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## FEATURES

### Oil field auction fuels massive protest



Bg Gogoi · 13:07, 6 Jul 2016 | Updated 13:12, 11 Jul 2016 · 8960 views · 4 min read



Assam is on the threshold of a massive agitation for exercising the rights (/taxonomy/term/1990) over (/taxonomy/term/2166) its own resources if somebody goes by the howls of statewide protest against (/taxonomy/term/1929) the move to auction marginal oil fields.

Many political parties and organizations are up in arms against (/taxonomy/term/1929) the Narendra Modi (/taxonomy/term/2361) Government at the Centre alleging a set of policies which is believed to have hurt the sentiment of the people who are proud of the state (/taxonomy/term/2332)'s oil and tea.

These agitating parties and organizations have not spared three month old BJP-led coalition government as (/taxonomy/term/2291) they pledged massive agitation to stop (/taxonomy/term/2235) the move.

The massive agitation started erupting as (/taxonomy/term/2291) soon (/taxonomy/term/2206) as (/taxonomy/term/2291) the Centre cleared the decks for auctioning a dozen of oil fields to the outside parties for operation calling it a non profitable exercise.

“We won’t allow it to happen. We will try to resist. Let’s see how the Centre auction these oil fields,” uttered RTI (/taxonomy/term/1927) activist Akhil Gogoi who was thrashed along with his fans and supporters when he was staging a demo beside a roadshow in Guwahati in presence of petroleum (/taxonomy/term/2424) minister Dharmendra Pradhan as (/taxonomy/term/2291) he was holding talks with the interested bidders a couple of days back.

The uncompromising United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA (/taxonomy/term/124)-I) vowed to protest the auction move. In a statement, the armed outfit said that they won’t remain idle if the people in power keep exploiting the state (/taxonomy/term/2332) resources.

Same voice of discord was evident when student (/taxonomy/term/2404) organizations like All Assam Students Union and Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuva Chatra Parishad pledged to resist the move. AASU, the influential student (/taxonomy/term/2404) organization threaten to launch a massive agitation if the Centre refuses to halt the move. In a recent statement, it strongly opposed the move and advocated state (/taxonomy/term/2332) ownership of its natural resources to serve the interest of the state (/taxonomy/term/2332).

The Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuva Chatra Parishad has given the NDA government at the Centre an ultimatum till July [\(/taxonomy/term/2164\)](#) [8](#) [\(/taxonomy/term/2164\)](#) to stop [\(/taxonomy/term/2235\)](#) the deal [\(/taxonomy/term/1922\)](#). In a recent press conference in Sivasagar in the upper portion of the oil rich Assam said that the Centre's anti-Assam policy [\(/taxonomy/term/2366\)](#) has forced them to take resort to oil field, road and rail blockade from Monday.

“We are dead opposed to the move and have served an ultimatum to the Modi government at the Centre till July [\(/taxonomy/term/2164\)](#) [8](#) [\(/taxonomy/term/2164\)](#). We are ready to face any eventuality,” said Biswajeet Tipomia, an AJYCP [\(/taxonomy/term/1764\)](#) leader [\(/taxonomy/term/1820\)](#) in Sivasagar district where they are blocking the oilfields, rails [\(/taxonomy/term/2278\)](#) and roads [\(/taxonomy/term/2454\)](#) from Monday.

The picture is not different in the political circle. The Asom Gana Parishad, the main coalition partner of the newly elected NDA government in Dispur has vehemently opposed the move. “This is bound the hurt the sentiment of the people of Assam. I want to urge the Centre to reconsider the decision,” said AGP leader [\(/taxonomy/term/1820\)](#) and former Chief Minister Prafulla Kumar Mahanta.

Outgoing Assam Chief [\(/taxonomy/term/2020\)](#) Minister and octogenarian Congress [\(/taxonomy/term/90\)](#) leader [\(/taxonomy/term/1820\)](#) Tarun Gogoi [\(/taxonomy/term/2150\)](#) also opposed the Centre move and vowed to back any democratic form of protest to resist the auctioning of Assam oil fields. Addressing a crowded press conference the three time chief [\(/taxonomy/term/2020\)](#) minister castigated the governments at the centre and state [\(/taxonomy/term/2332\)](#) alleging it an attempt to handover the state [\(/taxonomy/term/2332\)](#) resources to the outsiders.

Gogoi said, “f these marginal oil fields are not economically viable what forces the private parties to come forward? Why the public sector units are not considered? We would oppose it tooth and nail.”

A local organization has already called for 12-hour statewide Assam bandh [\(/taxonomy/term/100\)](#) last week which met partial response.

But the Government side is not likely to halt the process. Petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan who keeps visiting the oil rich state [\(/taxonomy/term/2332\)](#)

was firm on the government stand saying that it would fetch Rs 17,000 crore. He further said that it would give Assam the full rights (/taxonomy/term/1990) over (/taxonomy/term/2166) its own resources albeit he could not explain it.

Chief Minister Sonowal smartly said,” the entire process is allowed only for the interest of Assam and its people.” Beyond (/taxonomy/term/2045) that he could not go further to convince the people whom he heads.

The Centre has not shown any sign (/taxonomy/term/1687) to reconsider suggesting a full scale agitation in the state (/taxonomy/term/2332) where the government would take up it “a law and order situation”.



### **Bg Gogoi**

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Original URL: <https://assamtimes.org/article/oil-field-auction-fuels-massive-protest-17171> | Published: 6 July 2016 |  
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