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Title: Need to take steps to save poor tea garden workers in Darjeeling Hills, Dooars and Terai region.

SHRI MD. BADARUDDOZA KHAN (MURSHIDABAD): Hon. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, with your kind permission I would like to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the important valleys of tea estate in West Bengal's Darjeeling hills, Dooars and Terai region are now converting into the valleys of deaths. Sir, there are 273 tea gardens. Till date more than 100 people have died due to starvation and malnutrition.

Sir, as per a report by Harsh Mandar, the Supreme Court's Special Commission on Right to Food in September, 2015-16, Duncan tea gardens owned by G.P. Goenka in Dooars and Darjeeling are in a state of limbo. They are neither closed nor open in the true sense of the term.

This situation has added one more chapter of shameful history of hunger in the tea industry. As per report, none of the estates has a functional hospital, no medicine or other facilities in the hospital.

Since April, 2015, the situation has become miserable in all these gardens. Wages payment and bonus disbursement became irregular and yet the State Government did not take any step.

Wages are also very low in West Bengal. It is only Rs.97 in West Bengal; Rs.115 in Assam; Rs.206 in Tamil Nadu; and Rs.228 in Karnataka.

Other facilities like housing, drinking water, sanitation and medial facilities are not up to even minimum requirement.

As a result, some 100 workers died due to starvation and some 25-40 per cent workers and their families have left tea gardens in search of jobs else where.

So, I urge upon the Government to take some fruitful action to save the poor tea garden workers and their families.