

# Gogoi Allocates Portfolios

GAUHATI, Jan. 23.—The Assam Chief Minister, Mr Keshab Chandra Gogoi, tonight allocated portfolios to his Ministers, report PTI and UNI.

Mr Gogoi will hold charge of General Administration, Home, Excise, Forest, Labour, Health, Transport and Tourism, Planning and Development, Information and Public Relations, and Public Works.

The Finance has gone to Mohammed Idris while Mr Rabin Choudhury will be in charge of Irrigation, Fisheries, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Santi Banjan Dasgupta has been entrusted with Agriculture, Town and Country Planning.

Mr Gogoi today declined to comment on the immediate possibility of the expansion of his 15-member Council of Ministers. "Let me settle down first," he told reporters.

Mr Gogoi appealed to the movement leaders to call off their agitational programme on January 26 "in the interest of success of the tripartite talks and thus help create a congenial atmosphere for discussion and maintenance of law and order".

In an appeal issued here, the Chief Minister said the Republic Day was an occasion for all to pledge to work for flourishing democratic ideologies. "We should not try to create any anxieties and indignation on such occasion". He said this is an apparent reference to the 12-hour "people's curfew" planned by agitation leaders on January 26.

In New Delhi, 91 people, including 15 women belonging to the Assam Students Association, were detained today near the Prime Minister's house.

According to the police, the demonstrators were released after some time. The demonstration was to launch the "Assam Day" marking the beginning of the agitation in the State on the foreigner's issue.

# Concern At Naga Encroachment

From Our Correspondent

JORHAT, Jan. 23.—The encroachment by Nagas on several reserve forests along Sibsagar district have concerned both the Government and the public.

The attention of the Union Home Ministry has already been drawn to the matter by the State administration. It is a "very sensitive issue", official sources said.

The "big massacre", where hundreds of people were killed in a riot over the encroachment issue along the Nagaland Goalghat border in Sibsagar about three years is still fresh in memory.

The valley and the Gaeky reserve forests of the district, lying along the Assam-Nagaland border, are under massive encroachment. Indiscriminate felling of valuable trees is common. About 10,250 hectares of the total 25,380 hectares of the reserve forests are under encroachment by the Nagas, authoritative sources said here.

Large areas of the Abohoipur reserve forests in Sibsagar are also being encroached upon by the Nagas, the sources add. Forest authorities are said to have failed to combat such systematic encroachment. They plead helplessness due to bad road communication which makes supervision of the forests difficult. Some district forest staff, are said to have felt "insecure" to visit those areas for want of proper security. It is authoritatively understood from forest sources that illegal felling of trees from the Desol Valley reserve forests is continuing unabated and, as a result, valuable trees are almost extinct.

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the Statesman.