

CONTEMPORARY

TEA TIME

VOL. XXXIV NO. I @ JANUARY - MARCH 2024 @ RS. 80 @ US\$ 7

TEA JOURNAL WITH THE LARGEST READERSHIP 35TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION



Other Attraction:

- ☐ Cover Story: BATIC 24
- ☐ Technology ☐ International
- ☐ Personality
- ☐ Company Profile
- ☐ Controversy ☐ History & many more...



From
Retail
to
Branding
Page 18



Largest
Exporter
of Indian
Tea
Page 26



Most Advanced Automated Withering System

Engineering Tomorrow's Tea

In the Black Tea processing withering is the most important and critical process of leaf which has come a long way from natural air withering with no controls to present day force draught air with sufficient controls to new technology of continuous system.

Vikram's Continuous Mechanised withering system Eliminates all the deficiencies inherent in traditional trough withering and constitute the foundation of achieving quality in Tea Manufacturing in which freshly plucked Green Leaf is conditioned chemically as well as physically for ensuing processing stage for both CTC & Orthodox tea. The Catabolic changes of larger organic molecules enhance enzyme activities, contributes towards Briskness, production of Volatile flavour compounds (VFC) responsible for AROMA. This process needs sufficient times and can not be accelerated.

Continuous Mechanised withering system comprises of two separate systems for chemical and physical withering with separate controls for residence time, humidity and temperature.

Advantage of Continuous Mechanised withering system helps in achieving consistent withering percentage of green leaf in spite of change of ambient conditions, no loss and damage of green leaf in handling as in traditional troughs and the tea manufactured will be uniform and consistent.

COMPLETE SOLUTION

TO MECHANISED TEA

PROCESSING

VIKRAM INDIA LIMITED

HEAD OFFICE

Tobacco House, 1, Old Court House Corner
Kolkata - 700001, India

Telephone: +91 33 22307629

Fax: +91 33 22484881, **Mobile:** 98308 11145

Email: sales@vikramindia.in, kolkata@vikramindia.in

FACTORY ADDRESS

Vill: Jala Dhulagori, **P.O.:** Dhulagori

P.S.: Sankrail

Howrah - 711302, India

Phone: 9830811833

OFFICES IN INDIA

Tinsukia, Siliguri, Coonoor

LIASON OFFICES ABROAD

Dhaka, Colombo, Nairobi

www.vikramindia.in



COMPLETE RANGE OF MECHANIZED TEA PLUCKING SOLUTIONS.

Battery Tea Harvester
ELEKTRA-330



Single Man Tea Harvester
NINJA-600

Two Man Tea Harvester
ACHIEVER-1210 HD



PATEL AGROTECH PVT LTD

124, Rajlaxmi Villa, Sevoke Road, Siliguri-734001

Call : 0353-2521810/8170056688/7477799822

Email : info@patelagro.com

www.patelagro.com



CONTENTS



- 4 Publisher's Note
- 8 Quiz
- 9 Cover Story **BATIC 24**



Company Profile

- 16 Tea Estate Sealkootee: *Swananda Tea Pvt. Ltd*

Personality

- 18 Madhav Sharda
- 24 Aradhita Agarwal
- 26 Shah Brothers
- 28 Bal Kishan Poddar
- 30 Biswambar Prasad Kedia



Current Event

- 34 To add Salt or not, that is the question.
- 37 Tea Time Tea and Ayurveda
- 38 Technology: Tcs Launches New App
- 39 The Indian School of Tea



International

- 41 ITA: FAO Meeting at Guwahati

History

- 44 Extracts from Saga of Indian Tea
- 47 The Lost Tea Garden of Pedong
- 50 Tea In Colonial Times
- 52 Collage
- 23, 46 Happenings
- 54 Statistics



Publisher : A Nandkeolyar
Advisers : Nayana Goradia and Lal Raisinghani
Executive Editor : A Nandkeolyar
Correspondent (Bangladesh) : Monjur Hossain
Mailing Address : Editorial & Marketing Office, 1 Old Court House
Corner, 2nd Floor, Kolkata- 700001 Phone: +91 33 2230 7241 / 7242
Mobile : 9830454544.
E-mail: pkg@contemporary.co.in
Branches : • Guwahati - A Sarmah, 2A Central Point
(opp. Bora Service Station), G S Road, Ulubari, Guwahati- 781007,

Phone: 0361 252 4253/252 2052.
E-mail : ase@contemporary.co.in
• Siliguri - Angshuman De, STAC Building Mallaguri, Pradhan
Nagar, Siliguri- 734403.
Phone: 0353 251 3095/3521
E-mail : ade@contemporary.co.in
Published for Contemporary Brokers Pvt Ltd by A Nandkeolyar.
Designed & Printed by Espace (espacedesign.in)
Phone: 98300 54369/ E-mail : espace_design@ymail.com



PARUCCO

Tray Dryers, Air Heaters & Chain Grate Stokers



Range of products:

- AIR HEATERS (Solid fuel Type)
- TRAY DRYERS
- OIL FIRED AIR HEATERS
- GAS FIRED AIR HEATERS
- INDUCED DRAUGHT FANS
- HOT AIR FANS
- CHAIN GRATE STOKERS
- TROUGH FANS
- INDUSTRIAL CASTINGS (Ferrous)
- FOUNDRY
- ASSEMBLE UNIT
- FABRICATION UNIT
- MACHINE SHOP
- SPARES DIVISION
- CGS UNIT



PARUCCO FOUNDRY PVT. LTD.

Office: 142/1, G. T. Road, P.O. Chatra Bowbazar, Serampore, Hooghly-712204, WB, INDIA

Phone : +91 33 26320339, Telefax: +91 33 26323435 Cell: 9831014326 / 9433024326

E-mail: paruccofoundry@gmail.com, rudra_parucco@rediffmail.com, Website: www.paruccofoundry.com

Factory (Unit-I) 271 (48) Ghosal Para, Nabagram, Mullick Para-3, P.O. Serampore,
Dist. Hooghly, West Bengal, INDIA

Foundry (Unit-II) Dhobapukur, PO, Bighati, Dist. Hooghly, West Bengal, INDIA

● KOLKATA ● SILIGURI ● COONOOR ● COLOMBO

PUBLISHER'S NOTE



Despite the existence of the Plantation Labour Act of 1956, which safeguards Indian tea laborers by setting forth regulations concerning their working conditions, wages, and welfare, the next generation of workers are choosing lucrative opportunities in bigger cities.

This act mandates provisions such as minimum wages, proper housing, medical facilities, clean drinking water, and sanitation. The act also covers aspects like hours of work, weekly holidays, leave entitlements, and maternity benefits for female workers. All this protection is not sufficient to attract the new generation. Additionally, since it addresses child labor concerns by prohibiting the employment of children under a certain age and ensuring their education, it is but natural that the educated youth do not want careers as tea leaf pickers.

So even these enforced measures of the Plantation Labour Act of 1956 is insufficient to stop the muscle drain, leading to challenges in the harvesting of the leaves, particularly during the season time.

In the next issue, we propose to debate solutions and see whether mechanization provides some answers.

A Nandkeolyar



EVAPORATIVE COOLING



**Reduce temperature in Tea Fermentation
CTC rooms, Motors & Conveyor systems**

- Increases cooling, ventilation and humidity
- 100% fresh air & more oxygen
- Enhances infusion, liquor and bloom
- Maintain proper air changes
- Maintain better hygiene

Duct Design & Installation Services available

ARCTIC ARCTIC **PANWA** GROUP Company

100-101, Udyog Vihar, Phase 4
Gurugram 122015, India

+91 81 3081 0472
+91-124-4188888

arctic@panwa.com
www.yesARCTIC.com

Social Connect



TARIFF



Advertise in Contemporary Tea Time

The Voice of The Tea Industry

Contemporary tea time, a magazine of the tea industry published by Contemporary Brokers Pvt. Ltd. has completed 33 years of its existence. It has through the years evolved into a voice of the industry, reflecting the views, opinions, market trends and happenings of the tea scenario in India and abroad.

As the only magazine of its kind in India, Contemporary Tea Time offers the advertiser unmatched value for money. As a magazine which reaches the highest echelons of the industry Contemporary Tea Time is ideal medium for advertising your product/service.



Tariff & Space Options

COLOUR

Back Cover	Rs. 38,000 / US\$ 455
Front Inside Left Get Fold	Rs. 28,000 / US\$ 335
Inside Front Cover	Rs. 25,000 / US\$ 300
Inside Back Cover	Rs. 25,000 / US\$ 300
Front Inside Right Get Fold	Rs. 22,000 / US\$ 263
1st Normal Page	Rs. 19,000 / US\$ 228
Normal Full Page	Rs. 16,000 / US\$ 192
Centre Spread	Rs. 31,000 / US\$ 371
Half Page	Rs. 9,000 / US\$ 108

Black and White

Normal Full Page	Rs. 14,000 / US\$ 168
Half Page	Rs. 7,000 / US\$ 84



Technical Details

Frequency : Quarterly | **Language :** English | **Material Required :** Hi-Res PDF/EPS/TIFF for Color Advertisement & B/W advertisements | **Lead Time :** 30 days prior to the date of issue | **Bleed Advertisement :** Must allow extra margin of 0.3 cm on all sides for trimming. B/W advertisements are not accepted in bleed size.

For further details contact

The executive editor, Contemporary Tea Time
Editorial & Marketing Office : Contemporary Brokers Pvt. Ltd.
 1, Old Court House Corner, 2nd Floor, Kolkata - 700 001
 West Bengal, India
 Phone: +91 033 2230 7241/7242
 Mobile : 9830454544. E-mail : pkg@contemporary.co.in
 Website : www.contemporarybrokers.com

SUBSCRIPTION



The exclusive magazine
on the tea industry
A 2-year subscription for
only Rs. 500/-



Contemporary Tea Time, a quarterly magazine published by Contemporary Brokers Pvt. Ltd., has through the last 33 years, evolved into a voice of the industry. With unmatched circulation it reaches the movers, shakers and decision makers, both in India and abroad.

For further details, contact

The executive editor, Contemporary Tea Time

Editorial & Marketing Office

Contemporary Brokers Pvt. Ltd.
1, Old Court House Corner, 2nd Floor
Kolkata - 700 001, West Bengal, India
Phone : +91 033 2230 7241/7242

Mobile : 8282820002

e-mail : pkg@contemporary.co.in

Visit our website :

contemporarybrokers.com

I want my contemporary Tea Time

Subscription Rate:



INDIA

- 1 year Rs. 300
- 2 years Rs. 500

OVERSEAS

- 1 year US \$ 30
- 2 years US \$ 50

Cheques/DD should be drawn in favour of
Contemporary Brokers Pvt. Ltd. and payable at Kolkata, India

To subscribe, please fill up the attached
subscription card and send to:

The Executive Editor, Contemporary Tea Time
Editorial & Marketing Office
Contemporary Brokers Pvt. Ltd.
1, Old Court House Corner
Kolkata - 700 001 West Bengal, India

For online payments details as follows:

Account Name: CONTEMPORARY BROKERS PVT.LTD.
Bank Name : HDFC Bank Limited
Branch : Stephen House, 4, B. B. D. Bag East,
Kolkata - 700 001
Account No. 00080350003794
RTGS/NEFTIFSC : HDFC0000008
Swift Code : HDFCINBBXXX

QUIZ



Errol O'Brien

Questions

1. What is a potion of herbs, fruits, and flavoured flowers without tea leaves called?
2. What connects the sale of Tea and Tulips?
3. What is the art of telling fortunes by reading the position of the infused leaf in tea cups called? It goes back 2000 years to a Chinese Princess who was disillusioned by her astrologer.
4. In rural areas, Tata Tea has taken out a 5-4-3 strategy for their brand, Tata Kaapi. What does 5-4-3 stand for?
5. Who has been reported to make tea religiously every day at 5 p.m. sharp with Earl Grey and Malvern Water?
6. By what name is the tea taken late in the afternoon in the UK with full-bodied meats, bread, cheese and pickles known?
7. The name of which tea growing area in India, when translated, means 'the Land of the White Orchid'?
8. What is an Arnold Palmer?
9. People of which country have the habit of keeping a cube of sugar in their mouths while sipping tea?
10. Tea Tarik is another form of tea drinking created by Indian Muslims in Singapore/Malaysia where air is introduced into a cup of milk tea, creating foam on the surface. How is this done?

1. Tisanes.
2. The Auction System – but tulips are auctioned in Amsterdam under the Dutch Auction System, where the buyer's highest bid is given first.
3. Tasseography.
4. 5 gms of Tata Kaapi, providing 4 cups of tea at the cost of Rupees 3.00.
5. Queen Elizabeth of England.
6. High Tea.
7. Kurseong.
8. A mocktail of half a glass of tea and half a glass of lemonade.
9. Iran.
10. Similar to our Chaiwallahas pouring out yards of tea from mug to mug.

