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If we go back in time and look at the history of the Roman Empire, after its defeat at the hands of the Germans in 9 AD, Emperor Augustus decided to end the Roman expansion policy, which put a dent in its supply of foreign wealth acquired from conquering new lands. Augustus and the emperors who followed thus faced the problem of insufficient revenues. Taxes could only be increased up to a certain point before it angered the masses. "To counter this problem, Nero began in 64 AD a policy that subsequent emperors found increasingly irresistible," writes

In the first half of the 4th century, hyper-inflation kicked in due to the state's protracted inflationary policy. As Tainter writes, "In the second century a modius of wheat, during normal times, had sold for 1/2 denarius... the same modius of wheat sold in 335 AD for over 6,000 denarii, and in 338 for over 10,000." Whatever savings ordinary people held in denarii were practically wiped out. By the 5th century, the peasantry was decimated from prolonged predation, so much so that they became "apathetic about the dissolution of Roman rule," as "the

Historically, we have seen government elites, particularly the more corrupt ones, lose control once they started the practice of printing more money, until such a policy ruined the state's economy. As the famous economist Ludwig von Mises wrote, "Just as when you start to use certain drugs you don't know when to stop nor how to stop, it is the same with [inflationary monetary policy], the governments don't know when nor how to stop." That is why, during these challenging times, it is so important for us to "remember the past", so that we too are not "condemned to repeat it."

SHEIKH TOUHIDUL HAQUE and MD KAMRUZZAMAN

Historically, the tea industry in Bangladesh has been standing on the backbreaking labour of tea garden workers, most of whose ancestors were transported here from the impoverished states of Bihar, Odissa and West Bengal in British India. Currently, around 100,000 permanent workers and 30,000 seasonal workers work in 167 tea estates. The total number of tea workers and their family members is estimated to be around 500,000. The majority of them are illiterate, work for very low wages, and enjoy few rights or privileges in the tea estates where they work and live. They are ethnically, racially, religiously, linguistically and culturally distinct from other

The quality of these benefits, however, is questionable. Although the majority of tea garden workers are dissatisfied with the tea garden authorities for failing to fulfil the obligations of their employment

For long-term solutions, all parties involved – the government



Research indicates that the exploitative attitudes of the tea garden authorities and the failure of the government to act are responsible for the appalling living conditions of tea garden workers. The households in these communities, for instance, have a high population growth rate due to a lack of education on family planning. From the authority's standpoint, however, a high population growth rate is advantageous, as it guarantees a continuous surplus of labour. The owners of tea gardens are not very concerned about improving the human capital in the tea garden areas by investing in the community's health, education, and needs-based

Furthermore, in the absence of the necessary capital, skill, experience and, most importantly, distribution channels for entrepreneurial pursuits, tea garden workers are afraid to take up different income-generating activities. It is thus unsurprising that almost all small and medium business activities, other than businesses related to tea gardens, that have developed and are developing around tea gardens,

Though these initiatives might not be adequate in breaking this vulnerable and marginalised community's cycle of poverty and cultural prejudice in the near future, they could be the first step toward removing their suffering.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS		
1 Video chat need	34 Cell phone	friend
7 Ooze	annoyance	16 North African
11 Stir up	40 Days gone by	capital
12 Region	41 Panama	17 Supply with
13 Fumble	explorer	funds
15 Peony part	42 Genesis	19 Satchel part
16 New driver,	garden	20 Abode
often	43 Like some	21 Nourished
18 Netlike fabric	winter days	22 Tour carrier
21 Supply with	DOWN	23 Trawling need
cash	1 Gum mass	25 Jazz variety
22 Celtics' home	2 Mess up	28 Make moist
24 Finale	3 Scary shout	29 Compass
25 Hot dog	4 Like	creation
holder	panhandlers'	31 Piano part
26 Regret	hands	33 Fly catchers
27 Radio parts	5 Colorado resort	34 Color
29 Play group	6 Convene	35 Scepter
30 DNA sample	7 Dark-furred	36 Lode material
tool	martens	37 Tad Lincoln's
31 Plumbing	8 Pitcher's stat	dad
piece	9 Twisty fish	38 Auction buy
32 Grass cutter	10 Friend	39 Put down
	14 Pythia's	

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