

Bureaucracy in Assam under tremendous political pressure



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Daya Nath Singh 4 August 2010 10111 views

Recent developments and tug-of-war between Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS), an organization of farmers, led by its General Secretary, Akhil Gogoi and the ruling Congress party in Assam, over the issue of mega dam construction by National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) on River Subansiri in Gerukamukh, has indicated that the bureaucrats in the state are working under heavy political pressure. It was seen on the 15th July last, when a rally organized by KMSS and led by veteran environmentalist, Medha Patkar and Akhil Gogoi sought permission to march for the capital complex to raise their demand for undoing the construction of the dam. They were not permitted to move beyond the Deputy Commissioner's office in Pan Bazar area, where heavy security arrangements and barricades were put on high alert. The security men heavily armed with were seen as if they were going to combat armed activists. But they were disappointed over the action of well disciplined activists of KMSS. None of them even touched the barricade and peacefully sat on the road obeying order of their leader.

The KMSS leaders desired to hand over their memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner, Kamrup (Metro), Prateek Hajela, who was busy on his phone reporting the situation in front of his office and seeking instructions from the Bosses, but did not move on appeal of the activists.. He did not show even the courtesy to take the memorandum. Failing to handover the memorandum, the KMSS activists had to leave the place after soughting slogans and throwing their slippers at the office. The very next day, on 16th July the Youth Congress activists and some anti-social elements marched on the roads, burnt effigy of Akhil Gogoi and former chief minister, Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, in front of the DC office and the security men were silent spectator and did not dare to stop them. Not only this, the DC himself came out to receive their memorandum. It was reported that some anti-social elements were hired to create trouble in the public places, as the security men were relaxing, but no untoward incident took place except damages of a few vehicles and some stone throwing incidents.

Just after five days on 21st July last, in Barpeta district, where pilot project of National Register of Citizens (NRCs) was in progress, the Assam Minority Students Union (AMSU) activists along with some 'hooligans', attacked the Deputy Commissioner's office and put fire to a number of vehicles on the roads. There was no proper security arrangement in Barpeta. According to the versions of a few security men the strength of police personnel at the police station is not enough to control the mob violence. This reflects how the bureaucrats are working under the pressure without demanding proper security arrangements for them even if they have no reason to work under such pressure of politicians in power.

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