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Bandh hits normal life in Gauhati

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GAUHATI, Jan. 7—The Assam agitation leaders are scheduled to meet here tomorrow to finalise their participation in the tripartite talks with the Union Government and the panel of Opposition leaders on the foreigners issue in New Delhi on Jan. 18.

A joint meeting of the All-Assam Students Union and the All-Assam Gana Sangram Parishad, which have been spearheading the prolonged movement in the State, will take stock of the current situation besides examining the question of withdrawal of the remaining phase of the agitation. A sizeable section of the AASU and AAGSP leadership, however, appeared to favour continuance of the agitation unless the Centre made it categorically clear that the "strong arm tactics" to deal with the agitationists including the Government employees would not continue and the CRP forces would be ordered to return to the barracks.

Meanwhile, normal life in the Greater Gauhati Municipal Corporation area remained paralysed today as the 12-hour bandh from 5 a.m. called by the AASU and AAGSP city units affected city transport, business banks shops and markets and commercial establishments including the Gauhati tea auction centre.

Official sources claimed that attendance in the Civil Secretariat at Dispur and the North-East Frontier Railway headquarters at Maligaon was "normal." The State Road Transport Corporation operated its city services but private city buses and other vehicles were off the roads.

The bandh in Gauhati, observed to mourn the death of Mr Prafulla Boro, a Government employee was total. There was no major incident anywhere in the city, but official reports said several persons had been assaulted by miscreants in different parts of the city. Some Government employees were also manhandled while walking or cycling to their posts.