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Tea workers payment crisis to ease soon

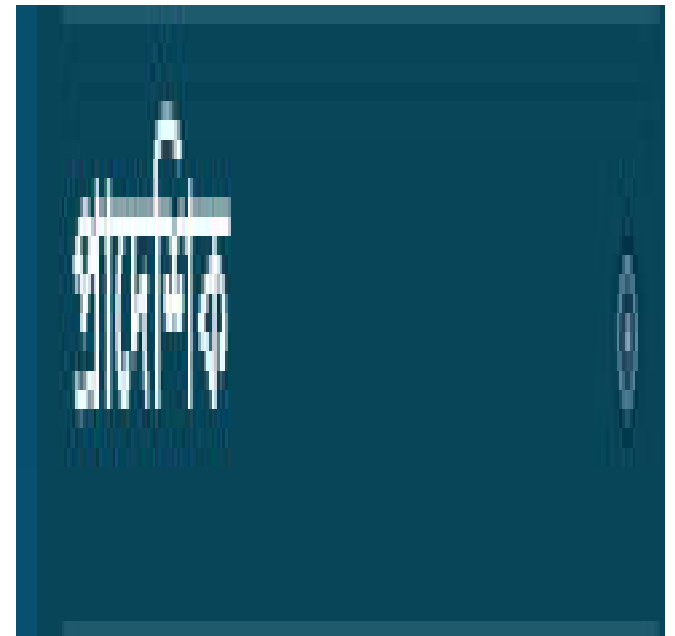
Special Correspondent

Silchar, Nov 13: Along with the common people, worst hit are the tea garden workers of 104 tea estates of Barak Valley due to the surgical strike on black money by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The banks in all the three districts of Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi are reeling under cash crunch and finding it difficult to handle the overflowing number of customers every day. ATMs continue to run dry. Even under this trying situation, the managements of banks are keeping their mind cool and exercising maximum coordination with the customers in queues.

Debashis Bhowmik, manager of HDFC Bank here, appreciated the gesture of his customers in understanding the situation and cooperating with the management. As this correspondent entered the bank premises, customers could be seen standing in queues who took the advice of the management rather gently when cautioned that cash shortage might hit the payments. Bhowmik said everything would become normal in another three weeks. There is acute shortage of Rs.100 notes, might be due to a sort of panic that this would also make a vanishing trick. It is true unless enough cash flows in from RBI, the complication will remain unchanged.

If common people are affected, worst affected are the tea garden workers. I B Ubadhiya, president of ITA, Surma Valley Branch, was hopeful the crisis in the tea gardens would be solved by the present arrangement made with the district administrations. It was known from a reliable source that in order to tackle the issue of weekly payment of wages to workers, two accounts in the name of Deputy Commissioner of Cachar, S Viswanathan, IAS, in SBI and UBI with his consent and the approval of RBI had been opened. Tea managements would transfer the money to these accounts.

The source added to say that Rs.1.80 crore would be available from banks to make payments to workers. The Assistant Labour Commissioner is coordinating with the managements and labour unions to maintain normalcy in the gardens despite all the hardship being faced by the workers. The decision to transfer money in the accounts was taken at a meeting called by the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar on Friday. Among all the

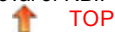


tea gardens, the condition of Bhuvan Valley tea estate workers continues to be grim as the estate has remained closed since September last. The Deputy Commissioner of Cachar deputed two ADCs for an on the spot study of the situation for taking remedial measures. The trade unions, Barak Cha Sramik Union and Barak Valley Cha Mazdoor Sangh are also hopeful of the situation becoming normal.

The situation is not in any way different in the tea gardens of Hailakandi and Karimganj. A good number of tea gardens have arranged purchase of essential commodities by workers from shops on credit. This has come as a great relief to them. In the absence of proper and scheduled ration supply by some tea gardens, food crisis looms large. A tea garden in Hailakandi has created a sort of flutter by the announcement that if any death occurs due to starvation, the management will not be responsible for that.

