

Gogoi seeks end to agitation

GAUHATI, January 14 (UNI).

ASSAM'S new chief minister, Mr. Keshab Chandra Gogoi, started his tenure with an appeal today to the foreigners issue agitators to give up their movement and at the same time declared that he was determined to maintain law and order in the state.

Mr. Gogoi was addressing his first press conference at Dispur as chief minister.

He pledged his government's full co-operation in finding a solution to the thorny foreigners issue and expressed its willingness to be represented at the forthcoming tripartite talks in Delhi if the Central government so wished.

Mr. Gogoi called upon the movement leaders to create a congenial atmosphere for the talks by calling off their agitation.

The chief minister said he would expand his ministry next week, for which he would visit Delhi for consultations.

Our correspondent adds:

Mr. Sarat Chandra Sinha, leader of the left and democratic alliance, today alleged that the Assam governor, Mr. Prakash Mehrotra, had installed a minority government in the state most undemocratically despite the fact that the alliance he headed had a "confirmed and verified" majority of 65 in a house having an effective strength of 119.

Addressing a press conference, Mr. Sinha pointed out that three members of the Congress (I) legislative party who resigned three days ago, had met the governor and told him about their decision to join the left and democratic alliance.

Mr. Sinha explained how the governor "avoided" him and other leaders of the alliance who had been frantically trying to meet him since January 9.

Mr. Mehrotra, he said, sent a communication in which he agreed to meet him (Mr. Sinha) at 4 p.m. yesterday,

But the letter was handed over to him only at 4.15 u.m., Mr. Sinha added.

Leaders of other parties comprising the alliance were present at the press conference. They included Mr. Golap Borbora and Mr. Dulal Baruah of the Janata party, Mr. Pramode Gogoi of the CPI, Mr. Baneswar Saikia of the RCPI, Mr. Ramesh Mohan Kuli of the Lok Dal, Mr. Hemen Das of the CPM, and Dr. Tarini Mohan Das of the Asom Janata Dal.

Dr. Tarini Mohan Das announced at the press conference that two more members of the Asom Janata Dal — Mr. Jogendra Nath Hazarika and Mr. Nanik Das — had joined the alliance. He claimed.

Mr. Sinha said the governor had. With this the strength of the alliance in the state assembly had risen to 67, not disputed his claim of having a majority in the assembly. He should, therefore, have asked him (Mr. Sinha) to form a government.

Mr. Sinha alleged that some Union ministers who had come here, had played a sinister role in the ministry-making process.

Army assists Assam telephones

By Our Correspondent

GAUHATI, January 14: The army is helping the authorities in operating the telecommunication system in Assam. It is also operating telephone exchanges in some parts of the state, according to informed sources.

The sources said this step had been taken in view of the deterioration in the telecommunication and telephone services as a result of frequent 'bandhs' and 'hartals' and the alleged non-co-operation of a section of the state and central government employees in operating these services effectively.

According to the sources, the army help in this regard was sought by the state government. The army is operating the telecommunication services in Tinsukia, Nowgong, Rangia, Dibrugarh, North Lakhimpur, Gauhati Main, Barpeta, Nalbari and Tezpur.

Army sources, which confirmed that it was assisting the authorities in running the telecommunication system, indicated that the army help was likely to be extended to more telephone exchanges in the state in the next few weeks.