

Keshab Gogoi Unanimously Elected Leader Of ACLP (I)

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BY A STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, JAN. 11—SRI KESHAB CHANDRA GOGOI WAS UNANIMOUSLY ELECTED THE LEADER OF THE ASSAM CONGRESS (I) LEGISLATURE PARTY FOLLOWING THE RESIGNATION OF SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR.

The ACLP (I) took this decision tonight at a meeting that lasted for several hours.

Srimati Taimur proposed the name of Sri Gogoi and Sri Hiteswar Saikia seconded it.

The Union Industry and Labour Minister, Sri N. D. Tewari, Srimati Rajendra Kumari Bajpai, General Secretary, AICC (I), and the Union Deputy Minister, Sri Magan Bhai Barot, who attended the meeting as observers, conducted the election.

The ACLP (I) which met in the party chamber till late in the night, discussed the leadership issue threadbare and ultimately made Sri Gogoi their unanimous choice.

The observers are understood to have been able to thrash out some of the minor differences that surfaced in the morning session of the ACLP (I). The session had to abruptly put off to evening following the decision of four CLP members to resign from the party.

The members who sought to resign are Sri A F Colam

Osmaani, Sri Afzalur Rahman, Sri Lilamoy Das (all former Ministers) and Sri Abdus Sobhan. They in a joint resignation letter to the Governor are reported to have desired to quit the party for changing the leadership which they felt was "without any reason". It appears they were dissatisfied with the party high command.

The newly elected ACLP (I) leader, Sri Gogoi, told this correspondent later in the night to-night that he would meet the Governor to-morrow and formally stake his claim to form a ministry in the State. A letter to this effect was sent to the Governor to-night, he added.

PTI adds: Congratulating Sri Gogoi on his election, Sri Tewari appealed to all the party legislators to remain united and 'boldly face the challenges' posed by the combination of rights and leftist forces.

The Union Minister hoped that legislators and the party would work in a spirit of co-operation for all round development of the State.

Sri Tewari asked the legislators to strengthen the image of the party under the leadership of the Prime Minister and hoped that there would be no further recrimination on the issue of ACLP (I) leadership.

Felicitating on his election as leader of the party, Srimati Taimur and Sri Saikia assured their fullest cooperation to Sri Gogoi to strengthen the party in order to face the challenges in the problem-ridden Assam.

They said that it would be their earnest endeavour to lend all-out support and cooperation to Sri Gogoi so that the image of Congress (I) could be kept intact.

Sri Gogoi assured that the Legislature Wing would always be guided by the party leadership and would make united effort to strengthen the hands of the Prime Minister, Srimati Indira Gandhi.

The meeting was attended by 36 legislators and several party leaders. The four Congress (I) legislatures, who resigned from the party earlier in the day did not attend the meeting.

Immediately after the election, Sri Gogoi told pressmen that he would stake his claim to the Governor tomorrow to form a ministry.

Sri Gogoi expressed his confidence that Congress (I) would be able to provide a stable Government in the State with the support of Independents and like-minded parties.

Excluding these MLAs, 36 legislators and several party leaders attended the meeting.