

Assam facing serious food situation

By Our Staff Correspondent

SHILLONG, May 21: Assam has been facing a serious food situation during the past 10 days as the stock position of wheat had fallen substantially short of requirements. The price of rice had risen almost throughout the state.

Tea gardens, particularly in Cachar and Dibrugarh districts, are also reportedly facing great difficulties in the supply of weekly ration to labourers. The stock with FCI is inadequate to meet the demand.

The state supply minister, Mr. Dulal Chandra Baruah, met the Prime Minister and other Union Ministers in New Delhi two days ago and pleaded with them to rush foodgrains to Assam to avert an acute food crisis in the state.

The Prime Minister, it is learnt, has already directed the railway ministry to make available adequate number of wagons to carry foodgrains to Assam. The Union agriculture minister, Mr. S. S. Barnala, has also assured the Assam minister that all necessary steps would be taken to maintain the supply line. His ministry was maintaining close liaison with the railway ministry to cope with the situation.

The price of coarse rice, which was selling in Assam for Rs. 2.20 a kg. even a fortnight ago, has now shot up to Rs. 2.40 while the fine variety is sold at prices ranging between Rs. 2.50 and Rs. 2.75 a kg. 'Joha' rice sells between Rs. 2.90 and Rs. 3 a kg.

The price of wheat has also been rising. The present price of 'atta' is Rs. 2 a kg. as against Rs. 1.80 a fortnight ago.

Plea to evict Bangla infiltrators

SHILLONG, May 21: The national executive of the Janata Yuva Morcha at a meeting held recently demanded immediate measures to evict Bangladeshi infiltrators from the north-eastern region.

The morcha also called upon the Assam government to take appropriate steps on the issue without yielding to pressures exerted by anti-national elements.

It also demanded that non-Muslims who had come over to India to escape from the atrocities perpetrated on them in Bangladesh be treated as 'refugees' since the partition of the country had not come about at the instance of these unfortunate people, but was imposed on them. It was the duty of the Indian authorities to rehabilitate these refugees, the resolution added.

The meeting expressed grave concern over the explosive political situation in the north-eastern region. The morcha felt that some separatist regional forces, foreign elements and infiltrators from Bangladesh were behind the mass killing on the Assam-Nagaland border on January 5 in the name of border problem. The convention also supported the proposed bill on freedom of religion.

The Times of India

22 - May - 1979