

# Assam stir leaders held

THE HINDU

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GAUHATI, Jan. 4. The police today broke up a procession here and arrested over 200 people, including 60 prominent members of the All-Assam Students Union and the Gana Sangram Parishad, for violation of prohibitory orders in different parts of the State.

According to the Chief Secretary, Mr. Ramesh Chandra, the 12-hour closure of shops and markets called as part of the new phase of the movement on the foreigners' issue, had no impact on Cachar, North Cachar and Karbi Along districts and in certain parts of Goalpara and Nowgong districts. Shops in Jorhat, Dibrugarh and Dhubri were also open.

Both State and Central Government offices and public and private transport services functioned normally, he added. In Gauhati all shops and markets remained closed while offices and transport services functioned normally.

CRPF personnel were seen chasing away bystanders to enforce the prohibitory orders.

Almost all the executive members of the AASU and AAGSP were among those arrested here for violation of the prohibitory orders.

They include Mr. Prafulla Mohanta, Mr. Bhrighu Phukan, Mr. Atul Bora, Mr. Nibaran Bora and Mr. Biraj Sharma. The agitation leaders tried to take out processions in groups from different points to join the proposed "march to Dispur" to submit a memorandum to the Adviser to the Governor, Mr. R. V. Subramanian, demanding withdrawal of all "repressive measures."

Student processionists were stopped before the Cotton College by a big posse of police and CRPF, who asked them to disperse.

However, the processionists con-

tinued to raise slogans like "save democracy," "withdraw repressive measures," and "more repression, more determination."

Among others arrested were the Vice-President of AASU, Mr. Nurul Hussain, advisers, Mr. Lalit Rajkhowa and Mr. Nagen Sharma, the Assistant General Secretary, Mr. Bharat Narah, and Mr. Khanin Baruah and Mr. Bhabagiri Roy Choudhury of AAGSP.

## Shops, markets closed

Trading and commercial activity in the Brahmaputra valley came to a standstill today in observance of a 12-hour protest day called by AASU and AAGSP in homage to the seven persons killed in police firing during the road blockade programme on Dec. 31 and Jan. 1.

In Gauhati, all shops and markets remained closed and the main commercial centres looked deserted. But offices and transport services worked normally.

Security forces have been deployed to maintain law and order.

The police resorted to a lathicharge in the Silpukhuri area here to disperse a procession. Many people were reportedly injured.

Mr. Pradip Baruah, proprietor of a group of newspapers, was allegedly beaten up after his car was stopped on the road.

The agitation leaders claimed that 30-odd processionists including, Mr. Atul Bora and Mr. Biraj Sarma of AAGSP were stopped on the way and beaten up.

Mr. Anil Daimari and Mr. Prasenjit Brahma, who represented the All-Assam Tribal Students Union, alleged that Mr. Prabin Gogoi, Mr. Durga Das Bora, Mr. Nripen Goswami, Mr. Bisheshwar

Bora and some women processionists were, among others, similarly treated.

In another development, a dusk-to-dawn "total blackout" at the call of the agitation leaders began at 5 p.m. today.

The agitation leaders appealed to the people to observe the "blackout" by switching off the lights in their homes as a mark of respect to those who were killed in the police firing last week.—PTI & UNI

## Left alliance claims majority

Mr. Sarat Chandra Sinha, leader of the Left and Democratic Alliance, said here today that he expected the Assam Governor, Mr. Prakash Mehrotra, to invite him soon to form a Ministry.

Mr. Sinha and some other leaders of the alliance today met the Governor at Raj Bhavan here.

He told newsmen later that they had produced two more legislators before the Governor to prove their majority in the State Assembly.

The delegation urged Mr. Mehrotra to take immediate steps to put an end to the "reign of terror" created by the police and CRPF in the wake of the current movement on foreigners issue in the State.—PTI and UNI.

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