Answers





BATIC 24

Witness to the Bi-Centenary Celebration of Assam Tea

Monjur Hossain covered this event
for TEA TIME



The Batic 2024 event held in Guwahati showcased a diverse range of innovative technologies and solutions. With over 100 exhibitors from various sectors, including AI, IoT, renewable energy, and healthcare, the event provided a platform for networking and knowledge exchange. Key highlights included discussions on sustainable development, digital transformation, and the role of emerging technologies in shaping industries. Industry leaders shared insights into future trends and challenges, fostering collaborations and partnerships. Participants also engaged in interactive sessions, workshops, and product demonstrations, gaining valuable insights into cutting-edge advancements. Overall, Batic 2024 was a successful convergence of technology and ideas, driving forward innovation and progress.

This event could serve as a foundation for the construction of a viable strategy for the industry's future growth path. The commercial aspects of the ideas mooted must be studied threadbare and applied soonest or else this entire exercise would have been futile. One question that begs an answer is that now best to balance the demand and supply for this commodity. Find alternate uses for the tea leaf and its extracts. Drive an increase in consumption but how? Add value? What are the practical answers to these questions?

As the farmer who grows tomatoes knows only too well that it's the ketchup makers who make the profits.!!!

Editor



TEA TIME

The Department of Commerce, Government of India, Government of Assam, Tea Board of India, and Tea Research Association (TRA Tocklai) organised Bi-Centenary Assam Tea International Conference (BATIC 2024) to celebrate the 200 years of the discovery of Assam Tea on the 29-30 January 2024 at Guwahati.



Maniram Dewan

Discovery of Assam tea dates back to 1823 when the great Maniram Dewan, along with Major Robert Bruce of the British Armed Forces and the chief of the local Singpho tribe, Bessa Gaum, spotted wild-growing tea bushes near Margherita.

Unfortunately, Robert died in 1824. The further “discovery” and development of Assamese tea is credited to his younger brother, Charles Alexander Bruce.

Robert Bruce was a mercenary fighting for the Ahom kings while Maniram’s family worked for the same kings. Probably that was where they had met and that is why in 1823, Maniram had accompanied Robert to the Bessa Gaum to meet the Singpho chief.

After Robert’s death, while Charles went to Sadiya, he continued to visit the tea shrub areas. In 1828, Maniram was made the Tehsildar of Rangpur. This must have provided them with opportunities to meet regularly. In 1839, both



Ms. Nayantara Palchoudhuri

Charles and Maniram held important roles in the Assam Tea Company and worked closely. In 1845, Charles was removed from his post, soon after Maniram resigned. Perhaps, Charles had advised or inspired Maniram to start his tea plantations.

It sounds a bit funny to present-days tea researchers that tea was discovered by Robert Bruce. The term “discovery” should relate to new knowledge. In this case, the knowledge about tea plants was known to persons like Maniram Datta who had taken Robert to the Singpho village. The Singpho tribe had known the tea plants for many centuries.

Instead of saying that the Bruce brothers discovered tea in India, it would be more appropriate to say that the Bruce brothers and





East India Company played a key role in setting up tea plantations in Assam and in the commercialization of tea.

In history mentioned only the name of the Bruce brothers while the role of Maniram is limited only to someone who had accompanied Robert Bruce for his first meeting. In reality, the role played by Maniram was much bigger.

Recent Assam history acknowledges Maniram Dewan as the first known Indian tea planter, who established his tea garden at Cinnamara near Jorhat in 1842. From thereon Assam tea grew exponentially, spreading its roots to several parts of east as well as north India. Such was the growth that China's dominance over tea production gradually faded and India began dominating the global black tea trade and export. Its bold, brisk, and malty flavour profile soon accorded Assam tea a unique pedestal amongst other tea varieties produced globally. Assam tea today commands more than



TEA TIME



10% share in the global tea production market. The industry backed by organised research for 112 years at TRA Tocklai, champions the cause of smart agricultural and manufacturing practices for sustainable production.

At the Bicentenary Assam Tea International Conference BATIC, the Tea Research Association (TRA Tocklai) and Tea Board Of India honoured and felicitated the following family members of the main contributors to the Assam tea industry.



Shri Bisa Mung Dang Gam, a direct 7th generation descendant of the Singpho Chief Besa Gam who were original tea growers of Assam; Shri Satyavrat Baruah, a direct 5th generation descendant of Maniram Dutta Baruah popularly known as Maniram Dewan; Smt Rumi Naidu & Smt Monila Naidu from Borbhetta Tea Estate Jorhat who represented the more than 1.5 million tea workers; Shri Atul Asthana, Chairman of the Consultative Committee of Plantation Associations representing all tea companies; Shri Bobrubahon Saikia, who is the grandson of the first pioneer small tea grower family of Assam Shri Gangadhar Saikia of Golaghat; Shri Siddharth Thard from Kadamba Tea Co. who represented the All Assam Bought Tea Leaf Manufacturer Association.

BATIC 2024 is attended by all segments of the Indian and global tea industry, delegates from various countries, International certifying bodies, diplomats from various tea-growing and consuming countries and officials from the Government. The organisers of the BATIC also invited startups to participate in the historic Bicentenary Assam Tea International Conference.

All associated with tea and other companies also showcased their products/technologies to the delegates.

Following BATIC 2024, the 25th session of the FAO Intergovernmental Group on Tea took place in Guwahati from 31 January to 2 February 2024. This session, under the Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, serves as a primary international platform for tea-producing and consuming countries, occurring every two years.

The event highlighted the impact of small tea growers in Assam, covering discussions on climate change, sustaina-

COVER STORY



new technology and innovation, and the promotion of Indian teas in new markets. The event kicks off in the afternoon on January 29 and concludes on January 30, with over 400 registered delegates from 24 countries.

Distinguished speakers at BATIC 2024 include Harish Bijoor, Brand Guru; Nitin Saluja, Founder of



Harish Bijoor

bility, technology and global promotion of Indian teas.

Topics include repositioning tea as a trendy beverage for the younger generation, insights on tea as a wellness beverage from Asian countries, and the effects of climate change on Assam's tea industry. Discussions also focus on regenerative agriculture and the potential for carbon credits in the Assam tea industry, along with the contributions of small tea growers.

Joydeep Phukan, Secretary, TRA Tocklai Coordinator for BATIC 2024 & FAO IGG on Tea for India, highlighted that BATIC 2024 showcased the revolutionary changes brought about by small tea growers in Assam. The conference also explored topics such as climate change and sustainability,



Nitin Saluja & Raghav Verma



James Grayland



Daneswar Poonyth



TEA TIME



Ganesh Babu

Chaayos; James Grayland from Wanlin Tea, Shanghai; Daneswar Poonyth from FAO Rome; Ganesh Babu, Founder of Boomitra; Shabnam Weber, President of

Following BATIC 2024, the FAO Intergovernmental Group on Tea, under the Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, was convened. FAO IGG is the sole international body for tea, bringing together tea-producing and consuming countries once every two years. India will hosts the session in 2024 after a delay due to the pandemic.



Shabnam Weber



Sharyn Johnston

The FAO Intergovernmental Group (IGG) on Tea represents a forum for intergovernmental consultation and exchange on trends in production, consumption, trade and prices of tea, including a regular appraisal of the global market situation and short-term outlook. The Group, under FAO auspices, considers changes in national policies and examines their international effects as they pertain to current and prospective markets. Technical side events are organized in conjunction with the IGG to facilitate a dialogue between FAO delegates, international policymakers, and the private sector. Linkages with other international organizations and commodity bodies are encouraged.



Thomas Kim

Tea Association of Canada; Sharyn Johnston, Chair of Australian Tea Association; Sanat Sarangi from TCS; Troy Kim and Thomas Kim from South Korea.

Key focus areas of BATIC 2024 include repositioning tea as a trendy beverage for the younger population, learning from Asian countries on making tea a wellness beverage, the impact of climate change on the tea industry in Assam, regenerative agriculture and carbon credits for Assam's tea industry, the role of small tea growers in revolutionizing the Indian tea sector, rebranding Assam tea in e-commerce sales, focusing on Assam tea exports to Australia and New Zealand, utilizing data analytics to enhance tea exports, and increasing efficiency in tea plantations through Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning.



Saurav Pahari, IAS



Let's Learn Tea

WHY INDIAN SCHOOL OF TEA

- Comprehensive Curriculum: Our courses cover a wide range of topics, including tea production, history, culture, tasting, blending, entrepreneurship, mixology and more.
- Experienced Faculty: Learn from industry experts and passionate tea educators from across the world.
- Practical Experience: Gain hands-on experience through workshops, tastings, and visits to tea gardens.
- Global Opportunity: Our Certificates shall put you right in the middle of Tea action globally.
- Choose your own career: Create your own Tea career based your learnings

GET IN TOUCH

- ☎ +91 91082 35096
- ✉ www.indianschooloftea.com
- 🌐 indianschooloftea@gmail.com



The Indian School of Tea

The first Tea School from India on Indian Tea for Global Tea Learners.

TEA CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

WEEKEND PROGRAMS

Introduction to Tea Appreciation
Introduction to Tea Entrepreneurship
Tea for Hospitality

SHORT DURATION

Tea Tasting & Appreciation
Tea Blending
Tea Etiquette & Customer Delight for F&B
The Art of Tea & Food Pairing

LONG DURATION & GARDEN VISIT

Becoming a Tea Expert

WHO IS THIS FOR

Hotel school students, food and beverage professionals, tea enthusiasts, tea entrepreneurs,

homemakers, retired professionals, and any graduate swilling to do something unique



SWANANDA TEA PRIVATE LIMITED SEALKOTEE TEA ESTATE

Introduction:

Swananda Tea Private Limited acquired Sealkotee TE from Warren Tea Limited in the late 2020's. It is located at Chabua of Dibrugarh district of Assam, alongside the NH-37 Highway and connected with the Air-Port and Railway Station within 15-20 minutes of road connectivity. The estate produces premium quality Black Tea both CTC and Orthodox and its tea plantation flourishes in 476.97 Ha of Tea and fallow land of 409.05 Ha i.e., totaling 886.02 Ha of the whole garden area. The estate possesses a unique character, which enhances the liquor in the made Tea produce. The estate ensures to good manufacturing practices and certificate requirements that fulfill the necessities required by the domestic & international markets. The estate nurtures population of approximately 7,000 people whose families are directly or indirectly dependent on the estate.

Background:

The company traces its legacy back to James Warren, who planted his first tea estate near Dibrugarh in 1850. Properties have been added subsequently and Warren Tea Limited was acquired by Gobin Ruia, a prominent businessman from Manchester (UK), in 1983.

The company has been able to enhance the crop from 6.04 lakh kg to 10.00 lakh kg of tea after taking over from Warren's years after acquisition and its yield has been increased from 1300 kg to 2150 kg per hectare.



Mr. Gopal Keshan



Mr. Rajat Keshan



Mr Baikunta Saikia
GM of Sealkotee

SEALKOTEET.E

COMPANY PROFILE



Mission Statement:

We aim for faster sustainable growth by crafting high-quality teas, empowering local communities and prioritizing domestic & international customer product satisfaction. Our dedication includes eradicating unethical practices, child labour, preserving & safeguarding the natural ecosystem and while ensuring the health & safety of our workers. Our focus extends to enhancing the well-being and living standards of our workforce.

Products Profile:

The estate produces premium quality Black (CTC and Orthodox) Tea's and a small quantity of White Tea's. Tea Grades viz. BPS, BP, BOP, BOPSM, PE, PD, CD in CTC and STGFOP, TGFOP1, TGFOP, GFOP, BPS(O), GFBOP, FBOP, GBOP, FOE, OPD & OD grades in Orthodox teas are well accepted among the national and international buyers.

Leadership Team:

The company is led by The Director, Mr. Rajat Keshan and the estate team is headed by Mr. Baikuntha Saikia, General Manager with Acting Manager, Sr. assistants, executive Officer, Medical Officer and Welfare Officer looking after their respective departments, along with staff & subordinate staff of 75 numbers in different job responsibilities.

Future Outlook:

The company endeavours to secure a position among top the 10 high-quality tea producers in Assam.



A Socially Responsible Tea Brand with A STRONG PRESENCE IN DARJEELING



Golden Tips, a premium tea brand from Darjeeling, has taken several social and humanitarian initiatives in Darjeeling over the years. With a heritage of over eight decades and roots firmly implanted in the Darjeeling region, the brand has always tried to make the lives of the hill station inhabitants a bit better.

Following the “Direct from Plantation + Auction model,” the expertise of Golden Tips lies in the sourcing, sampling, choosing, packaging and marketing of the finest single origin teas, tea blends and infusions. The company operates primarily through its retail outlets (14+ stores mainly in Eastern India), the Omni- Channel route, through renowned stores at select cities and airports in the country, and the company’s website, www.goldentipstea.com. apart from online marketplaces like Amazon, Flipkart, etc. The company has shipped its premium teas to almost 90 countries in the last several years through its website & online channels. Golden Tips also has exclusive representations in Russia, Japan, Mongolia, Nepal, Bhutan and now China through distributors.

