

Inner Line System in Tribal Areas Urged

By A Staff Reporter

GUWAHATI, Jan. 19—The All Assam Tribal Sangha has demanded the creation of a separate Directorate for Tribal Education and the introduction of Inner Line system in tribal areas of Assam.

A group of Executive members of the Sangha met Sri Natarajan, Adviser to the Governor of Assam, on January 11 and submitted to him a representation demanding steps for settlement of land and giving of pottas to tribal land holders and occupants, tightening of securing measurers on Assam-Nagaland border in Sibsagar district, appointment of tribal members (from respective District Sanghas) in the Sub-Divisional Welfare Boards, ITDP Committees and Sub-Divisional Land Advisory Committee, sealing of Assam-Bangladesh border as a measure of checking infiltration of foreigners.

The Adviser reportedly gave a patient hearing to the delegation and assured it to do the needful after examining the demands. The deputations included Sri R. K. Teron, Sri Sarat Chandra Rabha, Sri Kamala Kanta Saikia, Sri Upen Loring, Sri Jadu Narah, Sri Deben Narzary and Sri M. K. Pegu.

Earlier in a meeting of the Executive Committee, held on January 10 at Guwahati, presided by Sri Sarat Chandra Rabha, President of the Rabha National Council (RNC), the AATS had a threadbare discussion on the question of inclusion of some communities like Saranias, Maduhis, Chutias, Koch-Raibangshis and tea/ex-tea garden labourers of Assam in the lists of scheduled tribes.

The RNC President, Sri Sarat Chandra Rabha, claimed that the Maduhis were only a sub-tribe of the Rabhas while the Saranias were none but a section of the Boros and the Rabhas who embraced the religion of Sankardeva and disliked to identify themselves as tribes. He strongly condemned and vehemently opposed their move to identify themselves as different and separate tribes without having their own dialect, tribal habits, traditions, customs, etc.

The All Rabha Students' Union also placed a resolution adopted in the annual conference of the ARSU held in December last year which condemned the move of the Mahahi and Sarania Sanghas for recognition of these two communities as separate tribes. The meeting decided to suggest to the Government that those communities who do not speak their own dialect and follow tribal habits, tradition, customs, etc., should not be included in the lists of scheduled tribes.

Assam May Have 27-Member Ministry

From Our Special Representative

NEW DELHI, Jan 19—Assam may have a 27-member three-tier council of Ministers, according to indications available here.

The Chief Minister, Sri Keshab Chandra Gogoi who is now here to finalize his team in consultations with central leaders yesterday met the Prime Minister and several central Ministers, namely Sri N D Tewari, Sri Pranab Mukherjee, Sri P C Sethi. He also had discussion with Srimati Rajendra Kumari Baispai, APCC(I) General Secretary who is in charge of Assam affairs.

Though Sri Gogoi appeared tight-lipped as to who will be taken in his Ministry, he indicated that in view of the complexities of the State's political and other problems the team will be a broad-based one and impressed on the High Command that the principle that the Ministry should not be more than 10 per cent of the total number of legislators in a State could not be strictly followed in case of Assam where various groups and interests have to be represented.

When his attention has been drawn to the claim by the ten-party Alliance leader Sri Sarat Chandra Sinha that it had 65 members, Sri Gogoi gave a meaningful smile and said critically. 'His backdoor is wide open' which might indicate that some of the Alliance members may have already switched their allegiance to Congress(I) in expectation of berths in the Cabinet.

However, Sri Gogoi was quite categorical that without a solution of the foreigners issue no Government would be able to function properly and no development works could be done in Assam. Therefore, his first charge was to solve this problem and he would not shirk his responsibility in helping the Government of India in finding out a solution 'if necessary by direct participation in the negotiations'.

The Chief Minister has taken note of people's allegations of atrocities by the CRP and as a first step he has ordered them back to the barracks at Guwahati. Other steps will follow after the full Cabinet takes charge of the administrations, he added.

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