

Govt. men warned in Assam

GAUHATI, January 25 (UNI).

THE Assam government today warned its employees and teachers of government-aided colleges that absence from official celebration of Republic Day tomorrow would invite punitive action.

The warning came in the wake of the announcement by Assam movement leaders that they would enforce a dawn-to-dusk "people's curfew" during the day in protest against what they called the curtailment of democratic rights of the people.

A press release reminded the employees that participation by them in the Republic Day functions was part of their duty and any dereliction of this would invite action.

In a separate circular, the government warned the authorities of aided colleges throughout the state that it would stop its grants if they failed to persuade their teachers to attend the official celebrations.

PTI adds:

Even as the government finalised arrangements by mobilising security forces to maintain law and order in view of the "people's curfew", planned by Assam movement leaders tomorrow, the chief minister Mr. Keshab Chandra Gogoi, tonight renewed his appeal to the people to co-operate with the administration "to secure normal life and to maintain the solemnity of the occasion on the Republic Day."

The government also announced that it would provide "full protection" to the citizens attending the official Republic Day celebrations and warned that any attempt to create disruption

of law and order would be firmly dealt with.

If necessary, the district authorities in Assam will seek army assistance to maintain essential services, including water supply, power and tele-communication to meet the situation.

The AASU and the AAGSP, have said that the "people's curfew," the last phase of the current month-long agitation, is more in protest against "misuse of power by government and curtailment of democratic rights of the citizens" and not in any way meant to disrespect the national flag or the constitution.

Troops are already standing by to assist the civil authorities in any eventuality, to maintain law and order during the Republic Day celebrations. Should the movement volunteers try to enforce the "curfew" by taking any action against those not responding to their call to stay indoors between 5 a.m. and 5 p.m. tomorrow, the authorities will be ready to meet the situation, official sources said.

The state government is also understood to have directed the law enforcing agencies to firmly maintain law and order but at the same time to exercise "utmost restraint" to ensure that there were no complaints of "excesses."

Meanwhile, the ministers of Assam have left for different districts and important sub-divisional towns to participate in the Republic Day celebrations. The ministers would also supervise the law and order situation in the districts.

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