During the pandemic, the company earnestly came forward and did its bit by distributing free foodgrains and medical aid to the poor and needy, who were the worst hit owing to the global epidemic.

Golden Tips has served exotic Darjeeling teas and snacks in several marathons, sports events like tennis tournaments, seminars, special occasions like International Tea Day, Independence Day, etc., and several events of Chief Minister West Bengal Mamata Banerjee from time to time. In fact, Ms. Banerjee visited the brand’s tea boutique with her entourage and media personnel. She thoroughly enjoyed the teas offered to her and also appreciated the picturesque surroundings, aesthetics of the tea boutique and hospitality given by Golden Tips staff. Hitherto, the former President of India, the late Shri Pranab Mukherjee, also visited Golden Tips tea stores in Darjeeling during his tenure as the President of India and enjoyed his visit.

Mr. Piyush Goel, Union Commerce Minister, Government of India, had also visited Golden Tips tea boutique sometime back and spent a considerable amount of time enjoying the locales, delicious teas and interacting with the brand’s staff.

Recently, international T20 delegates visited the tea boutiques of Golden Tips in Darjeeling and had a gala time there. Complimentary teas, and delectable snacks were offered to the distinguished dignitaries. They were also presented with premium luxury tea in specially designed gift boxes.

Top celebrities, film actors and singers from Bollywood, Tollywood, Kollywood and other regional film industries have also thronged the numerous tea boutiques and office premises of the brand. Some international film directors have also shot their films in the picturesque outdoor locales of office premises overlooking the majestic Kanchenjunga and verdant Darjeeling hills.



Questionnaire

Madhav Sarda

Tea Taster and Managing Director, Golden Tips Teas

Family & Background

1. Tell us a little about your family (parents) and your educational background.

I am the son of the late Nandlall Sarada and the grandson of the late Nathmull Sarada, who founded the tea business in Darjeeling way back in 1933. I did my ISC at St. Joseph's School, Darjeeling. (North Point) and B. Com from St Joseph's College, Darjeeling.

2. Where is your family originally from in Rajasthan? When did they move?

Our family originally hails from Taranagar, District Churu, Rajasthan and moved sometime early in the 20th century.

3. What have you imbibed from your family and parents/grandparents?

My family, especially my parents, has had a profound effect on my personality since my childhood. My value system, sense of heritage and socializing and last but not the least, my business acumen, have been passed on to me from my ancestors.

4. Tell us about your current, family and where you live now.

I currently live in Delhi, but I visit Darjeeling often owing to business engagements. My family includes:

- **Spouse** Ranjeeta Sarada, Director in Golden Tips Tea Co. Pvt. Ltd.;
- **Daughter** Nupur Sarada, Head of Global PR and Communications, Vahdam, India, aged 31 years, who was married in Delhi 3 years ago



- **Son** Bala Sarada, Bachelor, aged 30, Founder Vahdam, India

5. When did you join the family business? What were the initial days like?

I joined my family business at a fairly young age. I was in my latter days of college life when I took the plunge into the tea business.

The initial days were very challenging, interesting and with a lot of learning along the way. The opportunity to meet and interact with tourists from India and across the world thoroughly nourished my learning experience.



TEA TIME

Golden Tips Teas

1. Tell us a little about your current role and responsibilities for Golden Tips Teas.

I have an all-encompassing role in running and managing the affairs of the company. This involves – conceptualizing and initiating new retail stores, Appointing and Training key personnel to man and run various key verticals of the company, including exports, product development, designing and packaging, online sales, sourcing, tasting and selecting the finest teas for discerning clientele globally.

2. Tell us how Golden Tips Teas came into existence. When was it launched?

GOLDEN TIPS was incorporated in 1989 and the brand was formally launched at select stores in the country in 1993.

3. How many products were there in the initial years?

In the initial years there were about 35 offerings of the finest Indian teas in a varied range of handcrafted gift packaging and assortments.

4. How did you see through the pandemic?

It was a big blow to us consequent to the two lockdowns which resulted in a complete loss of sales at our retail stores in the hills of Darjeeling and Sikkim. There was a total absence of tourists for periods of upto 6 months, even after the lifting of the lockdown in 2020 & 2021. We were totally deprived of business during our best performing months of April, May June June, successively in both years.

Since then, with revenge-tourism, it has been a V-shaped recovery and tourists have returned in droves leading to the



normalization of business.

Music Lover

1. Please share your journey of becoming an expert whistler.

From childhood I had a penchant for whistling on old Hindi film numbers. Then I graduated from being a bathroom whistler to someone who has been able to record a few numbers and albums, invited to perform in functions and on stage.

2. Tell us about your passion for old Hindi music.

Since whistling was a hobby, this led to some amount of proficiency in percussions. Now I can perform decently on the tabla and drums. It was thus inevitable that I developed an interest in Hindi songs of yesteryear, apart from old western groups and singers like the Beatles, Denver, Pink Floyd and ABBA to name a few.

3. Do you have other hobbies that you pursue in your free time?

- Singing with Hand Percussion and playing the Harmonica
- Travelling, Socializing
- Playing Chess
- Yoga and Exercise
- Daily chore of reading a set of Newspapers
- Drinking Darjeeling Tea, especially Fresh Spring Flush
- I have widely traveled across India and the world with multiple trips each to Japan, Russia, Dubai and Taiwan.

I have also visited China, South Korea, Australia, Singapore, the USA, Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland, the UAE, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan on several





occasions, primarily on business and to exhibit at Expos.

Other accolades

- **The company’s CSR initiatives:**
Distribution of foodgrains during the pandemic, sponsoring various social and sporting events in Darjeeling and Sikkim such as Marathons, Football and Tennis tournaments, Social and Cultural gatherings
- **Mr Sardá’s memberships of industry bodies or other organisations**
CII/FIEO/Darjeeling Gymkhana Club/
Former Charter president of International Award winning- LEO Club of Darjeeling (Youth wing of Lion’s International)
- **Awards and accolades won by the company and Mr Sardá**
- **Miscellaneous Awards** from Darjeeling Chamber of Commerce, All-India Whistling event in Chennai, LEO Club International etc.
- **Languages Spoken**
Fluency in Marwari, Hindi, Bengali, Nepali, English. Workable Japanese and Punjabi.

1. **When and how did you start your entrepreneurial career? What were the challenges and initial hiccups you faced, if any, and how did you overcome them?**

When we started a few decades back, the almost complete absence of a premium homegrown brand that could package and present the finest Darjeeling teas to customers spurred us to start Golden Tips.



As in every business, the initial years are the most challenging. General ignorance of the trade, lack of awareness of the nuances



of fine teas within the general public, and its consequences on the possible customer base were some of the teething issues. Also, most retail chains were either reluctant to keep our products, or if agreeable, they were ready to keep just a few variants in small quantities. This made little business sense as it would make very little impact in terms of visibility and awareness.

In present times, political agitations, climate change and the pandemic resulting in closure of offline stores and subsequent slump are some of the telling issues the tea industry has been plagued with.

Single minded focus, innovation, an uncompromising pursuit of quality, and providing the “quality teas at the right price” helped Golden Tips overcome the initial hiccups.

2. **What are the different range of teas offered by Golden Tips?**

The expertise of Golden Tips lies in sourcing, sampling, choosing, packaging and marketing the finest single origin teas, tea blends, infusions for a cross section of tea drinkers that too at the correct prices. The company offers an extensive range of 300+ varieties of black, green, white, masala, oolong, herbal, flavoured and matcha teas in different packaging and styles. These teas are primarily from Darjeeling, and many of them also originate from Assam, Sikkim, Nilgiris, Kangra and Japan.



3. What makes the Golden Tips Teas stand out among competitors today?

The company follows the practice of sourcing tea directly from producers as this will ensure that farmers get optimum realisation and workers get better living conditions. This vision of Golden Tips sets us apart. Following the “Direct from Plantation + Auction model,” the expertise of Golden Tips lies in the sourcing, sampling, choosing, packaging and marketing of the finest Single Origin teas, tea blends and infusions for a cross section of tea drinkers. Golden Tips offers an extensive range of teas in terms of varieties and styles.

We at Golden Tips personally taste and select each tea, assisted by fellow colleagues, which are eventually destined to bear the Golden Tips stamp, and which ensures that customers get the perfect cup each time. Our passion to make Darjeeling and other gourmet teas available to connoisseurs in India and worldwide - not only pure and fresh, but also at reasonable prices, and in attractive packaging directly from the source - continues unabated. This personal touch in selecting and processing teas makes Golden Tips stand out among other tea brands.

Our expertise in packaging is another aspect we are extremely proud of. We have a vast and eclectic range of the finest Darjeeling, Assam and other Indian teas packaged in varied styles and packs. Economy packs, handcrafted Gift packs consisting of hand-carved wooden boxes, fancy Brocade and

Velvet cloth bags, Jute boxes, etc are some of the variants offered. We also package commercial packs in Paper Cartons and Tin Cans.

4. Tell us a little about the stores in India and your online presence.

Golden Tips operates primarily through its retail outlets in India. Our 14+ tea boutiques in Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Mirik, Gangtok and Kolkata are very popular amongst tourists and locals, especially during the peak holiday season, festivals and otherwise. The boutiques are a must visit, whether to relish the ambience, avail of the free tasting facility, to see and learn more about the world-renowned Darjeeling Tea, and also to purchase for drinking or gifting.

A wide and attractive range of Tea accessories consisting of tea sets, tea pots, fancy tea strainers, tea cosies, tea timers, etc are also on display and sale at the Boutiques to entice and charm visitors to make their visit a most interesting and memorable one.

Online Presence: Apart from the domestic market, GOLDEN TIPS has dedicated customers across the globe and has shipped teas to almost 90 countries at some point of time in the last several years through its distributorship network, orders from our website (www.goldentipstea.com) & online marketplaces like Amazon and Flipkart.

5. Where do you export? Is there a top destination for you?

We export teas to Japan, Russia, the USA, Taiwan, Mongolia, China etc. GOLDEN TIPS teas have reached about 90+ countries through our distributor network, online sales and various other channels.

6. Help us understand how one can be a tea taster?

Tea tasting is an art that has to be mastered with years of hard work, dedication and



memory. Some characteristics a tea taster must have are as follow:

- Tea tasters need their olfactory senses alive so that they can identify the kinds of fragrances that are released by the tea samples under scrutiny.
- Knowledge of cultivation and manufacturing processes in a tea plantation such as tea kinds, varieties, and grades and again the characters of the resulting liquors.
- They should also be away from certain habits like smoking, alcohol, and tasting strong spicy foods most of which are best avoided.
- Tea tasters should be knowledgeable about the tea market too and keep abreast about changing market forces and should be willing to undertake strenuous work, by way of continuous and perpetual tasting.

Drinking tea alone can also be a meditative experience, but to get the most out of tea, try to drink it with others. It is like reading your syllabus alone or in a classroom where discussions lead to more learning and better results.

8. What are your future plans?

Golden Tips plans to expand its footprint through the brick-and-mortar as well as E-commerce routes by entering into strategic partnerships and widening our reach in export markets through distributor tie-ups overseas. The company is focusing on broadening its presence in physical retail operations across metros of the country by opening niche experiential tea boutiques.

HAPPENINGS



PETER LEGGATT MEMORIAL FLOWER SHOW (DOOARS)

FIRST PRIZE





FROM FINANCE TO FIELDS: MRS. ARADHITA AGARWAL'S JOURNEY IN THE TEA INDUSTRY

In the bustling city of Singapore, amidst the high-rises and trading floors, Aradhita Agarwal found herself navigating the world of sales and trading. Little did she know that her destiny awaited in the serene landscapes of tea gardens, calling her back to her roots in Calcutta. Aradhita's story is not just a transition from finance to the field but a tale of passion, perseverance, and breaking barriers in a traditionally male-dominated industry.

A Heritage Beckons & a leap of faith.

Born and raised in the vibrant city of Calcutta, Aradhita's journey began at La Martinière, Kolkata, where she laid the foundation for her future endeavors. After completing her education at NUS Singapore, she plunged into the realm of finance, working in a sales and trading firm in the heart of Singapore. However, destiny had different plans for her.

Aradhita's grandfather, the owner of tea gardens-Ellenbarrie & Karala Valley Tea Estates, extended an invitation for her to join him in the family business.



The transition from the structured world of finance to the unpredictable field of tea cultivation was not without its challenges. Banking offered a desk job with systematic routines, while the tea gardens demanded hands-on involvement with no fixed timings.

