



सत्यमेव जयते

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM

ADDRESS

BY

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Dear Friends,

I am indeed happy to be here amongst you once again. I came to the United States of America in the month of June, 2007 to meet you all. During my last visit I had received good response from many of the well-established and renowned investors and entrepreneurs. Taking the cue from the positive feedbacks which I had received during my last visit in June, I have decided to come here again in the company of Ministers and officials of the Government of India.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as I told you last time, today Assam has many advantages as an investment destination. **Now let me cite these advantages the State distinctly enjoys for your kind appraisal.**

1. **Assam has the locational advantage.** It is strategically located as a corridor to South East Asia. It is nearest to the fastest growing economies of Asia. In near future India would be connected to the South East Asian countries through the State of Assam by the proposed Asian Highways and Trans Asian Railways. Investors could reach the huge markets in the Eastern India, Nepal, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Bhutan by establishing manufacturing bases in Assam.

2. Assam is rich in natural resources. The chief amongst the mineral resources in Assam is the **crude oil**. Assam has a proud history in hydrocarbon. The country's first oil well was dug in Upper Assam more than a century ago. The country's first petroleum refinery was set up in Assam about 100 years back. It was also the first petroleum refinery in Asia. This refinery is the 2nd oldest operating refinery in the world, the first one being in your own Pennsylvania till the other day. The country's first fertilizer plant based on hydrocarbon feedstock was set up in Assam during the sixties. Presently, Assam has four refineries in operation including one Refinery and Petrochemical Complex.

2.1 The proven crude oil reserve in Assam is over 1.3 billion tonnes. The proven reserve of **natural gas** is 158 billion cubic metres.

2.2 But utilization of these huge deposits is not very significant. As for example, the average annual extraction of crude oil during the last three years has been 4.57 million metric tonnes. Similarly, the average annual utilization of natural gas is 2077 million standard cubic meters. Thus, **there is a great potential for investment in hydrocarbon sector in Assam.**

- 2.3 Under the new exploration licensing policy, popularly known as NELP, Government of India, opportunity abounds in exploration and production of crude oil as well as natural gas. Such opportunities may be explored as green field projects and also as secondary recovery projects. The Government of Assam has recently floated a new Company, **Assam Hydrocarbon and Energy Co. Ltd.** The Government of Assam welcome strategic partner for doing business of exploration and production of hydrocarbon with this new Company.
3. **Assam Coal** has some unique properties. It has very high volatile matter, high sulphur, high calorific value but low ash content.
- 3.1 The total proven reserve of coal is 320 million tonnes. But the average annual extraction is only 0.77 million tonnes at present.
- 3.2 With modern technology available, the huge coal reserves could help set up ventures in gasification and liquefaction of coal, desulphurization of coal and coal based power plant.
4. The river Brahmaputra and the Barak have a combined **navigable waterways** of around thousand kilometers. The waterways are used

for transportation of passengers and goods across the State and to the mainland of our country. The present cargo handling capacity of the fleet in operation is negligible compared to the potential.

4.1 The waterways in the State present opportunities in areas of maintenance of fairways, infrastructure developments like riverports, piers, mechanized handling, terminal development, floating restaurants and shopping arcades etc.

5. Majority of farmers in Assam still practise traditional farming methods including use of organic fertilizers. Average consumption of chemical fertilizers in the State is the lowest in the country. Thus, the State forms a **vast base for organic cultivation.**

5.1 Agro-climatic condition in the State is favourable for cultivation of many varieties of agro-horti plants.

5.2 Assam has over 300 varieties of **medicinal plants and herbs.** It grows several species of **Aromatic plants** too like agor, citronella, lemon grass etc.

- 5.3 It has over 600 varieties of **orchids** out of which around 200 varieties are unique to the region.
6. **Assam is famous for its silk particularly the Muga Silk.** Muga Silk known as Golden Fibre has recently obtained Geographical Index (GI) certification. There is ample scope to develop Muga Silk Industry to cater to the international demand.
7. **Bamboo grows abundantly in Assam.** Bamboo is going to be the Timber of the 21st Century. Labelled as 'Green Gold', opportunities in Bamboo are in the development of new products and new applications, commercialization of cultivation and processes and substitution in place of plywood and other wood-based products.
8. The Mother Nature has bestowed upon the State of Assam a bountiful of water resources. The river Brahmaputra which literally runs through the middle of the entire State is fed by the perennially snow-capped mountains of the Himalayas. Its tributaries, too, are perennially fed from the mountain ranges in Bhutan and Borail Hills. These rivers are, in fact a source of 'sorrow' to the people of the State during the rainy season. The flood caused by these rivers during the rainy season is disastrous to the lives

and properties of the people and is a constant annual deterrent to the economy of the State.

Though it may sound naive at this stage, I would like to throw open the idea of possibility of harnessing the **excess water resources** of the State for utilization in other water starved regions of the country as an investment opportunity in the near future.

9. Assam is endowed with green land of rolling plains with blue hills, dense forests and enchanting rivers. It has rich flora and fauna. Assamese society is multi-ethnic societies with varied cultures, customs, festivals, living styles, culinary habits and languages and dialects. The State, therefore offers **immense investment opportunities in tourism** in areas of adventure, wildlife, religion, cultural, eco and tea tourism.
10. You have so far listened to the narration regarding abundance of natural resources. I am glad to tell you that in order to harness these natural resources into profitable economic activities, we have **high standard infrastructure** like Export Promotion Industrial Park, Industrial Growth Centres and Integrated Infrastructure Development Centres spread

throughout the State. These centres have excellent road connectivity, power, water, telecommunication, effluent treatment plant and other institutional supports in banking, postal, HRD and testing laboratories.

10.1 The **skilled manpower at competitive cost** is another advantage in doing business in Assam. Most of the educated people are adept in English language and are also computer literate. I am also glad to inform that we are going to develop an IT Park very close to the International Airport in Guwahati.

We are going to develop a large pool of employable youth in collaboration with NASSCOM to cater to the demands of IT and ITES sectors.

10.2 Above all, our **Government is committed** to economic development of the State through industrialization. For the purpose, both the Central Government and State Government have taken policy initiatives where **attractive incentive packages** have been offered to the investors for investing in the State.

10.3 The Government of Assam is emphasizing on **adoption of a naturonomic investment strategy** for eco-friendly sustainable

development of the State. We desire to get our natural assets utilized with minimum of damage to the ecology and environment and optimum benefits to its people.

With these few words I welcome you to invest in our State. In return, you are assured of grand Assamese hospitality and warmth besides your corporate coffers going full.

Thank you.