

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

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4893
ANSWERED ON 01/04/2025

IMPACT ON TEA GARDENS

4893. SHRI JAGANNATH SARKAR:

Will the Minister of **COMMERCE & INDUSTRY** (वाणिज्य एवं उद्योग मंत्री) be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Ministry is aware of the adverse impact on tea gardens and local communities in West Bengal's Kalchini block due to pollution from Bhutan's Pasakha Industrial Estate;
- (b) the steps taken by the Ministry to coordinate with Bhutan to ensure adherence to international environmental standards, particularly in industrial areas close to the Indian border;
- (c) the assistance extended by the Ministry to affected tea estates and other industries in Kalchini to mitigate the environmental damage caused by industrial pollution from Bhutan;
- (d) the specific outcomes of discussions with Bhutan during the Commerce Secretary Level Meeting held in September 2024 concerning this issue; and
- (e) whether the Ministry is planning any further site visits or joint inspections involving Bhutanese authorities and Indian experts to address this matter comprehensively and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

वाणिज्य और उद्योग मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री जितिन प्रसाद)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
(SHRI JITIN PRASADA)

(a) to (e) Government is aware of the reports regarding pollution from industrial activities in Bhutan's Pasakha Industrial Estate affecting tea gardens in West Bengal. The issue was taken up with the Bhutanese side, and in August 2018, a joint delegation led by the Tea Board of India and the Department of Trade from the Bhutanese side, undertook a site visit. The delegation recommended a separate visit to the Pasakha Industrial Area to be undertaken jointly by the Environment Commission of Bhutan, Tea Board of India, Ministry of Jal Shakti and other environmental experts.

During the Commerce Secretary Level Meeting (CSLM) held in November 2021, Indian side requested Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) to facilitate this visit. However, due to COVID pandemic, the visit could not take place. This matter was again discussed by the Indian side with RGoB during Border District Coordination Meetings between Bhutan and the State Government of West Bengal. This matter has been raised most recently with the Bhutanese side in the CSLM held in September 2024, during which, RGoB has informed that it would further contact stakeholders in this regard.
