

Rs 222 Cr Dues to Tea Garden Workers by Garden Management: Assam Govt

The amount includes Rs 77.26 crore as wages, Rs 135.04 crore as provident fund, and Rs 9.73 crore as gratuity

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Over Rs 222 crore dues to tea garden workers, including their wages and provident fund, have not been paid by several planters, against whom the government has filed several cases, the Assam Assembly was informed on Monday. In a written reply to a query by BJP MLA Rupesh Gowala, Labour Welfare Minister Sanjay Kishan said Rs 222.03 crore remains to be paid to the workers by the management of 16 gardens across the state.

The amount includes Rs 77.26 crore as wages, Rs 135.04 crore as provident fund, and Rs 9.73 crore as gratuity, he added. Kishan, who also holds the portfolio of Welfare of Tea Tribes, said the Labour Commissioner has filed several cases against these defaulting tea garden managements for clearance of the dues.

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In reply to a separate query of Asom Gana Parishad MLA Ponakan Baruah, the minister informed the House that there are 1,157 tea gardens registered in Assam. "In these gardens, a total of 11,80,548 workers are engaged. This includes 4,62,070 permanent and 7,18,478 temporary workers," he added.

Kishan further said that in addition to the registered gardens, there are 1,01,085 small tea gardens across the state employing around six lakh workers, as per Tea Board data. At present, the daily wage of a worker is Rs 205 in Brahmaputra valley and Rs 183 in tea gardens across the Barak valley, he added.

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