What fueled her confidence to make this radical shift was her deep-rooted love for tea. It wasn't merely a business decision but a passion-driven choice. In 2017, she bid farewell to the corporate world in Singapore and embraced the lush tea gardens back in Calcutta. Stepping into the tea industry, Aradhita embarked on a learning journey that differed vastly from the corporate world. Unlike other industries, the tea business required patience; waiting several months after pruning for the fruits of labor to flourish. In 2021, she took over the reins of the family business entirely, a testament to her commitment and dedication.

The Tea Garden, a Silent Teacher:

Aradhita's education in the intricate art of tea cultivation was not gleaned from textbooks or boardrooms; instead, she found her most





profound lessons nestled within the very heart of the tea gardens she oversees. The tea garden, in all its natural wisdom, emerged as her most profound mentor. In this immersive classroom, practical knowledge, acquired through the tactile engagement of hands-on experience, overshadowed the abstract insights of theory. Aradhita discovered that the tea industry demanded more than just technical expertise—it required a delicate fusion of patience, a profound understanding of the land's nuances, and a humility that allowed the tea bushes to speak their silent language.

Through seasons of pruning and waiting, she learned that the rhythm of the tea garden was not dictated by calendars but by the delicate dance between the elements and the plants. Each leaf, each bud, held a story of its own, and unraveling this narrative required a blend of sensitivity and practical acumen.

In this vibrant tapestry of nature and cultivation, she unearthed the essence of her role. The tea gardens were not just a source of livelihood; they were repositories of timeless wisdom, patiently waiting to be decoded.

A Woman in a Man's World:

Aradhita's foray into the tea industry in 2018 wasn't without its challenges. Stepping into a domain entrenched in a deeply ingrained male-dominated culture, she encountered initial resistance, grappling with the dual barriers of age and gender. Adapting to a world where tradition often overshadowed change, Aradhita faced the daunting task of making her mark.

Fully assuming control, Aradhita encountered a fresh set of hurdles. Her authority was questioned, and her voice was often drowned out in a chorus of skepticism. As the sole woman at the helm, her youth added an extra layer of skepticism from her team. However, she approached these challenges with a weapon not often associated with power—humility. She

found solace in humility, understanding that arrogance, especially from a woman, could be detrimental in an industry rooted in tradition. With steadfast determination, she navigated through the skepticism, winning over her team not through force but through fostering a sense of respect and understanding.

Aradhita's journey is a testament to the transformative power of leadership guided by humility. Over time, as her team began to witness the sincerity of her efforts and the depth of her knowledge, the once hesitant environment transformed into a harmonious collective. The barriers that once stood tall crumbled, and today, she proudly stands at the forefront,

leading a content and cohesive team. When discussing tea trends, Aradhita sheds light on the undervalued qualities of black CTC tea, comparing its antioxidant content to that of green tea. Her insights reflect not only her business acumen but also her passion for the beverage.

Life Beyond Tea:

Outside of the tea gardens, she follows a systematic routine, scheduling not only office meetings but also personal commitments. Her dedication to work is evident, and she spends most of her time ensuring the success of her tea business.

Beyond her professional life, Aradhita finds joy in running and reading books. She humorously recalls an incident from her early days in the tea gardens when she got a tan, causing her grandmother to worry about her marriage prospects—a moment that now elicits laughter.

Aradhita's story is not just about running a successful tea business; it's about resilience, adaptability, and pursuing one's true passion. As she continues to break barriers in the tea industry, Mrs. Aradhita Agarwal stands as an inspiring figure, proving that with dedication and love for what you do, any field can be conquered.

Ena Bandyopadhyay
Tea Time, Siliguri

SHAH BROTHERS

Ms. Kinjal Shah



SHAH BROTHERS is one of the leading tea merchants and exporters and one of the largest stockists of Indian tea. The company is also certified as a “Double Star Export House” by the Government of India.

Ms. Kinjal Shah is the fourth generation member of this family-owned business.

1. **What evoked your interest in the business of tea? Was it only your family legacy?**

We have been in the business of Tea for 4 generations and enjoy a family legacy in TEA. Shah Brothers Tea & Industries Limited is one of the leading exporters of Indian Tea, with over 75 years of experience in Tasting & Blending teas of various qualities, suitable for different countries; well known for its blends of teas made with utmost care, keeping their customer’s palates and preferences in mind.

Being a traditional, family-owned enterprise, we are proud of the reputation we have built for ourselves. Years of experience, expertise, hard work,

dedicated teams, global vision and long-standing relationships with our buyers have enabled us to have a firm foothold in the national and international markets.

2. **Who is your business role model?**

Our Founder Chairman, Mr. S. B. Shah.

3. **What are your aspirations for your Company?**

Our aim is to reach various markets across the world and offer them the quality as per their taste and acceptability. Our staunch commitment to quality and long-term relationships with our discerning customers has enabled us to stand tall in the export scenario.



4. What are the opportunities for the industry?

Sustained and regular efforts to maintain quality to be able to create a larger market share in various countries across the world.

5. What do you perceive as threats to the Industry?

Pesticide residue as the world is getting conscious plus the rise in the cost of production making Exports less viable.

6. What do you see as opportunities for your Company?

Steady growth with multi-fold markets demanding different variants of TEA.

When it comes to customer satisfaction, we understand that when our customer invests in our teas, they invest in their name and reputation as well. Therefore, we make it our responsibility to ensure that all our client requirements are met in terms of quality, quantity, pricing and on-time delivery. It is our constant endeavour to present them the best of our products and services.

7. Do you have any of your brand?

We have our own brand named 'My Cup of Tea' which has a huge and varied range of packed teas. The 'My Cup of Tea' product range is a collection of the finest teas from the best tea gardens in India. The range includes different kinds of

teas, specialty teas, flavoured teas, herbal blends, wellness teas, gift packs etc.

We also have our brand 'KING' with an international presence and we also do private labelling for many countries across the world.

8. In general, do you see an interest among young entrepreneurs in tea?

The family legacy is to be carried on and the young entrepreneurs have to be cultivated accordingly.

9. What are your hobbies, interests and passions outside of tea?

Playing Golf, Cricket and Tennis.

10. What are the new avenues that have opened up for the new generation in the tea industry in India?

Tea fused with variants like flavoured Tea/ Fruity Teas/Spice Teas etc.

11. How would you compare the new leaders in tea as compared to the previous ones?

World today has changed its way of business and we have to keep up with the pace and reaching out directly to untapped markets to enhance the scope of reach of Indian Tea.



Vishal Kumar
M.K. Jokai Agri Plantations Pvt. Ltd.



One Chai, Please": Bill Gates Enjoys Tea Made By Dolly Chaiwala

Bill Gates collaborate with the Nagpur's famous Dolly Chaiwala is the most unexpected collaboratio

TEA TIME



PERSONALITY



BAL KISHAN PODDAR

B. K. Trading Co.

B. K. PODDAR & SONS * INDERSONS

ASHSIH ENTERPRISES * KADAMBRI TEAS

Guwahati

Forty-eight years down and many more to go, today I thought of penning down my journey as an entrepreneur. I believe patience is very essential for setting up a successful business and a plan should never be hurried. I began my journey in 1975 at Kesrisinghpur, Sriganganagar, Rajasthan. Ganganagar is my hometown and the place where I learned the basic structure of business from our family business. Us was a family business of Tea. We used to test Teas, select the best Teas, and sell to other villages and towns nearby. Along with my studies I used to help my brothers with account management, sales and marketing etc. We also settled our business at Kolkata, Siliguri and Guwahati and started auction buying in 1978. In 1984 and 1985 I visited Guwahati for the first time and attended the manual auction. For some time, I worked in Punjab and Siliguri also. I gained a lot of practical experience during these years.

In 2004, I decided to begin my journey as an Auction Buyer at Guwahati and started my firm B.K.Trading Co. The journey was not easy, I worked very hard throughout the years. My

hard work gradually made the path of success for me. Today I have five firms B. K. TRADING CO., B. K. PODDAR & SONS, INDERSONS, ASHSIH ENTERPRISES in Guwahati and a branch of INDERSONS at Siliguri. I also started my Tea brand “KADAMBRI TEAS” in 2016, which is running successfully in both offline and online marketing. My daughter-in-law Mrs. Taruna Poddar handles the complete process of online marketing on websites like Amazon, Flipkart and Shopify.

I loved to work in a technologically updated way. My son, Mr. Ashish Poddar who is a senior product manager at Microsoft helped me very much in adopting new technologies. I provide a friendly working environment for my office employees, as I believe that happy and satisfied employees will give their hundred percent for my business.

At the age of 69, I still think that I am a newbie in this Tea Business, as I always try to learn something new to step forward on the professional ladder.

And as Robert Frost said, “I have miles to go before I sleep”...!!!



Tech Source Solutions

Our Solutions for Water and Soil Conservation

Say goodbye to over-watering or under-watering with our revolutionary Soil Moisture Indicator (SMI).

SMI is an irrigation scheduling tool that helps optimize the timing and amount of water applied to crops or landscapes ensuring your plants receive the perfect amount of hydration every time.

Soil Organic Carbon Detection Kit

In any soil, organic carbon is a true indicator of the soil health. It is proven fact that soil having sufficient organic carbon will definitely have proper content of other major elements like Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Potassium. Use our SOCD Kit to track the status of your soil before, after or during any project/season. Organic Carbon Kit Features.



Approved and Licenced by



Features of Soil Organic Carbon Detection Kit

- ☐ User-Friendly
- ☐ Quick and Reliable Results within 20 minutes.
- ☐ Evaluates the impact of organic carbon amendments supplemented periodically.
- ☐ Guidance for Organic Manure Addition.
- ☐ Cost-Effective



Features of Soil Moisture Indicator

- ☐ Indicates soil moisture level with different coloured LEDs.
- ☐ Instant indication of soil moisture status for up to 30cm.
- ☐ Saves water, electricity and time.
- ☐ Easy to use portable and suitable for different types of soil.

Approved and Licenced by



Highly recommended for farmers, Tea Gardens, state and Central govt Agri projects, Agri- Institutes, KVK's, ICAR Labs, Pvt organisations and other organisations working towards Soil and Water conservation.

Biswambar Prasad Kedia



by Prafull Goradia



I came into a close acquaintance—Biswambar Prasad Kedia—when J. Thomas allotted me the call of Jayshree Tea & Industries, which had by then become a substantial chain of tea gardens. Kedia was the president and chief executive of the organization. Its beginnings were unusual; it was a small garden called Lohagarh in what is called the Terai region of the Darjeeling district. It had been acquired by a relation of the Birla family which was based in Mumbai.

The Bombay family could not manage this tea estate from all that distance. When they were at the end of their tether, the head of the family

**Kedia spoke only Hindi,
generally wore only
dhotis and kurtas.**

more or less fell at Mr. Birla's feet and requested that he kindly take it over at any price he liked. The Birlas had no choice. Having agreed to take over the garden, the question was how to manage

it. Until then, the Birlas had never owned or managed a garden.

When they could think of no officer in their organization who could be spared, someone in their office suggested the name of Kedia, who had joined the Birlas as a sarkar, had performed efficiently and deserved a promotion. Thus, the Birlas took charge of Lohagarh, and Kedia became the commander of the garden. He took his assignment seriously and soon started making profits.

In the early due course, more gardens were purchased in both north and south India. World War II had ended, and the prospective circumstances appeared predictable. Kedia spoke only Hindi, generally wore only dhotis and kurtas and had very little exposure to the society of tea producers. This was possibly a blessing in disguise because it enabled him to focus on work and work alone. By the time I came in contact with him, he had enjoyed twenty years of focus and had become a master of managing tea gardens. Yet, the tea trade was dominated by an anglicized culture; the tea auctioneers—many



of them — were from elite schools like Doon School and Mayo College and wore well-tailored suits, spoke English fluently, but could not relate to Hindi-speaking people easily. The auctioneers who came to call on Kedia every week would sit down and quickly come to the point.

“Sir! Your selling instructions for the next auction?” Kedia would smile back and ask in Hindi: “*Do we not pay you brokerage? How to sell the tea is your job*”. The embarrassed auctioneer would sheepishly say, “Of course, sir,” and walk away. In sharp contrast, I was interested in longish conversations with him to learn more about tea and felt no embarrassment whether I spoke Hindi correctly or otherwise. I had read two stories by the famous Hindi writer Premchand. One of them was “*Bade Ghar ki Beti*.”

Finding that I was not uncomfortable in his presence, unlike many others, Kedia too would relax. Every time a new subject happened to be raised, he would seize the opportunity to deliver a 15-minute diatribe on it.

Once, his export manager came into his room and asked whether he should dispatch the goods. The bank said the letter of credit had been received but not yet in writing; the steamer was leaving that afternoon. Kedia did not answer, but pressed the desk bell. When the peon, Gobindo, arrived, he asked him what his salary was. “Rs. 400” was the answer. Kedia then turned to the export manager and asked him if his salary was “Rs.1,400,” came the reply. Kedia looked sharply at the manager and asked him, “Why shouldn’t the company reduce your salary to somewhere near Gobindo’s? He doesn’t decide, and you can’t decide. Go and make your own decisions and don’t come again for such silly matters”.

