

Title: Need to take steps for the revival of tea industry in the country.

SHRI JOACHIM BAXLA (ALIPURDUAR): Since 1998, Tea Industry has been passing through a bad phase, resulting in closure of several tea gardens. Ultimately, labour force has to suffer a lot. They are deprived of their statutory benefits. Wages are not paid timely as it should have been done as per Plantation Labour Act,. Further, medical facilities are suspended, ration is not provided regularly, provident fund and LIC premium although deducted from the salary of the workers, are not deposited at the respective accounts. PF and gratuity are not paid to the employees even after retirement.

Replantation and rejuvenation were not done for long. Approximately, 1,72,000 and 42,000 hectares of land is required to be replanted and rejuvenated respectively in the existing tea gardens. It was given an impression by the hon. Commerce Minister that a package of relief would be announced during the Budget session to support the tea industry. Except withdrawal of surcharge of Re.1.00 on one kilogram of tea, quantum of sum required for revival of tea industry has not been declared as yet.

I request the hon. Minister of Commerce to expedite the matter and a package of relief for the tea industry may be announced immediately.