

CONTEMPORARY

TEA TIME

VOL. XXXII NO. 4 • OCTOBER 2022- DECEMBER 2022 • RS. 80 • US\$ 7

TEA JOURNAL WITH THE LARGEST READERSHIP 32ND YEAR OF PUBLICATION



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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The tea market in India has transformed vastly and the innovativeness of its participants at the Siliguri Tea Auction Center has led the way over the past two decades. Our cover story recalls the brief saga of these pioneers. We have tried to cover the ethos and inventiveness of these entrepreneurs and their skills. The stories and business models are similar; they would move from general trading to a shift to tea and then on to selling and branding tea. Many have gone on to own their own estates while others have set up Bought Leaf Factories. The entire saga of Siliguri would need a volume to be only half complete.

In the next issue we speak to Industry leaders to discuss the crossroads at which the industry finds itself and what has brought about these changes in the past 20 years. Did someone see it coming? And then there's the sad story of the Darjeeling Tea Industry, a GI-certified product that went terribly wrong.

But more important today is the question - what's next? With escalating input costs, supply overtaking demand and the expected growth in consumption being well below par, many estates are changing hands. The new entrants have one thing in common. They have other profitable businesses, or are small hands-on entrepreneurs with their own brands and marketing skills.

Supply is evenly distributed at 50:50 from two business models, with entirely different cost structures, quality parameters and profitability.

High-end premium teas are in demand no doubt, but the significant growth in market shares is in the economy or budget segment.

As always, thank you for reading Tea Time. We hope you enjoy reading the issue.

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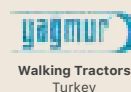
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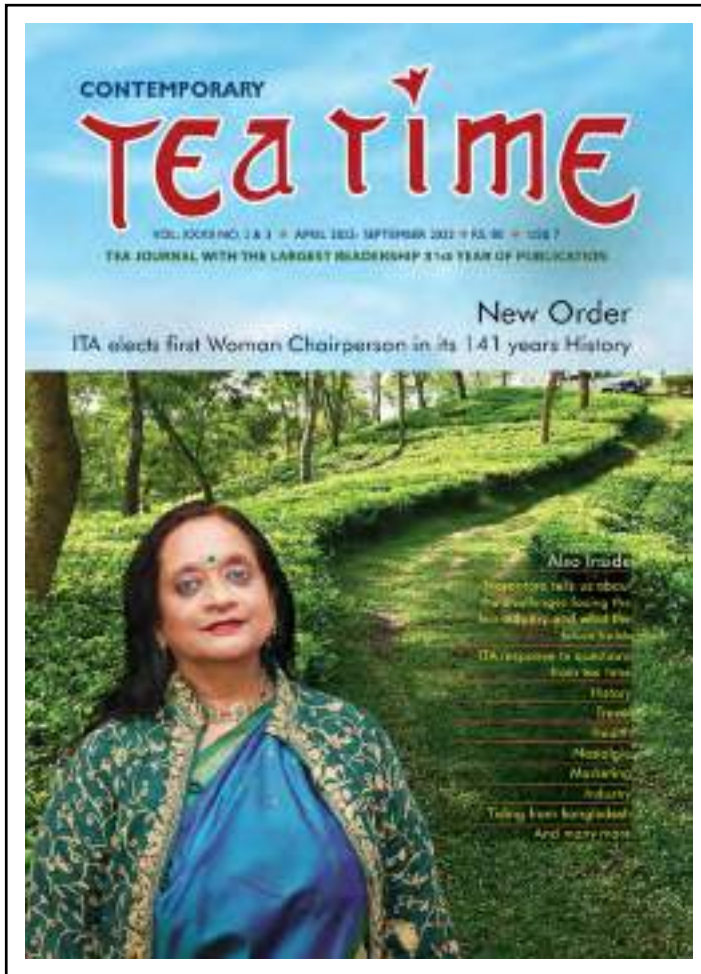
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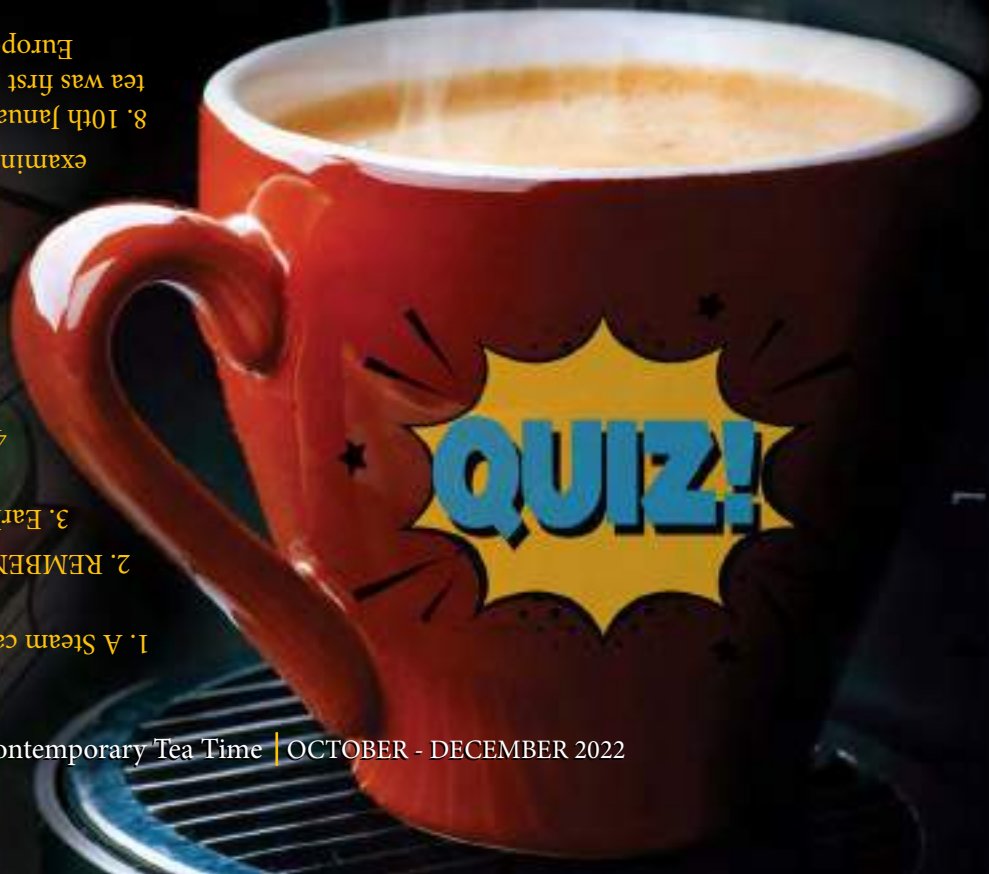
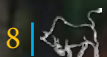


