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Title: Need to take steps to revive the closed tea gardens in North-Bengal.

SHRI ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY (BAHARAMPUR): Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the House to a very important matter. I am fortunate enough that the concerned Minister, Madam Sitharamanji, is also present here.

The fact is that closure of scores of tea gardens have become a nemesis for the entire north-Bengal area. Thousands of tea labourers have been inflicted by poverty and penury due to closure of the tea gardens in north-Bengal. The fly-by-night operators who are virtually ruling the roost in the tea industry have made the life of the tea workers more severe and difficult. I have personally visited those closed tea gardens and found that those tea labourers are living in distress and in utter deprivation. They are virtually landed in abysmal despair. They do not have any viable alternative to eke out their livelihood. In such a situation, finding no alternative, they are even selling their kids and even flesh trade has become rampant in those areas.

I would urge upon the hon. Minister to have a personal visit to those closed tea garden and save those poor people from starvation deaths. Already starvation deaths have been reported from that area. Madam, this area has been compared by the common people with Kalahandi and Somalia. â€
(Interruptions)

HON. CHAIRPERSON :

Shri Mohammad Salim may be allowed to associate with the issue raised by Shri Ahir Ranjan Chowdhury.