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Title: Need to ensure Minimum wages Act is applicable to Tea Garden workers.

**SHRI RAJU BISTA (DARJEELING):** In North Bengal — Darjeeling, Alipurduars, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar are dominated by Tea plantations, but the workers here are deprived of their basic wages. They are paid only Rs 176 per day, which is the lowest wage paid in the nation.

Minimum Wages Act is applicable across all sectors in Bengal, except in tea gardens. Despite being a highly skilled job, their salary is lower than the minimum wage for unskilled agricultural workers in the state.

Tea gardens are governed by the Plantation Labour Act of 1951, directly derived from the British feudal system that favours tea garden owners and denies Land Rights to workers. The owners can shutdown and reopen tea gardens without any accountability towards the workers. Hence, I request this august house to make comprehensive changes to the PLA Act to reflect the realities of New India and ensure Minimum Wages Act is applied to tea gardens too.