chief Secretary here and submitted a memorandum alleging that many "foreigners" including those who had entered the State after 1971 had been given land in the district.

The Chief Secretary assured the delegation that Government would look into the matter, Mr Mahanta said.

New Alliance bid to form Ministry

GAUHATI, Dec. 26 (PTI)—Mr Sarat Chandra Sinha, leader of the Left and Democratic Alliance in Assam, will meet the Governor, Mr Prakash Mehrotra, at Shillong on Dec. 28 to press the Alliance's claim to form a Ministry in the State.

Mr Sinha told PTI here tonight that the Governor should accept their claim as their strength had further increased.

Meanwhile, Mr K. C. Gogoi, leader of the "pro-changers" group of the Assam Congress-I Legislature Party returned here yesterday from New Delhi after meeting the party High Command leaders.

Sources close to Mr Gogoi said the prospects of the Congress-I forming a Ministry in Assam were "very bright" under a new leader and "some announcement" in this regard was expected from New Delhi "soon."