

## Indira Goswami prepares for 'last' push for Assam peace

Sahitya Akademi Award winning writer Indira Goswami is preparing for a final push to break the deadlock over peace talks between the government and the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) before she moves from here to her native state for completing some of her unfinished writings.

Goswami, appointed by the ULFA to head a group of civil society members to mediate for the talks, will meet National Security Adviser M.K. Narayanan Monday along with another mediator Rehati Phukan.

'We will try our best to take the process forward,' Goswami told IANS.

'I hope the government understands the situation and responds positively. Another stalemate will only prove that the government is pursuing a carrot-and-stick policy.'

Goswami, also a Jnanpith Award winner, said she is not dissociating herself from the peace process.

'I am always there for Assam's cause. I have a number of unfinished projects in hand, including a novel on Bodos during the British regime and another on Ahom ruler Rudra Singha.'

She leaves for Guwahati next week.

Peace talks with ULFA representatives had broken down after [New Delhi](#) Sep 24 called off a six-week ceasefire accusing the outfit of stepping up attacks and extortions.

The two mediators were supposed to meet Narayanan earlier this month, but the meeting was cancelled after ULFA's stepped up violence in the state.

Goswami said the Assam government was willing to release the five jailed ULFA members but the adamant stand of the rebel group as well as New Delhi was delaying the peace process.

'I met Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi (who is in the capital for his medical examination) Thursday and requested him to impress upon both the sides to take the process forward.'

New Delhi Tuesday announced a major counter-insurgency offensive against the ULFA after two powerful explosions last weekend in Assam's main city of Guwahati killed 15 people and wounded 40.

The group, however, has not claimed responsibility for the attacks.

New Delhi Thursday also extended for another two years the ban on the ULFA under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, apart from rushing 19 additional companies of the Border Security Force (BSF) and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) to join the anti-insurgency operations in Assam.

Peace talks between ULFA representatives and the central government broke down last month after the civil society team - People's Consultative Group (PCG) - pulled out of the peace process

criticising New Delhi for calling off the truce.

There were three rounds of talks between the PCG and the government peace negotiators.

The ULFA wants the release of five of its jailed leaders as a precondition to holding peace talks.

New Delhi in return wants the rebel leaders to commit in writing that they would come for direct negotiations if the jailed militants were released.

The ULFA is not willing to give it in writing, leading to the collapse of the peace process.

Born in an orthodox family in Assam, Goswami rose to fame with her stories and novels, most of which showcased human pathos, like 'An Unfinished Autobiography', 'The Man From Chinnamasta', 'The Rusted Sword', 'The Moth Eaten Howdah of A Tusker' and 'Pages Stained With Blood'.

Goswami's collection of poems 'Pain And Flesh' was released here last week.

*Zafri Mudasser Nofil* ( © IANS / India eNews)