

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY
(DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE)

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. *140
TO BE ANSWERED ON 15/12/2023

RUNNING AND MAINTENANCE OF TEA GARDENS IN WEST BENGAL

***140. SHRI PRAKASH CHIK BARAIK:**

Will the Minister of **COMMERCE & INDUSTRY** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Government has issued a Gazette Notification for taking up the running and maintenance of a number of tea gardens in West Bengal;
- (b) if so, the present status of the same; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
(SHRI PIYUSH GOYAL)

(a) to (c): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to Part (a) to (c) of Rajya Sabha Starred Question No. 140 for answer on 15th December 2023 on “Running and maintenance of tea gardens in West Bengal”

(a) to (c): Government had vide Gazette Notification No. S.O. 260(E) dated 28 January, 2016 under Section 16E of the Tea Act, 1953 authorized Tea Board to take steps to take over the management control of seven tea gardens viz. Birpara Tea Estate, Garganda Tea Estate, Lankapara Tea Estate, Tulsipara Tea Estate, Hantapara Tea Estate and Dumchipara Tea Estate owned by M/s Duncans Industries Ltd. and Demdima Tea Estate owned by M/s Santipara Tea Company Private Ltd., a sister concern of M/s Duncans Industries Ltd. The Tea Board, accordingly, invited Expression of Interest from interested tea companies for handing over the management control of the seven tea gardens. Immediately thereafter, M/s Duncans Industries Ltd. and M/s Santipara Tea Company Private Ltd. petitioned the High Court challenging the notification, which was followed by an appeal to the said High Court by the two companies.

The Court in its Order dated 20th September, 2016 had directed, as an interim arrangement, that the management of the tea gardens should be taken over by the two companies. Subsequently, the companies had made arrangements for managing of the tea gardens viz. Birpara, Garganda, Lankapara, Tulsipara, Hantapara, Dumchipara with M/s Merico Agro Industries Pvt. Ltd. and Demdima Tea Estate with Demdima Tea Company Pvt. Ltd. These tea gardens, except Lankapara, were reopened during 2016-2018.

Insolvency Resolution Proceedings were initiated against M/s Duncans Industries Limited vide National Company Law Terminal's Order dated 5.3.2020. The control of M/s Duncans Industries Ltd. is with the Insolvency Resolution Professional appointed by the NCLT as part of the Insolvency Proceedings.