QUESTIONS

1. What was Stanley's Flying Teapot?
2. Which estate in India first produced organic tea?
3. What is Chhota Hazari?
4. After London and Kolkata where was the next auction centre opened?
5. In which part of India is Tsaku Cha a favourite?
6. Rooibos forms the part of which tea culture?
7. Towards which cardinal point should a tea tasting room face?
8. When is Tea Day observed?
9. Which tea from China has a smoky tarry aroma?
10. What disease was the chewing of tea leaves in British colonies suppose to prevent?

1. A Steam car built in 1918. About two hundred were produced
2. REMBENG – Assam Tea Company
3. Early Morning tea with a light breakfast
4. Colombo 30th July, 1983
5. Manali. It is salt tea mixed with buttermilk
6. South African
7. North, so that light is evenly spread out during daylight hours for visual examination of leaf and infusions
8. 10th January – remembering the day tea was first shipped from India to UK. Europe has also adopted this day
9. Lapsang Souchong
10. Malaria

ANSWERS





Working the Market

Chadrasain Mahabir Parshad ☐ *Tea Linkers*

Nikunj Bansal

Nikunj is the 3rd generation family member in Tea. Educated at Dehra Doon, he has been a founder publisher for his school magazine and has been passionately pursuing his interests which include trekking. This interest has encouraged him to backpack around the areas of Bihar and Jharkand where they now sell their brands. He has gathered first hand market information on his travels and with the same dedication has created and successfully re-launched some of his brands. Their brand and its variants in the different segments have shown growth of over 20% in his very competitive market space.



- 1983 Bansal Tea Industries Pvt Ltd commenced operations.
- 5kg economic value wholesale pack Bansal No 1 was the first introduced and quickly became a popular “wholesale” brand. These were further packed in 30 kg packs of 6 bags of 5 kg each. This continued to gain popularity between 1983-1985.
- Due to piracy in 1985 the brand was registered in 1986.
- In 1995-the volumes grew and a 3 kg pack was introduced.
- Post 1995 the introduction of smaller packs followed.
- In 2002-500g and 250g packs were launched.
- After 2005 came the smaller 50g and 100g SKU's.
- After 2015 SKU's at multiple price point were introduced.
- Earlier Rs10 packets contained 100g of tea, now the norm is to pack between 20-25g.
- Our Original and first in the market, Blackcolored packet was a hit, but was followed by rampant regional piracies, in

similar colored packets but with unsimilar names. These were ME TOO copycat brands but were not sustainable.

