

Lockout at tea estate in Assam

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S ICHAR: The management of Doyapore Tea Estate declared a lockout at the sprawling tea garden and two of its out-gardens Majhargram and Durga Nagar in Cachar district on Tuesday.

The management's action rendered 800 permanent workers and an equal number of casual workers jobless.

Industry sources on Thursday said the management and the workers had been engaged in a dispute over repair and reconstruction of workers' quarters in the garden and a section of the employees had gheraoed manager SK Parekh on Tuesday. When the workers became aggressive, Parekh declared a lockout after consulting Kolkata-based owner Mohit Agarwal.

State minister and general secretary of the Intuc-affiliated Barak Cha Shramik Union Ajit Singh criticized the management's action and said the garden should be reopened before the first phase of polls on April 4.

Assistant general secretary of the union Dinanath Baroi said a case is pending with the assistant labour commissioner, Cachar, on the issue. The management, Indian Tea Association and the union will meet on Saturday to resolve the deadlock.