One day, on one of my calls, Kedia surprised me by asking me why I had not brought my tea auction catalogue. Actually, I had, but it was resting on my lap and not in his view. As soon as I placed it on his desk, he asked what my selling policy would be. “Sell, sell and sell,” was my reply. Kedia reacted by asking, “Do you think we have

produced these teas free of cost?” “Of course not,” I said, “Only, I would like to hedge by selling these teas against all your future production. You have tea in the next catalogue as well and more in the warehouse. Many tons are coming, laden on the trucks from Assam; the bins in the gardens are full of tea and there are leaf on the bushes ready to be plucked. Therefore, if I make a mistake by selling your teas and the prices go up in the future, all your unsold teas will gain in value. On the other hand, if we don’t sell the catalogued teas now and the market declines, all the teas would lose value,” Kedia’s quiet answer was, “*Theek hai*.”

On yet another day, when I was sitting with Kedia, one of his garden managers, Mishra, had arrived from Assam, so the peon said. Kedia summoned him inside and I signalled to leave, but Kedia motioned for me to keep sitting. After a sedate start, the boss thundered at Mishra, as the profits from the gardens were only Rs. 12 lakhs per annum. According to their company’s average, profits should have been Rs. 20 lakh. He concluded by saying, “Become alert, Mishra; or else, you will fail”.

After Mishra had exited the room, Kedia asked me the cost of the company vis-à-vis that manager.

Biswambar Prasad Kedia was overall the best tea producer the industry came out with.

I didn’t have a clue at all about this question. After a minute, Kedia came out with the answer, “*Nearly Rs.8 lakh a year*.” I nearly fell out of my chair. This was nearly sixty years ago, when a lakh of rupees a year was considered a good salary. Kedia then explained that the manager should have made a profit of Rs. 20 lakhs, whereas he has made only Rs. 8 lakhs. That was his cost to the company. His pay and perks were of little consequence on this scale.



TEA TIME

When it came to the management of tea, Kedia's keenest insistence was that the crop of a garden must increase every year. To the extent of bringing down the cost per kilogram, it would be controlled by the previous year's level. His reasoning was that inflation was inevitable, year after year. Moreover, the prices of sale in bulk were unpredictable and quite often went down instead of going up. The least therefore, the producer could do, was to keep his cost of production down.

To an extent, in a tea garden situation, this was possible, because at least half the costs were in terms of overhead. When, therefore, the producer divides the expenditure on overheads by the number of kilograms produced, and the kilograms are more, the cost per kilo would be controlled.

This strategy is much more difficult to implement. The reason is, raw materials and inputs are unpredictable, and costs therefore, are likely to go up with inflation. The element of overhead is only about 15-20 percent and not half. The second point Kedia insisted on is a continual search for innovation. In the old days, there used to be a maximum of 5,000 bushes per acre; today, we try to do at least 10,000 bushes when we plant a new section. There are many who dream of even 50,000 bushes per acre.

The third point to enter hot debate under Kedia's roof had been the topic of perennial plucking and extended pruning. His fundamental point was; Why are Sri Lanka and South India able to pluck bushes all year round, in other words, perennially? The simple answer was that even in the height of winter, the south enabled much longer exposure to photosynthesis, which kept the bush flushing. In the north Indian winter, there is virtually very little photosynthesis.

As a result, the bushes did not really flush and no tea was produced, until spring arrived. Kedia called his senior planter from his gardens in south India to come and study what could have been done in the north. A number of experiments

were launched, and the tentative conclusion was that their company should begin with their southernmost estates in Assam, which were in the Cachar district. Sections of tea bushes were left, i.e., unpruned altogether. Initially, it was not realized that plucking would also have to be altered. The early leaf would have to be plucked very fine.

Planters of other companies were possibly envious that something revolutionary would emerge from this new experiment. Some of them did their best to condemn the experiment by writing long letters and articles, questioning how one could fight nature. In any case, during January and February, Kedia's gardens produced leather rather than tea.

As an outsider, what impressed me was the argument as follows: A tea bush has a certain capability of producing nitrogenous matter reflected in the leaf. So far, in northern India, pruning is practiced as soon as the winter digs in. In this context, pruning meant cutting across all the leaves lying on the bush, half an inch above the level of exactly the previous year. In the bargain, a significant amount of substance from the bush was lost. Kedia's attempt was to retain that substance within the bush and produce a higher quantity of tea over the years.

My mind was also diverted to the idea, without any real knowledge, of trying ultraviolet rays, if possible, as a substitute for photosynthesis. Or perhaps introduce heat to offset the cold winter. I wanted to try out these ideas in my subsequent assignment with James Warren and the Duncan Brothers but didn't have the leisure to do so. Nevertheless, I learnt a great deal from Kedia about producing tea. If I were to put it all down on paper, it would result in a book by itself. Therefore, I would conclude by saying that in the post-WWII era, Biswambar Prasad Kedia was overall the best tea producer the industry came out with. Unfortunately, he died prematurely as well as tragically, as well as remained an unsung hero.



Marshall-Fowler
Engineers in Passion

www.marshallfowler.com

50
Years
Experience
Engineered in Passion

We are a company with strong roots dating from the 1890's in the United Kingdom, started by the Marshall family. Back then the company established an enviable reputation, supplying agricultural machinery and steam engines. The product offerings from the company have undergone a sea change with time and today it offers state of the art equipments for CTC, Orthodox and Green Tea manufacture which save on energy, reduce labour dependency and deliver optimal performance, consistently.

CTC Tea

A few from amongst the wide range of CTC process line equipments offered by us are as follows:



Green Leaf Silber



Chemical Withering



Physical Withering



Vibroscreen



Roller Vane



CTC



CTD



Dryer



Online Weigher



Fiber Extractor



Automatic Milling



Automatic Chasing

Marshall Fowler Engineers range of CTC Tea processing machineries are engineered to meet the ever increasing demand for fuel and energy saving equipment. The machinery offered also reduce labour cost and ensure consistency in quality.

Marshall-Fowler Engineers India(P) Limited
S.F.69/1,Avy Layout, Sidero Industrial Estate Post, Coimbatore -641021.
India. Phone : +91-7200086054 / 86053
E-mail : Indoep@mfeindia.com

CONTROVERSY

To add Salt or not, that is the question.

While in India, particularly amongst the rural populace, it is an age old practice to add a pinch of salt to their tea liquor, which is drunk without milk or sugar. Recently, the American scientists dictum that adding salt adds to the taste has led to some interesting banter across the Atlantic.

According to US chemistry professor Michelle Francl, adding a pinch of salt to tea can reduce bitterness. The sodium ions in salt block the chemical mechanism that makes tea taste bitter. However, you should only add enough salt so that it's undetectable. She has claimed to have found the secret to making the perfect cup of tea - and it includes adding a pinch of salt. Professor Michelle Francl, of Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania, conducted her own research, combining a search of existing studies and using her teapots at home to discover the chemical secrets of tea. From her findings, she claims that people should use a "short and stout mug", and opt for leaves over teabags. In terms of the milk, she suggests tea drinkers use warm milk to "reduce the chance of curdling." Her most

unusual suggestion, though, is to add a pinch of salt to the brew to "reduce the bitterness." The pinch of salt is advice, she claims, that dates back to the eighth century; the chemistry research is much more recent. She said, "It turns out that a tiny amount of salt, not enough to even taste, blocks the perception of bitterness. Her newly published book "Steeped: The Chemistry of Tea" has been published by the Royal Society of Chemistry and includes tips on how to brew a better cup. Dr. Francl advises not to use the microwave to heat the water, as she says it leads to the formation of something called tea scum.



RECIPE

- ❑ “The perfect cup of tea is really made with loose tea leaves in hot water [boiling if you’re making black tea].
- ❑ Pre-warm the pot.
- ❑ “Use a big tea basket or infuser, or better yet, just put the tea leaves naked into your pot.
- ❑ “Agitate the tea basket or stir the leaves [or if you’re making tea the way most people do with the teabag, don’t get up and down]. Pour and enjoy.”



SO HERE’S MY
COUNTERATTACK FOR
A PERFECT BRITISH (OR
IRISH) CUPPA:

- Warm the pot (or mug, but you get second helpings out of a pot) by filling it with hot water.
- Boil the kettle again.
- Meanwhile, put a heaped teaspoon of loose leaf (I like Scottish or Irish breakfast blends for their high Assam content) or one teabag per person into the pot or mug, adding an extra spoonful of loose leaf to the pot (but no extra bag) and place this nearby.
- Fill with boiling water and leave to brew for four to five minutes, then remove the leaves or bag, pour if necessary.
- Add milk (preferably whole) to taste; I like the colour of wet sand.
- Clasp the cup with both hands and savor five minutes of pure comfort.

George Orwell, who said in his own 11-point guide to making the perfect cup that “tea is meant to be bitter, just as beer is meant to be bitter,” argued that adding sugar to disguise this aspect of it was quite as ridiculous as seasoning it with pepper or salt.

Orwell favoured Indian or Sri Lankan black tea: “China tea has virtues that are not to be despised nowadays — it is economical, and one can drink it without milk — but there is not much stimulation in it,” wrote Orwell. “One does not feel wiser, braver or more optimistic after drinking it. Anyone who has used that comforting phrase ‘a nice cup of tea’ invariably means Indian tea.”

No salt, please; we’re British. How to make the perfect cup of tea Reports of Dr. Franc’s study even prompted a lighthearted statement from the United States Embassy in London, which said it wanted to “ensure the good people of the UK that the unthinkable notion of adding salt to Britain’s national drink is not official United States policy.” The statement added, “Let us unite in our steeped solidarity and show the world that when it comes to tea, we stand as one.

“The US Embassy will continue to make tea in the proper way — by microwaving it.

TEA TIME

OUTRAGEOUS' TEA RECIPE INVOLVING PINCH OF SALT DRAWS A US EMBASSY COMMENT

An American chemist inspires a moment of diplomatic levity with controversial brewing suggestions.

Amelia Hill writing for the Guardian.

The special relationship between two G7 countries has possibly been imperilled by an American scientist's claim that Britain's favoured brew requires a pinch of salt.

The international incident was triggered when a scientist from the US claimed to have found the recipe for a perfect cuppa. The secret, according to Michelle Francl, a professor of chemistry at Bryn Mawr College, is a pinch of salt – an energetic squeezing of the teabag.

“You get some awful cups of tea in the US. People here often use lukewarm water straight from a tap. It's horrific,” said Francl, who analysed research papers and ancient texts dating back more than 1,000 years, documenting these experiments in her new book, *Steeped: The Chemistry of Tea*.



Suggesting that the claim itself needs to be taken with a large pinch of salt, the US embassy conceded that the controversial recipe for a perfect cup of tea had “landed our special bond with the United Kingdom in hot water.”

Writing on X, the embassy said that because tea is “the elixir of camaraderie, a sacred bond that unites our nations, we cannot stand idly by as such an outrageous proposal threatens the very foundation of our special relationship.”

The post solemnly reassured a horrified country: “We want to ensure the good people of the UK that the unthinkable notion of adding salt to Britain's national drink is not official United States policy. And never will be.”

However, the post has nevertheless left anxious Britons in a state of trepidation. Referring to another nuclear moment in the nations' relationship — when an American woman claimed on TikTok that tea could be made in a microwave — the post ended with the solemn promise: “The US embassy will continue to make tea in the proper way — by microwaving it.” Suggesting that the claim itself needs to be taken with a large pinch of salt, the US embassy conceded that the controversial recipe for a perfect cup of tea had “landed our special bond with the United Kingdom in hot water”.



Tea Time Tea & Ayurveda



All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) to research the health benefits of Tea and explore Ayurvedic applications

- MoU signed between AIIA and Andrew Yule Group in the presence of Union Minister, Sarbananda Sonowal.
- Andrew Yule & Company Ltd. (AYCL), a Govt. of India enterprise, has Seven tea estates in Assam
- Tourism in Assam is set to boom with the healing touch of Ayurveda & Yoga in the pristine lap of Tea Gardens: Sarbananda Sonowal.
- Collaboration set to unroll the possibility of Assam becoming a new destination of healing tourism in the Southeast Asian region: Sonowal.

A historic memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between the All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), India's leading institution in Ayurveda, and The Andrew Yule Group, a government of India enterprise, in the presence of the Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways and Ayush Sarbananda Sonowal in New Delhi today. The MoU is aimed at undertaking research in the tea estates of AYCL and discovering the various health benefits of tea, including exploring possibilities for possible applications in the Ayurvedic line of medication and treatments.

