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Title: Regarding need to continue the supply of subsidized rations to tea labourers in Assam.

SHRI GAURAV GOGOI (KALIABOR): The Centre has decided to stop subsidized rations meant for tea labourers and asked the state Government of Assam to do away with the system of allocating bulk food grains to the tea garden management. The decision will effect 19,28,719 families of tea garden labourers in Assam.

In this connection, Under the Essential Commodities Act 1955, each tea garden labourer in Assam gets 3.26 kgs of food grains including rice or wheat, every week at 55 paisa per kg from the tea garden management. Similarly, the dependent of the labourers is entitled to 2.44 kgs of food grains at the same rate per week. Their children get 1.22 kgs of the ration per week at the subsidized rate. Whereas the Assam government has been providing a total of 12,590 metric tonnes (MT) of rice and wheat to the garden management every month at subsidized rates for the purpose. This system has been in force in Assam for the last 60 years and removing it all of sudden and without making an alternative arrangement will affect the interests of the tea industry of not only North eastern States but also the national exchequer indirectly.

Hence, I request the Hon'ble Minister of Commerce & Industry to kindly take necessary steps to cancel the circular issued for the purpose to protect the interests of the tea garden workers of North eastern states in general and Assam in particular.