

Darjeeling tea planters seek funds to meet workers' expenses

PTI



Production still at a standstill due to shutdown

Kolkata, Aug 28:

The Darjeeling Tea Association (DTA), the apex body of tea planters in the hills, has asked for a funding package from the government to meet the expenses of the workers as production has been stopped owing to the continuing shutdown in the hills.

“We have asked for funding to run the gardens and meet the workers’ expenses till the next flush in March 2018,” Binod Mohan, DTA Chairman, told PTI.

He said that production could not take place since the indefinite strike began in June and has been continuing till today.

“The season had been completely a washout and the 87-odd gardens were staring at a revenue deficit. We need to meet the expenses of around one lakh workers till the next flush,” he said, adding that the estimated deficit would be in the range of ₹ 350 crore. He also said, “Now, we have to see how the government through the Tea Board responds to our demand.”

Earlier, DTA representatives met Tea Board officials and apprised them of the situation in Darjeeling, which in turn asked the association to submit a package proposal to it.

The shutdown has also created a sense a fear among the planters as production of the second flush crop—which commands a premium in the overseas markets—could not take place. They also feared that the export market for the produce could be lost and replaced by crop from other countries like Nepal.

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