

Tea board expresses inability to take over Duncan's 7 tea gardens

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The fate of hundreds of workers of seven tea gardens owned by the Duncan Group in North Bengal worsened after the tea board on Friday expressed its inability to take over their management.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industries through a gazette notification on January 28 had asked the tea board to take over the management of seven tea gardens. The tea gardens are Birpara, Garganda, Lankapara, Tulsipara, Hunterpara, Dunchipara and Dim Dima.

The board on Friday informed the state chief secretary Basudeb Bandopadhyay that it would not be possible for them to take over the management of these tea gardens as they had already been referred to BIFR.



A pall of gloom descended in the area after the board's decision reached as the death due to poverty because of closure of the tea gardens is continuing unabated. The death toll has reached an alarming height.

It may be recalled that a BJP delegation had met Nirmala Sitaram during her visit to North Bengal and urged her intervention. Accordingly, a team from the Centre had visited the tea gardens and prepared a report. The board had also conducted a survey and submitted a report. The state government had also produced a report. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had said the Centre should take steps to run the tea gardens.

The state government had announced Rs 100-crore project for the workers of closed tea gardens.

Gautam Deb, north Bengal development minister, said how could the ministry ask the tea board to take over possession of the tea gardens without knowing their status.

Meanwhile, Nirmala Sitaraman, Minister of Commerce and Industries (Independent charge) on Friday inaugurated a state-of-the-art five-storey laboratory in Siliguri.

The quality of tea would be examined here along with finding out know how to increase the production of tea.

The board has taken a lease of 15 cottah land from the Siliguri Jalpaiguri Development Board to set up the laboratory.



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