As per the agreement, the expert team from AIIA tea samples from various tea estates of AYCL which will be collected for undertaking necessary lab research. Further to this, the AIIA will perform a detailed analysis of various teas as provided by AYCL from the perspective

of Ayurveda and its benefits for human health. AIIA to carry out experiments on tea for its health. Ayurvedic importance and usage in Ayurvedic medicines, cosmetics, etc. It is to be noted that AYCL has seven tea estates in Assam, including one in Khowang, the flagship garden of the company, in Dibrugarh district: Hoolungooree tea estate in Jorhat district: Tingkhong tea estate in Dibrugarh district: Basmatia tea estate in Dibrugarh, Rajgarh tea estate in Dibrugarh district: Desam tea estate in Dibrugarh district and Murphulani tea estate in Golaghat district.

Both AIIA and AYCL agreed to work on examining the health benefits of tea and its importance for humans from Ayurvedic perspective. AIIA may provide technical recommendations to change the compositions and processes to enhance health benefits and utility.

Adding further, the Union Minister, Sarbananda Sonowal said, "Tea gardens have a mesmerising effect by rejuvenating the health and mind of any individual. With this collaboration, we are unrolling the possibility of booming tourism industry in Assam with the healing touch of Ayurveda and Yoga in the pristine lap of Tea Gardens. The vision of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi is to energise the possibilities of Assam and enable the growth engine of India to become an Atmanirbhar nation by 2047. Tea, with its numerous commercial viability and soothing effect, is set to draw strength from Ayurveda, our rich heritage, and provide a platform for Assam towards becoming a new destination of healing tourism in the Southeast Asian region."



ASSAM: TCS Launches A New App to Revolutionize Tea Industry

The Tata Consultancy Services has developed an e-plantation application, Digital Farming Initiative (DFI) mobile app, for reporting pest disease and other events in real-time.

GUWAHATI: Managing a large tea estate is a daunting task as tea planters face numerous challenges of different sorts, especially now more than ever.

It becomes very difficult for managers on large estates to keep a daily track of all the major operations carried out in the lush green gardens. Be it the timely spraying of pesticides or the correct intervals for plucking or harvesting in a proper way, it is not easy to keep a daily check on these crucial activities.

However, tea planters have reasons to rejoice as Tata Consultancy Services has developed an e-plantation application, the Digital Farming Initiative (DFI) mobile app, for reporting pest disease and other events in real-time.

In what could pan out to be a revolutionary move, seven tea estates in Assam the under Amalgamated Plantations Private Limited

(APPL), have started using the mobile app.

Notably, APPL, a subsidiary of Tata, has 24 gardens spread across Assam and the Dooars.

A senior official from APPL revealed that the application provides a digital platform for various aspects of tea garden operations.

The official added that initially, only the plucking and spraying activities were captured digitally for daily work scheduling, using the TCS-developed DFI mobile app for detecting deadly pest diseases and other events.

The official concluded by saying that all the other field activities have now been on-boarded on the e-plantation platform.





The Indian School of Tea

The Indian School of Tea is the first of its kind educational and skill enhancement institution dedicated to comprehensive training and certification of individuals in the realm of Indian tea. The Indian School of Tea offers specialized programs on various aspects of tea, its art, culture and business. It is a premier hub for advancing expertise and proficiency in Indian tea cultivation, production, appreciation, and marketing.



breadth and depth of the industry and its produce, and in the last two hundred years, we have not produced even one tea master of international repute!

Recognizing the evolving preferences of Indian and global tea consumers, shifting from traditional “kadak chai or chai latte” to specialty and gourmet teas, the Indian Tea School endeavors to bridge this knowledge gap by providing essential training to both tea professionals and consumers – in India and globally. By dispelling misconceptions and fostering a deeper understanding of Indian tea, the school aims to elevate its global recognition and value and in the process, offer a skillset to the youths of this country towards a brand new, highly paid, global career.

The necessity for the Indian School of Tea, or IST, arises from India’s prominent position as the leading global supplier of tea, coupled with its rich heritage as one of the most well-known tea-producing nations. Despite this esteemed standing for almost two centuries, Indian tea often encounters misconceptions and underestimations, particularly in comparison to counterparts from countries like China or even Sri Lanka. This discrepancy stems from limited awareness of the diverse range of Indian orthodox, specialty, and other teas, with many associating Indian tea solely with the ubiquitous “chai” beverage.

Remarkably, India lacks formalized tea training institutes offering programs that encompass the

The Indian School of Tea’s offerings are multifaceted, serving as a comprehensive learning platform for global tea “people” – enthusiasts, buyers, consumers, influencers, entrepreneurs, and industry professionals. It serves as a central repository of knowledge on Indian tea, facilitating certified courses, workshops, and seminars on tea appreciation and tasting, brewing and steeping and food pairing and presentation, blending and



TEA TIME

mixology, history and business, and much more. IST aims to function as a training ground for aspiring tea experts and tea sommeliers, while also catering to the needs of the tea-based global hospitality industry, such as tea rooms and luxury hotels.

As the founder of the Indian School of Tea (IST), I am proud to lead an institution poised to redefine the landscape of the tea industry, both in India and globally. IST embodies my vision of fostering talent, nurturing expertise, and instilling a profound appreciation for India's rich tea heritage.

At IST, we have assembled a team of exceptional Indian and international faculty members, along with senior industry leaders who serve as guest lecturers. Their collective wisdom and experience ensure that our students receive the highest quality education and training.

Guided by an esteemed advisory board comprised of industry luminaries, our programs are designed to be innovative, comprehensive, and tailored to meet the evolving needs of the tea sector. From immersive factory and garden visits to online courses, we offer diverse programs to cater to students' interests and aspirations.

In essence, the launch of IST represents a significant step forward in realizing a long-standing vision of empowering individuals, elevating standards, and driving transformation in the tea industry. With a focus on education, training, and empowerment, IST promises to unlock new horizons, enrich lives, and shape the future of tea for generations to come.

We need your support.

Please visit: www.indianshooloftea.com

GENNEX SERVICES Siliguri

For quick and efficient trade sampling

Rely on us

Trade samplers for

CONTEMPORAY BROKERS



25th Session of FAO Intergovernmental Group on Tea Guwahati, India

31st January-2nd February, 2024



The FAO Intergovernmental Group (IGG) on Tea represents a forum for intergovernmental consultation and exchange on trends in production, consumption, trade and prices of tea, including regular appraisals of the global market situation and short-term outlook. The Group, under the FAO of the United Nations, considers changes in national policies and examines their international effects as they pertain to current and prospective markets.

The 25th session of the FAO IGG was held in the Hotel Radisson Blu, Guwahati, from 31st January to 2nd February, 2024. Delegates from 25 countries participated in the session, which was

held for the first time in Assam. TRA facilitated the Tea Board of India to organize the session at Guwahati.

There are six working groups under the FAO IGG on tea and one task force on tea statistics. The gist of the discussion in the different groups is as follows:

1. Working Group on Organic Tea: Chair, INDIA
2. Working Group on Small Holders: Chair, INDONESIA
3. Working Group on Climate Change: Chair, INDIA

TEA TIME

4. Working Group on Tea Trade and Quality: Chair, SRI LANKA
5. Working Group on Tea Promotion: Chair, CHINA
6. Working group on MRL: Chair, INDIA & UK
7. Working Group on Tea & Health: Chair, Canada & USA
8. Task Force on Projections and Statistics

Mr. El Mamoun, Secretary of the FAO IGG on Tea, made a presentation on the international tea market and medium-term outlook projection, salient points of which are as follows:

- Over the past four years, the global commodity market has been dominated by an increasing number of risks and uncertainties — geopolitical conflicts, climate change, pests and diseases and economic shocks. In terms of price development, after an increase of 14% in 2022, tea prices declined by 9% in 2023.
- The global economy is slowing down. Inflation is reaching its peak. Signs of global fragmentation.
- International tea trade flow (2000 vs 2020). (Asia and Kenya expanded exports and imports).

- While export concentration has gone up, import concentration remains the same.
- The FAO tea composite price declined by 9.2% in 2023 due to greater availability and slower demand.
- The war in Ukraine, geopolitical tension and slowdown in the global economy have put further pressure on the prices of all commodities, including tea.
- Diversification and value addition are key for market expansion for raising returns of tea producers and processors and ensuring the long-term performance of the tea sector.
- World tea production and crop area have gone up.
- World tea exports have gone up slightly. (2013 vs 2023)
- Area under tea has increased by 2.3% per year since 2013.
- Tea yield registered a slight increase of 0.8% over the last decade, although witnessing unstable trends.
- Climate change is threatening the livelihood of farmers.
- Demand for tea is influenced by many factors, including price, income and demographics.





- Tea consumption remained strong over the past decade.
- Demand for specialty teas has surged in recent years, creating new markets.
- The group is invited to provide feedback on the methodology and data requirements.
- Discuss the way forward and the next steps, taking into consideration data and resource limitation.
- Take note of the ongoing efforts to provide a first assessment of the carbon footprint of the tea value chain.
- Any methodology has to be validated.
- At the retail or wholesale level, carbon footprint data is not available.

Medium term outlook:

- Over the medium term, the tea market is expected to grow.
- The black tea market is foreseen to recover from the current setbacks but at a slower pace.
- Innovation and premiumization are key to increasing demand for tea and attracting new segments of consumers.
- The green tea market is anticipated to rise at a faster rate.



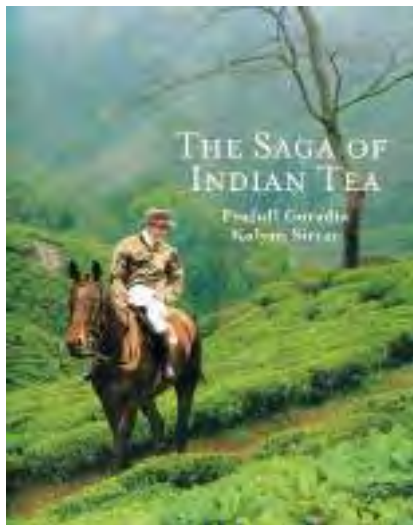
Conclusion:

- The sector needs to achieve greater sustainability.
- Greater efforts at expanding demand.
- Innovation and diversification into other market segments.
- The health benefits of tea consumption should be propagated more extensively in promotion consumption.
- Cooperation is needed to harmonize market requirements and reduce compliance costs.
- Public intervention aimed at supporting and expanding external economies of scale.

Calcutta Trade



Old Court House today



The first auction in Calcutta was held on December 27, 1861 and was conducted by Mackenzie and Lyall under the supervision of a broking firm called R.Thomas and Company.

The beginning of the Calcutta trade dates back to 1834, with the shipment of the first consignment of a produce called Muttak from Calcutta to the United Kingdom. Muttak, grown in the upper Assam region under the supervision of some Chinese manufacturers, was packed in about a dozen soldered tin boxes encased in wood to avoid contamination during the long sea voyage. Calcutta, in due course, emerged as the world's largest tea trading centre due to its close proximity to the sea routes used for overseas trade. The great city stood near the largest producing districts in the country located in the north-eastern region. It already had a well-developed commercial and financial infrastructure and the second consignment of 171 chests was shipped to London in 1841. Thereafter, for the first twenty-five years, a major portion of the country's production was sent to London from this city. The first auction in Calcutta was held on December 27, 1861 and was conducted by Mackenzie and Lyall under the supervision of a broking firm called R.Thomas and Company. Records show that different varieties, which were placed in the first auction, included two kinds of Pekoe, Souchong and Congo of Cachar and some produce from

other plantations. While flowery Pekoe sold at two anna and two pie per pound, the other varieties fetched prices between one anna five pie and one anna four pies per pound. Souchong was sold at one anna and four pie.

The second auction was conducted by W. Moran and Company on February 19, 1862, when 53 lots of leaf and dust comprising 234 chests from Darjeeling and Kurseong Tea and Coffee Company were sold. This auction was held

safeguard the interests of all parties involved in the trade. The printing of rules on the auction catalogue became mandatory and this was first circulated among the buyers during the second auction in 1862. One such rule was the payment of one anna per pound for the total



Old Court House Street in 1876

at the godown of Wood, Ollife and Company and was followed by the third one at the Old Mint Mart on February 25, 1862, where Moran and Company, on behalf of The Assam Company and Jorehaut Tea Company, disposed of 751 chests. The fourth auction was also conducted by Messrs. R. Thomas and Company after one month at the New Mart, where 100 lots comprising 462 chests were sold. The New Mart became a regular venue for the auctions.

During the first decade of auctions, the produce would come to Calcutta from different gardens owned by about 30 British companies, resulting in an enhanced volume of business and auction frequency. The commodity was sold under the name of the companies, but occasionally under the name of the owner or planter. It was not necessary to mention the names of gardens in the auction catalogue.

As the number of companies increased, the auctioneers in Calcutta felt the need to formulate certain rules for sale to

In 1866, an organisation called the Calcutta Tea Brokers' Association was founded and rules for auctions, including payment of brokers' commission and various other service charges by the bidders, were refined and prescribed. During this period, the traders attempted to give the Calcutta auctions an institutional shape, for business promotion and protection of their interests.

