

# Laldenga Rejected Statehood Offer'

NEW DELHI, Jan. 24.—The Centre offered Mr Laldenga, leader of the now-outlawed Mizoram National Front, statehood for what is now a Union Territory, it became known today, reports PTL.

The Centre, however, insisted that the Governor of the proposed State of Mizoram have special powers.

This conditional offer of statehood was not acceptable to Mr Laldenga, according to Mr Rothuama, Independent member of Parliament from Mizoram.

Mr Rothuama met Mr Laldenga two days ago with an appeal from the Mizoram Union Party that the offer be accepted by him in the interest of peace in Mizoram, the MUP is in the Opposition in the Mizoram Assembly.

Mr Rothuama said this evening that Mr Laldenga was also insisting on the MNF forming an interim Government in the proposed new State pending fresh elections

to the Assembly.

Sources have said this was not acceptable to the Centre as Brigadier T. Sailo, the Chief Minister, commands a clear majority in the Mizoram Assembly.

UNI adds: Mr Laldenga said in New Delhi yesterday that he would like the Government to honour its commitment. To send him back from where he was "picked up", if the talks failed.

He was picked up from West Germany on January 25, 1976 "on the assurance and condition" that he would be sent back.

He had written a letter to Mrs Gandhi requesting her to honour her commitment. "I am waiting for her reply. My passport is with her Government", he said.

Mr Laldenga said that if he wanted to go back to Mizoram, he would do so on his own. "I may be put in an army camp. My life will be in danger as war is on", he said.

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