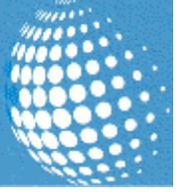


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AASTGA demand undisrupted LPG supply

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(NP)

Over 300 activists of the All Assam Small Tea Growers' Association (AASTGA) on Thursday blocked National Highway 37 at Jorhat for two hours from 11am demanding undisrupted supply of LPG. Hundreds of tea factories in Assam have

been suffering from acute LPG shortage, leading to serious losses for the state's tea industries.

"We have demanded that the government take steps to provide LPG to the bought leaf factories in Assam soon. Due to the shortage of gas supply in the factories, over 1.2 lakh small tea growers have been incurring huge losses over the past one month," president of the organization Durlov Borah said.

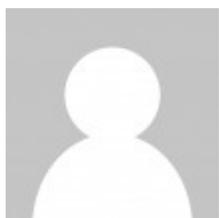
The organization sent a memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan to take steps to ensure adequate LPG supply to tea factories at the earliest.

Life in Jorhat was disrupted due to the protest. Hundreds of buses to and from the upper Assam districts of Tinsukia, Dibrugarh and Sivasagar were stranded on the highway due to the blockade.

Trucks and other private and public vehicles were also stranded, affecting traffic in Jorhat.

"The tea industry is graded very low on the list of priorities when it comes to gas supply. It is rated eighth in the list of priority of gas supply to industries in Assam," Nasir Ahmed, secretary of the organization, said.

Over 1.2 lakh small tea farmers produce 60 crore kg green tea on 5.2 lakh bighas of land in Assam every year. They give an annual business of Rs 1,541 crore to the state's economy and contribute to 33% of the total national tea production.



Aruna Sharma