ASSAM TALKS ADJOURNED TILL MONDAY

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THE ASSAM TRIBUNE

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From Our Special Representative

NEW DELHI, Oct. 31—The five hours of discussions between the officials of the Government of India and the delegation of the AASU and the AAGSP produced only one result—construction of a road along the 270 km borders between Assam and Bangladesh.

Sri Nagen Sharma, adviser to the AASU said that this road would be constructed hundred to two hundred meters away from the border thus crating a no mans land along the border. This was one of the demands of the agitation leaders. The other two measures agreed to is the construction of a wall or barbed wire fencing wherever possible with a view to seal the border. It was also decided to strengthen river patrolling by placing engine and speed boats on the Brahmaputra and Barak.

Today's discussions were not attended by the Cabinet Secretary Sri Krishnaswami Rao Saheb. Sri T N Chaturvedi, Home Secretary led the official team consisting of Sri M L Kompani, Additional Home Secretary and Sri K M L Chhabra, Joint Secretary, Home and Sri P K Kartha, Joint Secretary in the Law Ministry. The AASU was represented by Sri Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, President and Sri Bhrigu Kumar Phukan, General Secretary and Sri Nagen Sarma, adviser. AAGSP was represented by Sri Nibaran Bora President PLP and Sri Atul Bora, Convener. There will be no discussions tomorrow.

According to AASU sources the real issues will come up on Monday which would include detection and deportation of foreigners and the modalities to be followed. The discussions are slated for ten in the morning. Today the participants did not break for lunch but had a working lunch on the discussion table itself. Sri Ramesh Chandra Saharia, a former Home Minister in Sayeda Anwara Taimur's Government and now a challenger to her leadership of the ACLP (I) had several rounds of discussions with Home Minister Sri Zail Singh Industry and Labour Minister Sri N D Tewari, Cabinet Secretary Sri Krishnaswamy Rao Saheb.

Sri Saharia who has been camping here for the past week refused to disclose the nature of the discussions except saying he has stressed to thrash out the issue during the current session. But it is understood he had suggested to them that Government should not stubbornly stick on to their date of 1971 as the basis. They should change their stand and come to a compromising point.

During yesterday's discussions, the official claim that the infiltration from Bangladesh to Assam has stopped had been challenged by the leaders of the Assam delegation. The official claim that since the agitation started two years ago, 3.20 lakh people have been deported was similarly contested. They maintained that the BSF posted on the borders were not able to prevent such infiltration because of their inadequate number. It was agreed by the officials that the 'Forces' on the borders would be enhanced through drafting from other sources.

The question of working of the PIP (prevention of infiltration from Pakistan) supposed to be still under operation was also discussed. It was disclosed by the officials that annually Rs. 2.14 crores were being spent on this. They agreed to inquire into whether this amount was being properly utilised or misused.

The AASU President, Sri Prafulla Kumar Mahanta made it clear to reporters that his organisation would stick to the demands already placed before the Government in their draft proposals. The General Secretary of the AASU, Sri Bhrigu Kumar Phukan denied a report published in a section of the Press that there were "hard liners and soft liners" among the agitation leaders. He said that both the organisations were completely united on their demands for deportation of foreigners as contained in the 15-point draft. However, last minute dropping out of the Asom Jatiyatabadi Dal President, Sri Girin Baruah from the delegation has caused some misgivings. The organisation earlier opined that there was no need for attending unofficial talks. Whether it was the result of this decision is not known and the delegation members refused to comment.

PTI adds: Central Government officials and Assam movement leaders discussed for the second day today measures to strengthen security of the Indo-Bangladesh border along Assam to prevent infiltration of foreigners.

According to the sources, the official side has so far agreed to consider the movement leaders' demand for sealing the border by creating a wall and providing barbed fencing where necessary.

Officials have, however, rejected the demand for associating Assam Police with the job of manning the border. They maintained it was the sole concern of the Centre and the Border Security Force was quite competent to do the job.

Other demands which the official side agreed to consider are: Building of a road parallel to the border, creation of a no man's belt between India and Bangladesh, setting up of check posts at closer proximity and intensification of patrolling, the sources said.

The movement leaders claimed that the official side today agreed to grant them permission for holding a mass rally in Guwahati on November 10 to explain their position to the people.

A ban order under Section 144 Cr PC is in force in Guwahati.

Sri P K Mahanta, President of All Assam Students Union, meanwhile, demanded an inquiry into the killing of Sri Hem Kalita, President of Kathiatoli unit of All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad, by some "anti-social" elements on October 27.

SWAHID DIVAS TODAY

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By A Staff Reporter

GUWAHATI, Oct. 31—'Swahid Divas' called by the Coordination Committee of the All Assam Employees Parishads to pay homage to the employees who died during the Assam Movement, will be observed all over the State tomorrow.

At Guwahati, the day will be observed centrally at Nabin Bordoloi Hall with a day-long programme.

In a statement, the Karmachari Swahid Divas Udjapan Committee called upon all citizens to pray for the eternal peace of the departed souls.

The Asom Sahitya Sabha has extended its full support to the observance of the Swahid Divas and requested all its branches, recognised affiliates etc. to pay their respects to the 'Swahids' in a statement, by Chief Secretary, Sri Durgeswar Sarma.

In a statement, Smt. Nirupama Chakraborty, widow of Sri Dilip Chakraborty stated that by remembering the sacrifice of her husband and several others during the Assam Movement the people must march ahead towards the achievement of the goal of a safe future for Assam.

The Birubari-Kalapahar Gana Sangram Parishad will observe the day from 9 am at its office.

The All Gauhati Students Union, in a statement, has extended full support to the swahid Divas and called upon the students of Greater Guwahati to the make the programme a success.

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