TEA TIME

quantity of the produce of the bidders' choice in advance, before bidding. From the third auction, the amount of advance was reduced to half an anna per pound.

Meanwhile, there were developments in the Calcutta trade. In 1866, an organisation called the Calcutta Tea Brokers' Association was founded and rules for auctions, including payment of brokers' commissions and various other service charges by the bidders, were refined and prescribed. During this period, the traders attempted to give the Calcutta auctions an institutional shape for business promotion and protection of their interests. In 1881, the producers formed an association of their own called the Indian Tea Association (ITA), which worked closely with the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry. This was followed by the formation of the Calcutta Tea Traders' Association (CTTA) in 1886. The primary objective of the CTTA was to promote trade and protect the interests of buyers and sellers at the Calcutta market. The CTTA took charge of the auctions in 1887 and continued to function under the umbrella of the Bengal Chamber

of Commerce and Industry, increasing its membership strength from 40 in 1886 to 1,360 in 1993. The Calcutta Tea Brokers' Association (CTBA), which organised auctions prior to the CTTA's taking over the responsibility, continued to function till World War II. The CTBA was dissolved in 1947.

There were some additions and alterations to the brokers' list on the Calcutta market. R. Thomas and Company became J. Thomas and Company after the changeover of ownership from Robert Thomas to his brother John Thomas. W. Moran and Company, which entered the broking business in 1862, left the business after a brief spell. In 1877, Carritt Moran and Company appeared on the scene. One WS Cresswell started a broking business in his own name and later formed Cresswell and Company, which, after a century's successful work, went bankrupt in 1979. Another broking firm, A.W. Figgis and Company, started its operations around 1888 and continued functioning until 2002. These four broking firms dominated the Calcutta auctions until Indian companies appeared on the scene after Independence in 1947.



The Assam government is contemplating the reclassification of tea garden lands for industrial use. In a bold move aimed at fortifying Assam's industrial foundation, the state government is considering a pivotal shift in land usage regulations, specifically targeting tea garden lands for potential reclassification

NEWS

to facilitate industrial purposes.

The announcement came via a tweet from Assam's Industry Minister, Bimal Bora.

Plans are now underway to further augment its role in economic development.

This strategic maneuver involves the reclassification of tea garden land to accommodate industrial activities, thereby optimizing land

HAPPENINGS

utilization.

The objective is to delineate zones suitable for industrial ventures while meticulously upholding environmental concerns to safeguard ecological equilibrium.





THE LOST TEA GARDEN OF PEDONG

KALIMPONG, West Bengal, India

Long before loose tea as we know it was created, compressed cakes and bricks of tea from Southern Yunnan and Sichuan Provinces in China traveled by caravan to Tibet and then onward to far-off lands. In the monasteries and nomad tents in Tibet, one can still find this kind of tea in use.

Tea was an expensive luxury for some and an essential staple for others. The cost of bringing it all the way from China, both in currency and in effort, was often beyond the point of profit. Losses in cargo, human and animal resources and onerous taxes and tolls, among other things, had to be recouped to the selling price. For the tea merchant, these challenges posed formidable obstacles in running a successful business.

Their journey ended in Kalimpong. Little known to people outside of North Eastern India, let alone the rest of the world, the town has served for hundreds of years as a junction point and conduit for trade between China,

Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, Burma and India. It was the nearly impossible destination of the brave caravans that brought tea and other goods from remote Southern China along the ancient Tea Horse Road. The arduous journey took months to complete and passed through hundreds of miles of inhospitable and often precarious terrain. Many packmule and handlers met their ultimate fate on the trek.

The bulk of the tea consignments from China were intended for Tibet's capital city of Lhasa. Even so, it was a longer distance from Yunnan's tea producing districts of Xi Shuang Ban Na (shee shwang ban nah) and Dali (dah lee) than from Lhasa to the Indian border. Eventually, some enterprising Chinese realized that if the tea was made in Kalimpong and shipped to Lhasa, months of time and cost could be saved. And so it was that tea planting and production began in India, hundreds of years before the British East India Company began planting.

The Chinese set up tea production in the lower reaches of the Himalayas, taking advantage of the ideal weather and environment for



TEA TIME

growing tea. Actually part of Bhutan at that time, gardens were set up in Algarah, Pedong and Lava along the Jalep La, the road to Lhasa. Most of the details of when and how these teas were produced were carried away by the misty clouds that haunt the hills. There remain only a few “old timers” who carry the oral tradition and heritage of the area.

In the early 1800s, during a time of openness in India, Tibet and China, foreign influence, though by no means rampant, became more tolerated. As a bustling land port, Kalimpong experienced a thin stream of outsiders arriving for trade, adventure, or to evangelize their faith. Roads were improved. Infrastructure was enhanced. A Scottish Presbyterian Church was built, which still stands. Originally coming as missionaries to promote Christianity, a group of swiss priests who also recognized the value of tea established a tea garden named Damsang in Pedong, on the outskirts of Kalimpong.

Migrating from their original base in Hele, Nepal, these “Swiss Fathers,” as they are still known, propagated their faith, converting many of the local people to Christianity. They also added to the number of faithful by eventually

marrying local women and remaining in the area for the rest of their lives.

In the years that followed, the Swiss (and the British) expanded and mechanized the tea growing centers. Estates were set up, producing “tea that was formed in compressed ball shapes,” recalls a local elder named Chottu Fulla. This compact form was more efficient for transporting the cargo to Lhasa. The Damsang tea estate was eventually reorganized into the Doars Tea Company, which owned the Kumai tea estate, also on the trade route. In fact, there was once a road stretching 677 miles through Kumai Estate and connecting the port of Chittagong in Bangladesh with Lhasa, Tibet.

Sporadic clashes along the border following the political upheaval in Tibet culminated in the 1962 Indian/Chinese war that left 3,500 dead and 2,500 wounded. The passes into Tibet were closed. Domestic civil unrest in the 1980’s further jeopardized commerce and the tea garden was gradually abandoned, its bushes left unattended or cut down.

Records of the early years and figures on tea processing and the volume of tea produced went up in flames during the conflict. One still sees the ruins of old buildings, decimated by time and civil war. The grave of Leslie Ranger remains on the site with a telltale inscription





“Over that ridge is China,” our guide informed us. Only those with special permits dare approach the border, which is still manned by soldiers. Indeed, the Mountain Division of the Indian Army has a base nearby. In the clearing also stood the ruins of the old family house.

We continued up

in stone revealing the family’s connection with tea. It identifies Ranger as the superintendent of the “Doars Tea Company.” His resting place is just a few steps from where the old Damsang tea factory used to stand.

The exact whereabouts of the once prolific estate are known only to a few locals who tell stories about the “days of tea in Pedong.” In December, we traveled to the site where we met the last descendant of the Swiss missionaries. He lives on the grounds of the former tea garden.

I was accompanied on my trip by tea businessman and historian Rajiv Lochan. Together, we ventured into this nearly forgotten place to discover if there was any truth to the legend that tea was once grown in the hills. The four hour odyssey from Darjeeling took us through rolling hills covered in tea bushes, across the majestic Coronation bridge and along the powerful Teesta River. We wound around precarious hairpin turns through bustling Kalimpong town, plied our way up through alpine forests and stopped at the aptly named Silk Route Inn to refresh and meet up with a man named Pedan.

It was Pedan who took us to meet “Jimmy Uncle,” as he is known. We set out on foot up a wide path. The gravel paving gave way to dirt and narrowed to almost a shoulder’s width. Pausing at a clearing to catch our breath, we turned around to see the mountain range behind us.

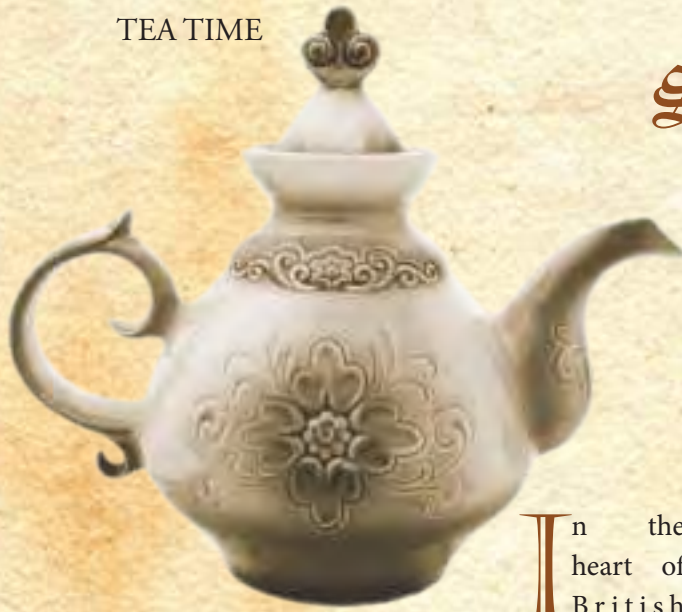
the trail, spurred on by a sixth sense that there were tea bushes nearby. Our hopes were rewarded when a six-foot “wild”-growing tea bush was spotted about 10 feet off the path. A few more steps and the answer to our quest was fully revealed. Abandoned tea bushes dotted the hillock that led to the cottage where James Ranger and his wife live.

Sitting on the front porch, which was decorated for Christmas, Ranger shared the story of his family history. He proudly pointed out the portraits of his grandfather, Fr. Leslie Ranger and other forebearers. After spending nearly an hour answering our numerous questions, he strolled with us back down the path, tenderly touching some of the leaves of the tea plants that remained.

In 2006, the Nathu La (pass) was formally reopened, once again allowing trade and traffic to flow between India and Tibet. Kalimpong has since become a tourist destination, known for its beautiful scenery, abundant plant life (especially orchids and rhododendrons) and religious studies.

It is hoped that the old Jalep La Pass will also be reopened, which will further revive the local economy. Will there be a resurrection of the old tea gardens of Pedong?

Who can say, but telling the story will keep the tea alive for those who enjoy the adventure that swirls in their tea cup?



Sipping Elegance: The Timeless Tradition of Tea in British India

In the heart of British India, a colonial past unfolds through the delicate ritual of tea drinking. Steeped in history, this cultural practice not only quenched the thirst of the colonizers but also left an indelible mark on the diverse tapestry of the subcontinent.

As the sun dipped below the horizon, the clinking of porcelain teacups became a symphony echoing

across the vast plantations that sprawled under the imperial gaze. The British, with their penchant for refinement, brought the art of tea cultivation to the lush landscapes of India, forever altering the social fabric of the region.

In the colonial era, tea gardens were not merely plantations but enclaves of social interaction and cultural exchange. The British elite would gather in opulent tea estates, surrounded by verdant hills and manicured gardens, to partake in the ceremonious afternoon tea. The delicate notes of





Darjeeling and Assam teas blended seamlessly with the crisp colonial air, creating an atmosphere of sophistication and leisure.

Yet, beneath the veneer of elegance, the tea culture of British India bore witness to a complex interplay of power dynamics. The laborers toiled under the sweltering sun, plucking the leaves that would be transformed into the prized beverage enjoyed by the ruling class. The contrasts were stark, but the humble tea leaf served as a unifying force, connecting disparate lives

through the shared experience of cultivation and consumption.

Tea in British India transcended the boundaries of class and culture, weaving itself into the social fabric of the nation. It became a symbol of unity and division, tradition and change. The iconic 'chai wallahs' emerged as local purveyors of this aromatic elixir, catering to the masses with a brew that resonated with the diversity of the subcontinent.

Today, the legacy of British India's tea culture endures in the bustling streets of cities and the serene landscapes of plantations. The echoes of colonial refinement and the resilience of local traditions continue to shape the way tea is enjoyed, uniting people across time and cultures in a shared appreciation for this timeless beverage.



