

Life In Brahmaputra Valley Paralysed

GAUHATI, Jan. 18.—The "total non-cooperation" programme in Assam today to vindicate public protest against the "illegal" induction of Mr Keshab Gogoi's Congress (I) Ministry ended in the evening after forcing the civil authorities to hand over "very essential" services to Army engineers at some places, reports UNI.

For the first time during the current movement essential services like electricity, water supply and telephones had to be run by the Army. These services had been exempted on earlier occasions.

Loosening of bolts and nuts from three fish plates on the railway track was reported on the Morabari-Chapamukh branch line at Phulaguri in Nowgong district.

Official reports said on detection of the mischief repairs were made to the track and running of trains was not affected.

A Nowgaon report said that some passengers were assaulted at Iaiborgaon. Two persons have been arrested.

A few other incidents of harassment and intimidation of office-goers and willing workers were reported from different parts of the State.

Official reports received here said that the non-cooperation programme which began at 5 a.m. today paralysed life, and disrupted official work throughout the Brahmaputra valley.

However, air, tram and Government road transport services were normal and oil production in the State was unaffected.

However, the programme did not affect Cachar district in the Barak valley and the two hill districts of

Karhi Anglaong and North Cachar Hills.

The call to observe the programme had been given by the All-Assam Students' Union and the All-Assam Gana Sangram Parishad against what they called "illegal installation of a Government in the State with defectors and legislators elected on the foreigners' vote".

About 50 preventive arrests were made during the day.

Pumping of crude oil and work in the oilfields, including production at the three refineries in the State were uninterrupted. Banks, however, were closed and attendance in the State and Central Government offices was poor. It was stated to be normal at the secretariat at Dispur and the North-east Frontier Railway headquarters at Maligaon.

Mr. water, transport and train services were normal. But private vehicles went off the road though the State Transport Corporation buses were run under police escort.

The Chief Minister of Assam today discussed with Mrs Gandhi the formation of his Council of Ministers, adds PTI.

Mr Gogoi said after his discussions with the Prime Minister for about 15 minutes that he hoped to finalize his Ministry before his departure to Gauhati either tomorrow or the day after.

The movement representatives challenged the presence of Mr Laskar, protesting that he did not represent Assam. They contended that Mr Laskar had been elected on the vote of foreign nationals and should not have been included in the Union Council of Ministers let alone brought to the talks.

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Assam Ministry To Be 'Broad-Based'

From Our Special Representative

NEW DELHI, Jan. 18.—Mr Keshab Chandra Gogoi, Chief Minister of Assam, proposes to have a "broad-based" Ministry, giving representation to all sections.

He met Mrs Gandhi here today on the formation of his Council of Ministers and told reporters he hoped to finalize the composition of his Ministry before he left for Gauhati either tomorrow or the day after.

Mr Gogoi, who arrived here last evening, today met the Finance Minister, Mr Pranab Mukherjee, the Industry and Steel and Mines Minister, Mr N. D. Tiwari who was closely associated with the efforts at restoration of a popular Government in Assam, and Mrs Rajendra Kumri Bajpayee, AICC (I) General Secretary in charge of Assam affairs.

The Chief Minister will meet the Railway Minister, Mr P. C. Sethi, and the Planning Minister, Mr S. B. Chavan, to discuss about the new railway lines for the State and the State plan for 1982-83 which is yet to be finalized.

Tripartite Talks Begin

From Our Special Representative

NEW DELHI, Jan. 18.—Generally agreeing with the Assam movement leaders, the leaders of the Opposition parties at the tripartite talks on the foreign nationals' issue asked the Government to disclose the criteria that it was going to adopt to determine who the foreign nationals in Assam are.

As the talks began here today, the Assam leaders found the Opposition parties' representatives endorsing their viewpoint that the Government should go about the task of deciding who foreign nationals are on the basis of the Constitution and other relevant documents.

Those attending the talks are Mr Zail Singh, Union Home Minister, Mr P. Venkatasubbiah and Mr N. R. Laskar, Union Ministers of State for Home Affairs, Mr Jagannath Kaushal, Union Law Minister, Mr Bhisma Narain Singh, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs on the Government side, the Opposition leaders, Mr Atal Bihari Vajpayee (BJP), Mr Ravindra Varma (Janata), Mr Bhola Paswan Shastri (Congress S), Mr Indrajit Gupta (CPI) and Mr Hanjishan Singh Surjeet (JPM). Besides there is an eight-member delegation representing the All-Assam Students Union and a 10-member delegation representing the All-Assam Gana Sangram Parishad.

The meeting that lasted 3½ hours was held in "a cordial atmosphere", according to Mr Vajpayee. There will be another meeting tomorrow.

The first-ever combined meeting of the Government, Opposition leaders and the Assam agitation leaders today decided to discuss draft proposals tomorrow on strengthening the State's border with Bangladesh to prevent future infiltration, adds UNI.