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1000 evacuated as gas leak at OIL well continues in Assam	Hindustan Times	1	Utpal Bhaskar	Neutral
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GUWAHATI: Around 1,000 people have been evacuated from the vicinity of an Oil India Limited (OIL)-operated well at Baghjan in Assam's Tinsukia as natural gas and condensate matter continued to leak from it for the fourth day on Saturday following a blowout on Wednesday. The well is located near the Dibru Saikhowa National Park, home to endangered species like Gangetic dolphin. **P11**

1k shifted amid Assam well blowout

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GUWAHATI: Around 1,000 people have been evacuated from the vicinity of an Oil India Limited (OIL)-operated well at Baghjan in Assam's Tinsukia as natural gas and condensate matter continued to leak from it for the fourth day on Saturday following a blowout on Wednesday even as authorities continued efforts to bring the situation under control. The well is located near the Dibru Saikhowa National Park, which is home to endangered species like Gangetic dolphin.

Residents said the blowout could have long term consequences for the area. The recovery of a Gangetic dolphin's carcass in the

Maguri wetland close to the well has heightened these fears.

"The dolphin did not have any injury marks and its skin was peeled off. People have noticed oil in Maguri wetland, which could have spilled from the well. Because of the blowout, there is a layer of oil like substance dripping from trees and roofs of houses in the area," said Binanda Hatibara, who lives near the well and visited the site.

Tinsukia deputy commissioner Bhaskar Pegu said the Park's core area is located around 1 km from the well and there is no threat to it. "But the eco-sensitive zone outside the park is around 300 metres away from the site and we have got reports that oil condensate have fallen on the wet-

lands in that area," he said.

Officials said a blowout means uncontrolled release of crude oil or gas from a well when pressure control systems fail. Condensate is a low density hydrocarbon generally found with natural gas.

In a statement, OIL said the blowout happened while work was underway to produce gas from new oil and gas-bearing reservoir at a depth of 3,729 metres. It said food and other support was being provided to the evacuees and that continuous monitoring is underway to minimise any environmental impact.

OIL officials said the process to contain the leakage was underway and measures like adequate water supply, proper lighting, and transportation of heavy

equipment to the site have to be put in place before the operation to control it can be started.

"A lot of preliminary work needs to be done to enter the well site...it would take at least another two days to reach the well and try and contain it," said OIL spokesman Tridiv Hazarika.

Chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Friday called Union petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan and urged him to take immediate remedial measures.

On May 11, the Union forest, environment and climate change ministry had given clearance for extension drilling and testing of hydrocarbons at seven locations by OIL under Dibru-Saikhowa National Park area, minutes of the meeting revealed.

Assam sends notice to OIL as dolphin, fishes die in lake	Asain Age	3	PTI	Neutral
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Assam sends notice to OIL as dolphin, fishes die in lake

Guwahati, May 30: The forest department of Assam has issued a notice to Oil India Ltd (OIL) after fishes and a dolphin reportedly died in a lake close to Dibru Saikhowa National Park following a blowout in a gas well of the public sector undertaking in Tinsukia district.

Chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal has directed the chairperson of the state pollution control board to visit the site and submit a report immediately, a senior forest department official told PTI on Saturday.

OIL on May 27 reported a blowout at one of its gas-

producing wells at Baghjan near Dibru Saikhowa National Park in Tinsukia district, leading to the evacuation of thousands of locals from around the site.

The company said it is working with experts from Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) to mitigate the situation.

"We issued a notice to Oil India yesterday seeking a detailed report of the extent of damage to the environment through our Tinsukia DFO. We have asked them to give details of the area under damage and composition of the gas and liquid," the offi-

▶ THE NOTICE also sought to know whether the gas released is very harmful to humans and biodiversity, as the area is very sensitive from the environmental point of view, the official said.

cial said. Photographs of a dead river dolphin and many fishes floating in a waterbody, claimed to be the Maguri-Motapung lake, which is adjacent to Dibru-Saikhowa National Park and about 1.5 km from the incident site, have gone viral on social media.

The notice also sought to know whether the gas released is very harmful to humans and biodiversity, as the area is very sensitive from the environmental point of view, the official said.

He said the chairperson of the Pollution Control Board, Assam will make a site visit at the earliest along with the OIL chairman to assess the damage and measures taken to control the blowout.

When contacted, an OIL spokesperson said the company received a notice from the forest department and replied to it on Friday evening.

"Our CMD has reached field headquarters at Duliagan and held a meeting with the experts today. He will visit the blowout site with the chairperson of the pollution control board in a day or two," he added.

On the repairing of the well in which the blowout happened, the spokesperson said everything is being done expeditiously to minimise the impact.

Petroleum and natural gas minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Friday "advised OIL to take all necessary steps to ensure the health and safety of the local population", the

company said in a statement. He also instructed the ONGC to provide support to OIL in this moment of crisis.

"OIL management is hopeful that the well will be brought under control at the earliest. At this critical time, OIL seeks the support of all the stakeholders so that together this crisis can be overcome," the statement said.

The safety zone was extended to 1.5 km from the well site and another relief camp was set up to evacuate the people with the help of Tinsukia district administration, it added.

— PTI

