

## Forum agrees to puts off tea strike

**Siliguri:** Representatives of Joint Forum, the apex body of tea trade unions excepting Trinamul, announced on Tuesday evening that they have postponed the three-day tea industry strike and the 12-hour general strike, much to the relief of tea planters.

The decision was made after senior officials of state labour department and members of the tea planters' fraternity mentioned to them at a meeting that was held here in Uttarkanya, that discussion is in progress for fixation and implementation of minimum wages for tea workers serving in the state.

Since July 2, the Forum has launched a series of agitations on the issue of minimum wage and had also called a three-day strike in the industry from July 23 to July 25. Also, on July 24, they had announced a 12-hour general strike in tea producing areas of north Bengal.

The announcement had left tea planters perturbed, as production is in the peak across the industry in the current month.

"The state labour commissioner assured us that state labour minister Moley Ghatak will announce a proposed rate of minimum wage for tea workers at meeting to be held in Uttarkanya on July 30. We considered it as a positive move from the state's side and thus decided to postpone the strike till that date," said Ziaur Alam, convener of the Forum.

On July 20, constituent unions of the Forum will hold meetings in each of the tea estates to apprise workers and their families about the development.

"However, if the state's proposed rate is not accepted by workers, we will resume our movement," the trade union leader added.

The planters expressed a sense of relief at the decision.

"We appreciate the decision of Joint Forum to keep on hold the strike. It would help the industry to maintain its production that is in the peak during this season," said R. A. Sharma, secretary of the Dooars branch of Tea Association of India.

**Source:** <https://www.telegraphindia.com/states/west-bengal/forumagrees-to-puts-offtea-strike-245725>