

Assam talks around agitators' draft

Hindustan Times Correspondent

NEW DELHI, Oct. 29—Talks for determining the future of alien immigrants in Assam were resumed today after the August 23 adjournment.

Emerging after the 40-minute session, an official spokesman described the discussions as of a preliminary nature, with the trend of the dialogue between the Central official team and leaders of the movement in Assam against the foreigners being taken up from the point it was left at the last round of talks.

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The official team comprised Cabinet Secretary Krishnaswamy Rao Saheb, Home Secretary T. N. Chaturvedi, Additional Home Secretary M. L. Kampani and Law Ministry Joint Secretary P. K. Kantha.

The agitationists were represented by All-Assam Gana Sangram Parishad members Nibaron Bora and Atul Bora, and All-Assam Students Union leaders Prafulla Mohanta and Bhriгу Phukan.

The next meeting is scheduled for tomorrow in the afternoon.

UNI adds: The 15-point draft of the Assam agitating organisations will be the basis for the current round of talks on the foreigners' issue, which began today.

Mr Prafulla Mohanta said after the discussions with the officials that it was agreed to discuss their draft proposals in detail tomorrow. Only preliminary discussions were held this evening.

Asked whether the draft proposals were in modification of the Government draft given to the agitators, he said he could not comment at the moment but promised to say something later.

In their proposals, the agitators have demanded that foreigners who entered Assam during 1961-71 should be detected, their names deleted from the electoral rolls and the Government should settle them outside the State within six months of their identification.

Also, the Government should guarantee that these persons were not allowed to enter the State again.

About the post-1971 foreigners, they have demanded that they should be detected and housed in camps pending deportation.

The agitators have also demanded that the AASU and the Parishad should have the sole right to monitor implementation of the process of identification and dispersal or deportation of foreigners.

The agitating organisations have agreed to accept 1951-61 foreigners and the Government is committed to deporting post-1971 aliens.

The Assam leaders have proposed that foreigners should be detected on the basis of the Constitution, Citizenship Act, Foreigners Act, Passport Act, 1951 National Register of Citizens, 1952 electoral rolls and land records.

They say that former Pakistani citizens could not be conferred citizenship except on a reciprocal basis under Section 5(2) (E) of the Indian Citizenship Act. Hence the citizenship certificates already granted by State Governments should not be recognised.

The proposals demand that foreigners occupying land in tribal belts should be evicted.

Also, the Government should recommend to the Election Commission that the next general elections in Assam be held only after the electoral rolls have been revised deleting names of the foreigners.

It has also been suggested that harbouring of foreigners should be made a criminal offence under Section 14 of the Foreigners' Act.

Govt 'formula' on aliens' dispersal

GAUHATI, Oct. 29 (UNI)—A compromise Government formula to solve the problem of foreigners in Assam envisages dispersal elsewhere of those aliens who entered the State between 1961 and March 24, 1971 and their disfranchisement for at least 10 years.

The formula has a provision for setting up an impartial official machinery to detect such foreigners. Every person detected as a foreigner will be allowed to contest the finding within three months and claim citizenship before a special tribunal constituted for the purpose.

The formula, drafted following talks between Central officials and leaders of the Assam agitation in August at New Delhi, proposes that such foreigners would be detected on the basis of existing relevant laws such as the Citizenship Act, Foreigners Act and the Passport Act.

Their names would be deleted from the electoral rolls, the Government would ensure their settlement outside Assam by giving them incentives and they would not be eligible for citizenship unless they had lived outside Assam for ten years.

Foreigners, who had entered Assam after March 24, 1971, would be detected and their names, if already on the electoral rolls, would be deleted.

The Government has also agreed to the agitationists' demand that future citizenship certificates will be issued only by the Central Government.

The formula also provides for a special appellate tribunal to enable a foreigner to file an appeal against any adjudication or trial by the special tribunal within a period of 45 days. There will be no appeal against the judgment of the appellate tribunal.

The Government proposes to continue detection of foreigners in the State and in the process make use of the 1951 National Register of Citizens, electoral rolls—including those of 1952—and relevant public documents, such as land records available with the Government and birth and death registers.

The stay of those foreigners who entered Assam between 1951-60 will be regularised. For this purpose, this category will be identified so as to distinguish it from other categories.

The Government has also agreed, according to the formula, to deport those aliens, who has been deported earlier, but had illegally re-entered Assam.

"Also those foreigners having been already detected after 1961 and ordered to be deported, but did not leave, shall be deported or settled outside Assam," according to formula.

The Government also agreed to take "immediate, effective, practical steps" to prevent illegal entry of foreigners by setting up physical barriers at appropriate places and intensification of riverine patrolling.

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