

Assam Government Ready To Meet Stir Leaders

GAUHATI, Jan. 3.—The Assam Government tonight warned that any violation of the prohibitory orders, now in force in the State, would be firmly dealt with, reports PTI.

The Government was, however, ready to meet any delegation of Assam movement leaders, the Chief Secretary, Mr Ramesh Chandra, said.

The warning came in the wake of the All-Assam Students' Union and All-Assam Gana Sangram Parishad decision to take out a "march to Dispur" procession tomorrow to submit a memorandum demanding an early solution to the "foreigners" issue and withdrawal of "repressive measures" to the Governor's advisers.

The Chief Secretary added that security forces had been deployed to keep shops and markets open tomorrow in the wake of the agitation leaders' call for the closure of establishments by traders as part of "Protest Day" to pay homage to the victims of last week's police firings.

Mr Chandra said that the Government would also ensure uninterrupted maintenance of electricity during the movement leaders' 12-hour dusk-to-dawn blackout programme tomorrow.

All precautionary measures had been taken to maintain law and order in the State, the Chief Secretary added.

He said that the overall situa-

tion in the State including the curfew-bound areas in Daarang and Nowgong districts had been quiet today.

Meanwhile the indefinite curfew imposed on the municipal areas of Tezpur after Friday's "mob violence" was relaxed for two hours from 11 a.m. today, official sources said. There were no untoward incidents during the period of relaxation.

The Deputy Commissioner of Daarang, Mr A. K. Saikia, ordered a magisterial inquiry into the police firing on Friday at Murhateheli in which three persons were killed.

The Left and Democratic alliance in Assam today urged the Government to begin the proposed tripartite talks on the "foreigners" issue immediately.

They also appealed to the sponsors of the movement to withdraw the agitation to create a congenial atmosphere for a solution through negotiations.

The alliance felt that the delay in finding a just solution to the "foreign nationals" issue was aggravating the situation in the State.

Leaders of different parties constituting the alliance, in a joint statement in Gauhati, regretted that on the eve of holding a tripartite conference, the sponsors of the movement had begun programmes of action which were used

by "divisive and anti-people forces". The Assam movement leaders expressed satisfaction at the stand taken by most of the national Opposition parties, except the CPI(M), on the "foreign nationals" issue.

Mr Bhrigu Kumar Phukan, general secretary of the All-Assam Students Union said here that the Opposition leaders had agreed that the "problem of foreigners" was a national one and that the burden should be shared by the entire country and not Assam alone. He, along with six other members of the AASU and the Gana Sangram Parishad, returned here today after having discussions with Opposition leaders in New Delhi.

Mr Phukan said he was particularly pleased with the opinions expressed by the Lok Dal leader and former Prime Minister Mr Charan Singh, and the Bharatiya Janata Party president Mr A.B. Vajpayee.

He said that he had not received any formal communication from the Centre on the date of the proposed tripartite talks as yet.

Mr Phukan said that the executive members of AASU and the AAGSP would participate in the "March to Dispur" procession to be taken out tomorrow, violating the prohibitory orders.

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