

Assam to have border barrier

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, January 20.

THE tripartite talks on "foreign nationals" in Assam adjourned tonight till February 8 without any agreement on the basic formula for the detection of such nationals. However, some measures to secure the international border against future infiltration were agreed to at the meeting.

This "agreed draft" provides for the erection of a physical barrier and a zone "free of human habitation" all along the border.

The agreed draft also provides for intensive patrolling by security forces on the border and the construction of a road along the border to facilitate the patrolling and establishment of checkpoints.

An official spokesman told newsmen that even this agreed draft could only be a part of the "package deal". Some progress had been made with regard to the formula for the detection of foreign nationals but the issue

might be settled when the talks are resumed on February 8.

This round of tripartite talks involving Union ministers, opposition leaders and leaders of the Assam movement continued for three days. There was a marathon session today with an hour's break in the evening during which the Union home minister, Mr. Zail Singh, and other participating ministers went to attend a cabinet committee meeting.

The chief minister of Assam, Mr. Keshab Chandra Gogoi, who is here, appealed to the Assam movement leaders to withdraw their call for an Assam curfew on January 26, since the talks were going on.

Mr. Prafulla Mohanta, president of the All-Assam Students' Union, said the tripartite talks had made some progress to the extent that the government had agreed to the use of the 1951 national register of citizens, the 1952 electoral rolls, the citizenship act, the passport act and the foreigners act for detecting foreign nationals in Assam.

The Assam movement could not agree to the government's insistence on using all documents permitted under section 74 of the evidence act, for determining the citizenship claims of disputed persons.

The leaders were agreeable to the use of land records — "pattas" and "zamabandi" proceedings — for settling citizenship claims.

A spokesman of the movement said that the government had not agreed to the withdrawal of "repressive measures" against those agitating for a solution to the problem of foreign nationals.

MPs' homage to Assam stir victims

NEW DELHI, January 19 (UNI): In a rare gesture, the Union home minister, Mr. Zail Singh, and four other cabinet ministers joined the All-Assam Students' Union (AASU) and the All-Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) leaders in paying homage to those killed during the Assam agitation in the state on the 'foreigners' issue.

Before they began their talks with the government and opposition leaders, the AASU and the AAGSP delegation members, wearing black badges, observed a minute's silence to mourn the deaths.

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