Ena Bandyopadhyay,
Tea Time, Siliguri



TEA TIME

TO MEET MR. PRAFULL GORADIA,
FRIENDS CLIENTS AND WELLWISHERS
JOIN IN FOR LUNCHEON

22 March 2024
at Contemporary Board Room





Estimated Consumption of Teas in India						(Figures in M.Kgs)
Year	Production	Imports	Exports consumption	Available for consumption	Estimated	Remarks
2021	1343	27	197	1173	1161	#
2022	1366	30	227	1169	1188	#
2023	1368	24	228	1163	1214	##
2023	1368	24	228	1163	1188	###

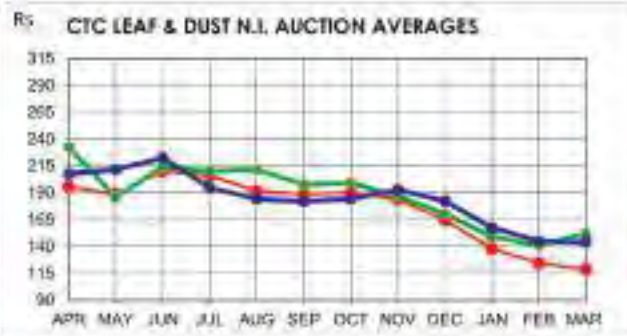
2021 & 2022 figures are from Tea Board
 ## 2023 estimated growth in consumption is 2.2%
 ### 2023 estimated static growth in consumption

N. India Market Graphs April to March

North India - CTC Leaf & Dust

Months	2023/24	2022/23	23 vs 22	2021/22	23 vs 21
APR	185.41	252.61	-67.21	207.68	-22.27
MAY	188.98	180.98	7.99	211.54	-22.57
JUN	228.45	218.80	9.65	222.45	6.00
JUL	190.17	210.09	-19.92	195.05	15.12
AUG	180.98	211.49	-30.51	186.20	7.80
SEP	188.48	197.74	-8.26	183.89	4.59
OCT	186.13	199.12	-12.99	194.32	-8.19
NOV	188.92	196.57	-7.65	192.42	-3.50
DEC	168.89	170.58	-11.69	182.51	-13.62
JAN	137.97	189.31	-51.34	157.70	-19.73
FEB	134.52	141.17	-6.65	145.08	-10.56
MAR	159.92	191.97	-32.05	143.87	16.05
April to March	178.88	191.87	-12.99	186.80	-7.92

Dust - Excluding Orthodox Dust

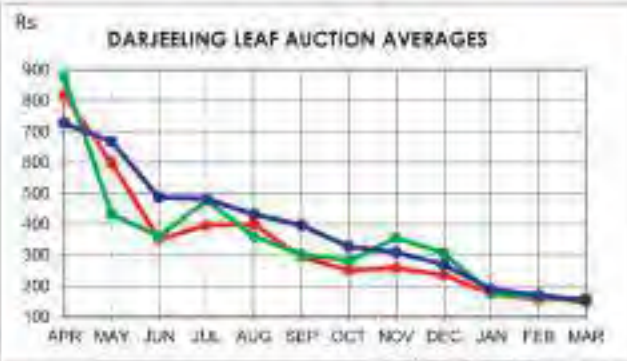


North India - Orthodox Leaf

Months	2023/24	2022/23	23 vs 22	2021/22	23 vs 21
APR	248.19	377.62	-129.43	327.81	-79.62
MAY	244.14	341.46	-97.32	307.72	-63.58
JUN	352.19	269.21	82.98	308.93	43.26
JUL	308.47	477.07	-168.60	382.14	-73.67
AUG	290.53	300.89	-10.36	332.63	-42.10
SEP	294.48	302.20	-7.72	296.52	7.96
OCT	251.67	281.01	-29.34	287.88	-36.21
NOV	258.42	294.24	-35.82	286.99	-28.57
DEC	235.24	276.88	-41.64	269.41	-34.17
JAN	172.18	176.45	-4.27	189.81	-17.63
FEB	168.62	181.80	-13.18	179.89	-11.27
MAR	189.48	146.12	43.36	152.19	37.29
April to March	274.43	249.56	24.87	278.31	-3.88

Darjeeling Leaf

Months	2023/24	2022/23	23 vs 22	2021/22	23 vs 21
APR	889.19	877.62	11.57	727.63	161.56
MAY	598.19	433.96	164.23	907.72	-309.53
JUN	352.18	280.23	71.95	405.28	-53.10
JUL	388.47	477.07	-88.60	482.14	-93.67
AUG	430.53	300.89	129.64	332.63	97.90
SEP	394.48	302.20	92.28	296.52	97.96
OCT	290.53	281.01	9.52	307.88	-17.35
NOV	258.42	294.24	-35.82	286.99	-28.57
DEC	235.24	276.88	-41.64	269.41	-34.17
JAN	172.18	176.45	-4.27	189.81	-17.63
FEB	168.62	181.80	-13.18	179.89	-11.27
MAR	189.48	146.12	43.36	152.19	37.29
April to March	324.43	249.56	74.87	278.31	46.12



(Subject to modification)

Month wise District wise Auction averages

CTC Leaf & Dust

Assam : Estate

Month	2023-24	2022-23	Diff (+/-)
APR	244.28	281.77	-37.49
MAY	222.70	213.60	9.10
JUN	260.83	258.24	2.59
JUL	254.23	260.82	-6.59
AUG	232.09	261.22	-29.12
SEP	227.46	237.28	-9.82
OCT	227.55	233.18	-5.63
NOV	218.35	214.61	3.74
DEC	185.46	188.72	-3.26
JAN '24	152.33	165.91	-13.58
FEB	137.95	159.83	-21.88
MAR	129.66	156.20	-26.54
April to March	213.09	224.54	-11.45

Dooars & Terai : Estate

Month	2023-24	2022-23	Diff (+/-)
APR	242.16	261.70	-19.54
MAY	226.31	209.17	17.14
JUN	238.47	245.75	-7.28
JUL	226.13	227.51	-1.38
AUG	197.74	221.53	-23.79
SEP	191.65	204.45	-12.80
OCT	193.22	210.72	-17.51
NOV	197.13	200.36	-3.22
DEC	186.78	187.38	-0.60
JAN '24	157.98	169.92	-11.94
FEB	135.22	153.52	-18.30
MAR	147.63	209.13	-61.51
April to March	198.28	209.64	-11.35

Cachar : Estate

Month	2023-24	2022-23	Diff (+/-)
APR	216.51	236.46	-19.96
MAY	190.38	183.33	7.05
JUN	186.67	182.31	4.35
JUL	198.36	191.67	6.69
AUG	188.84	202.25	-13.41
SEP	187.79	194.04	-6.26
OCT	188.52	186.95	1.56
NOV	176.97	180.58	-3.62
DEC	151.06	162.19	-11.13
JAN '24	132.69	145.03	-12.34
FEB	122.75	139.74	-16.99
MAR	127.93	134.84	-6.91
April to March	169.64	175.85	-6.21

Tripura : Estate

Month	2023-24	2022-23	Diff (+/-)
APR	219.71	227.34	-7.63
MAY	166.51	160.47	6.05
JUN	160.76	151.56	9.20
JUL	163.42	153.80	9.62
AUG	152.07	161.65	-9.59
SEP	152.98	157.57	-4.59
OCT	144.38	149.58	-5.19
NOV	138.62	146.68	-8.07
DEC	130.26	136.92	-6.66
JAN '24	107.95	126.89	-18.94
FEB	101.61	126.31	-24.70
MAR	107.34	121.72	-14.38
April to March	142.24	149.55	-7.32

Assam : BLF

Month	2023-24	2022-23	Diff (+/-)
APR	171.79	196.35	-24.57
MAY	154.52	158.23	-3.71
JUN	171.32	164.75	6.56
JUL	175.43	167.03	8.40
AUG	166.12	178.85	-12.73
SEP	162.57	172.97	-10.40
OCT	163.08	173.84	-10.76
NOV	153.52	163.37	-9.85
DEC	136.39	145.32	-8.93
JAN '24	115.22	129.03	-13.82
FEB	110.88	127.03	-16.15
MAR	109.34	133.92	-24.58
April to March	153.55	162.65	-9.10

Dooars & Terai : BLF

Month	2023-24	2022-23	Diff (+/-)
APR	124.48	158.63	-34.15
MAY	124.33	130.47	-6.14
JUN	121.24	122.58	-1.34
JUL	121.58	120.44	1.15
AUG	114.75	126.97	-12.22
SEP	114.81	127.58	-12.78
OCT	119.27	134.66	-15.39
NOV	118.64	134.77	-16.13
DEC	112.05	126.58	-14.53
JAN '24	100.68	116.63	-15.95
FEB	96.63	114.74	-18.11
MAR	93.29	129.23	-35.94
April to March	114.69	127.45	-12.77

CTC Leaf & Dust

South India

Month	2023-24	2022-23	Diff (+/-)
APR	119.15	103.37	15.78
MAY	112.60	100.45	12.15
JUN	104.51	96.01	8.50
JUL	103.54	92.58	10.96
AUG	99.61	104.19	4.59
SEP	101.60	107.23	5.63
OCT	105.21	110.56	5.36
NOV	106.53	120.90	14.38
DEC	104.84	117.41	12.57
JAN '24	107.97	127.24	-19.27
FEB	106.54	131.26	-24.72
MAR	112.11	125.68	-13.57
April to March	105.66	184.84	79.18

Orthodox

Assam

Month	2023-24	2022-23	Diff (+/-)
APR	245.09	282.51	-37.42
MAY	210.08	265.63	-55.55
JUN	230.21	354.27	-124.05
JUL	228.10	354.92	-126.83
AUG	227.87	343.25	-115.38
SEP	235.98	284.81	-48.83
OCT	225.33	278.43	-53.10
NOV	231.50	284.02	-52.52
DEC	214.06	226.88	-12.82
JAN '24	181.62	185.90	-4.28
FEB	157.82	162.65	-4.83
MAR	176.57	173.91	2.66
April to March	223.00	284.66	-61.67

South India

Month	2023-24	2022-23	Diff (+/-)
APR	162.48	139.38	23.10
MAY	159.98	160.43	0.45
JUN	145.69	161.63	15.94
JUL	132.42	167.62	35.20
AUG	121.52	160.19	38.67
SEP	139.87	166.17	26.29
OCT	144.24	165.88	21.64
NOV	135.36	172.00	36.63
DEC	141.01	163.78	22.77
JAN '24	145.35	156.76	-11.41
FEB	145.32	153.97	-8.66
MAR	153.29	163.07	-9.78
April to March	142.43	163.09	20.66

Darjeeling

Darjeeling

Month	2023-24	2022-23	Diff (+/-)
APR	819.19	877.62	-58.43
MAY	599.39	433.96	165.43
JUN	352.18	360.23	-8.04
JUL	396.47	477.07	-80.60
AUG	400.53	360.89	39.64
SEP	294.40	302.79	-8.39
OCT	251.67	281.43	-29.76
NOV	259.42	356.34	-96.92
DEC	235.24	306.89	-71.65
JAN '24	173.60	176.45	-2.85
FEB	156.48	164.40	-7.91
MAR	160.40	148.17	12.23
April to March	324.40	348.48	-24.08



Compiled by Soumen Bagchi

EXPERIENCE A NEW LEVEL OF TEA ENGINEERING

www.tiglobal.com



COMPLETE TEA MACHINERY SOLUTION !



Continuous Withering Machine



Kaizen CTC



Conquest Combination Dryer



Matrix CFM



Vibrant VFBD Dryer



Questea Conventional Dryer



Shola C.I Heater



Axis Auto Milling • Auto Chasing



Rolling Table

Automation



Smart Feed

(Uniform Green Leaf Feeding)

Smart Discharge

(For Dryer Mouth Tea)



- Smart CFM Automation System
- Smart UNIFIED Dryer Temperature Controlling System
- Smart Coal Heater Controller



Meyer TD3 Colour Sorter (Ancoo)

T&I Global Ltd. is one of the leading tea machinery manufacturers and exporter across the world. Started in the year 1949, the group has already completed 70 years in Tea machinery business. Currently we are exporting our machines to 35 countries including expanding our business in India.

Some of our renowned machines are, WIZARD Continuous Withering Machine, KAIZEN Nova CTC, MATRIX CFM, VIBRANT VFBD DRYER, SHOLA Cast Iron Heater, AXIS Auto Milling Machine, SMART AXIS Auto Chasing Machine, ROLLOMAX Rolling Table, CONQUEST Combination Dryer, QUESTEA Conventional Dryer. We do provide Turn Key solutions in Tea Factories.



- CTC Tea machinery
- Green Tea Machinery
- Orthodox Tea machinery
- Mini Tea Factory Machinery

COMPLETE SOLUTION

T & I Global Limited

4a Auckland Square, 11 Jassal House, Kolkata - 700017

Kolkata - 033-40733-556 | 9593488806 | 9051252229 || Assam - 9101630500

Email Id - salesindia@tiglobal.com

#1 TEA
HUMIDIFICATION
SPECIALISTS

HARLEY
HUMIDIKOOL



F. Harley

Continuous
Running
Capability

2 Year
Warranty

24 X 7
Customer
Support

- ✓ BECAUSE YOUR TEA NEEDS THE BEST INFUSION IT CAN HAVE
- ✓ BECAUSE YOUR TEA NEEDS TO BE THE BEST YOU CAN OFFER
- ✓ BECAUSE WE HAVE THE BACKING OF MORE THAN 350+ WELL - WISHERS
- ✓ BECAUSE WE CARE

With Harley Humidikool's Advanced Cooling and Humidification Solutions, you can get

- Optimum Humidification without any dripping or wetness
- Customized, scientific solution with option for automation
- Peace of mind with high durability and longer warranty



Contact Us now to get Quality Performance, Solution and Service

📍 F. Harley & Co. Pvt. Ltd.
5 Rameshwar Shaw Road, Kolkata - 700014

☎ +91 - 9903998085 📞 033 2289 7676

🌐 www.harleyhumidikool.com