

Gogoi Threatens Ban On Agitation Groups

GAUHATI, Jan. 29.—Assam's Chief Minister, Mr Keshab Chandra Gogoi, said today that the Government would be left with no choice but to consider banning organizations spearheading the agitation on the foreigners issue if they continued "secessionist acts" such as running a parallel Government in the State, reports UNI.

Speaking at the Gauhati Press Club, Mr Gogoi said that acts such as enforcing a "people's curfew" on Republic Day showed secessionist tendencies on the part of the agitators.

Mr Gogoi said his Government favoured taking constructive steps to bring the situation back to normal. It wanted to find a solution to the foreigners issue, he said. But this was not to be construed as weakness on the part of the Government. The Government would not hesitate to consider banning the organizations spearheading the agitation if they continued to defy it.

Mr Gogoi said that he proposed to expand his 15-member Ministry by the time he faced the Assam Assembly in the second week of March.

He had requested the Congress (I) High Command to allow him to add eight more members to his Ministry to accommodate the interests of different sections of the people.

He would discuss the issue with the High Command during his visit to New Delhi early next week.

Two members of his Ministry, who could not be present when the rest were sworn in, would be administered the oath of office and secrecy tomorrow.

He indicated that the expanded Ministry would include a member from the Plains Tribal Council of Assam.

The Assam Chief Minister said the State was passing through "very difficult times". In the past two years the agitation in the State had created several hurdles.

Some anti-social forces had taken advantage of the agitation and indulged in acts of sabotage, he said.

These anti-social elements and vested interests had vitiated the good atmosphere created during the last tripartite meeting in New Delhi.

PTI reports: Mr Gogoi claimed that he would survive a trial of strength on the floor of the Assembly.

Announcing that the Budget session of the Assam Assembly would be convened in the second week of March, Mr Gogoi reiterated that he had the support of 63 members of the House which has an effective strength of 119.

When his attention was drawn to his earlier statement that the Assembly would be convened within five or six weeks of him assuming office, Mr Gogoi said the House could not be convened before March because it would take time to prepare Governor's address and the Budget.

More than 500 women were arrested in the Dighliokhuri area of Gauhati today when they took out a silent procession violating the prohibitory orders in force there.

The women demonstrators were protesting against alleged repression by the police and the administration.

Among those arrested were some prominent educationists, and Sarvodya workers.

The Nazir in the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup and a police sub-inspector have been suspended in connexion with a mishap that occurred at the Capital

Parade Ground in Dispur on Republic Day.

The national flag felt off its pole while it was being hoisted by the Chief Minister, Mr Gogoi told reporters that a report on the incident had been submitted to the Chief Secretary for scrutiny.

*30-January-1982
The Statesman.*