There is no doubt resentment and anger creeping among the workers as Ram Lal said, "It is good that the management has arranged flour and rice on credit. This is not enough. We need vegetables and other food items." Reports from Rupacherra, Dholai, Keya, Ramchandi, Ainakhal, Saraspur and Kalacherra gardens in Hailakandi tell the same story. As Dhires Das, vice-president of Barak Valley Cha Mazdoor Sangh, said, "Problem more or less is the same in all the tea gardens." The Deputy Commissioner of Hailakandi, Maloy Bora, according to a report from the district, has sent demand note to RBI for opening accounts in banks to make payment to workers of the 17 tea gardens of the district. The approval of RBI is awaited.

Another report from Karimganj says that at the initiative of Subrata Bhattacharjee, BJP president, a meeting was held with Additional Deputy Commissioners, Dhruvajyoti Deb and Arunabha Dey, today in the conference hall of the district administration for finding a way out for making weekly payments of the tea workers. Earlier, the Deputy Commissioner, Prasanta Kumar Mahanta, held a meeting with officials of the banks to enable garden managements to transfer money in the accounts to be opened with the approval of RBI.



Yesterday's Weather

	Maximum	Minimum
Guwahati	30.0°C	24.0°C
Dibrugarh	31.0°C	24.0°C
Shillong	18.0°C	14.0°C
Imphal	27.0°C	11.3°C
Kohima	24.3°C	13.5°C
Itanagar	30.2°C	20.5°C

Today's forecast for Guwahati City

Weather is most likely to remain dry over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram & Tripura. Shallow to moderate fog is very likely to occur at isolated places over South-Assam and Tripura during next 48 hrs. No significant change in night temperature.

Arunachal News

- Khandu calls for 'Jan Andolan' to carry cleanliness drive
- AAK conference concludes
- Fifteen clear 1st round of Mega Model contest audition
- Killing of scribe in Bihar condemned

Meghalaya News

- Meghwal for connecting NE digitally
- Meghwal pleads for patience
- Children's Day celebrated at Raj Bhavan
- Cherry Blossom Festival kick started in Shillong

Northeast News

- Manipur battles cash shortage, blockade
- Denomination issue dominate run up to Tripura bypolls

Cachar News

- Barak Valley celebrates Children's Day
- Platinum jubilee celebration of Baram Baba Mela begins
- Felicitations of journalists on National Press Day

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National News

- Congress dares PM to disclose BJP's bank transactions
- Modi rejects opposition demand for demonetisation rollback
- Will masses still back you, Shiv Sena asks Modi
- 'Modi shed crocodile tears in Goa'

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Local Sports

- Odisha make good start after Kunal's century
- Nitish wins RAC Open Chess title
- Assam bounce back

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International News

- Pakistan says 7 soldiers killed on LoC; Indian envoy summoned
- Team Trump urges Democrats to help stop protests
- Trump names top aides
- Xi, Trump discuss China-US ties

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Sports

- India-New Zealand ODI series highest rated in last 3 years
- Rahane drops four spots to No.9
- Everton manager puts Liverpool firmly in title hunt
- Chennaiyin, Pune in crunch ISL clash

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State-1

- Demonetization has paved ways to explore new avenues of corruption: Ripun Bora
- 'School magazine helps students enter into the world of literature'
- Children's Day celebrated
- Children's Day celebrated in Goalpara with gaiety

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Editorial

- Landmark deal
- Groundwater crisis in India
- India's pro leagues made-to-order for TV
- Letters to the Editor

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State-2

- Timings of DEMU train services changed on experimental basis
- ATMs remain cashless, banks still overcrowded in Lakhimpur
- General observer takes stock of poll preparations
- Children's Day celebrated

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Op-Ed (Sunday)

- The devil's own choice
- The ascent Of Manipur's women - and their descent into drugs
- Children's Day

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