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Assam mobs teargassed

By Our Special Correspondent

SHILLONG, December 14.

THE police burst tear-gas shells and resorted to lathi-charges at Nowgong, Senchowa and a few places in Assam, to disperse crowds of agitators who turned violent during the 36-hour "civil disobedience" movement which began at five this morning.

A call for it was jointly given by the All-Assam Students Union (AASU) and All-Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP), to pressure the government to solve the foreigners' problem in Assam, on the basis of the latest 17-point proposal submitted by them.

While the "civil disobedience" call did not evoke any response in the predominantly Bengali-speaking Cachar,

north Cachar and Arbi Anglong districts, the response elsewhere was lukewarm.

In the Nowgong district, where the agitators have managed to put up a bold front during the current phase of the agitation, the "civil disobedience" movement, like the "Assam bandh" and "rasta roko" programmes last month, took a violent turn.

The police had to burst tear-gas shells and resorted to lathi-charge to disperse a "stone-throwing" crowd at the Nowgong bus station. A large number of state transport buses were damaged in the incident.

BUSES DAMAGED

The police had to cane-charge another crowd at Senchowa railway station. According to official sources at Gauhati, train services and government transport services ran throughout the state as per schedule.

An official spokesman said that the "civil disobedience" call given by the agitation leaders had proved to be a "damp squib".

Air services had been exempted by the agitation leaders from the purview of the "civil disobedience" programme. Private buses and other vehicles had also been exempted.

Thousands of gun-wielding CRP and police personnel guarded rail, bus and other government stations in Gauhati so that no "unauthorised" person boarded government buses, ferries and trains.

The government-run city buses in Gauhati were seen plying with strong CRP escort. Railway stations were guarded to ensure that none entered the platform without a ticket.

UNI adds:

Official sources said about 500 people were rounded up by the police in connection with the civil disobedience programme.

The Assam chief secretary, Mr. Ramesh Chandra, said trains, the government owned inland water transport system and the road transport system functioned normally.

Reports, however, suggested that most people travelled by private transport.

At Gauhati, passengers were being allowed to board the Government owned city buses only after the purchase of valid tickets.

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