- 50 districts in Bihar/Jharkand can alone boast of over 72 local brands!

New trends:

2/3 tier towns in the urban sector have income generation, due to distribution of wealth in the recent times. There is growth too in the rural sectors, but this still is a price sensitive market. To win loyalty quality teas at attractive price points, can be a good differentiator.

Contrary to popular belief that the rural markets find milk and sugar ‘expensive’ ingredients to their daily cups of tea, there is an abundance of milk as most houses have a cow in the back yard and sacks of sugar purchased during harvest in their stores.

Outlook:

In the rural areas demand for good quality teas are on the raise and there is little or no competition from the infusions, both tea or of other types, which urban youths are quick to try. The packet tea market will continue to grow.

About Siliguri:

Siliguri is abundant with young energetic and economically solvent entrepreneurs. The only deterrent to its growth, is the infrastructure such as roads and certain other basic civic amenities. The authorities would do well to hear this.

Brief History of Siliguri Tea Auction Centre

A Story of Growth

SILIGURI TEA AUCTION COMMITTEE

CHAIRMEN

Sr. No.	Name	From	To
1.	SRI BIRENDRA CHANDRA GHOSH	SEP. 76	JUN. 84
2.	SRI B.L. MAHATA	JUN. 84	AUG. 86
3.	SRI A. PAL CHOUDHURI	SEP. 86	JUN. 89
4.	SRI C.B. ABYSHEKAR	NOV. 89	DEC. 90
5.	SRI BALKRISHNA DALMIA	JAN. 91	APR. 94
6.	SRI ARUN K. AGRAWAL	APR. 94	AUG. 96
7.	SRI K. K. MINTRI	SEP. 96	AUG. 99
8.	SRI RAMABTAR BERLIA	AUG. 99	SEP. 02
9.	SRI S.P. CHAUDHARI	SEP. 02	DEC. 04
10.	SRI RAVI AGARWAL	DEC. 04	MAR. 06
11.	SRI SHIV KR. SARIA	MAR. 06	JULY. 08
12.	SRI GANGADHAR MANIPURIA	JULY. 08	FEB. 12
13.	SRI K.K. MEHRA	MAR. 12	MAY. 15
14.	SRI BASANT AGARWAL	MAY. 15	JUNE. 17
15.	SRI AJAY GARG	JUNE. 17	AUG. 19
16.	SRI KAMAL KISHORE TEWARI	AUG. 19	OCT. 22
17.	SRI MAHENDRA PR. SINGHARSAI	OCT. 22	

From a mere quantity of 2.7 m kg of teas sold in 1976, at Rs.11.05, last year Siliguri Tea Auction Centre sold a whopping 149.6 m kg at Rs. 177.70 per kg.

The centre has evolved. With the dynamics of the buying having undergone a transformation. Siliguri today boasts for a large number of packers who own successful brands selling in the eastern regions. Some of these pay the highest prices for quality Dooars and Terai Teas. They have Pan India reach as well.

There is a plethora of service providers who offer a one window of services , pan India to all wholesalers and regional packers interested in procuring teas at source. The services range from tea selection, buying, blending, packing to quality control. Several have expanded their buying networks into the Guwahati auction centre and their private buying fields extent from Dibrugarh in the East to the Munnar High Ranges in the South in Kerala.

A major credit for its recent growth, particularly during the pandemic may be attributed to the Chairman Kamal Kishore Tewari and the support he was able to garner from the administration to keep the centre in operations. (pix of Kamal Kishore Tewari)

Siliguri Tea Auction Centre was inaugurated on 29th October, 1976 with Shri D.P. Chattopadhyay, the Union Minister of Commerce in the Chair, Shri Siddharta Shankar Roy, the then Chief Minister of West Bengal and Shri Pranab Mukherjee, the then Minister of State for Revenue in attendance. The sale proceeds of the inaugural Auction amounting to Rs.5,72,502/- was donated to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund on 9th December 1976.

Since Siliguri Tea Auction Committee had no building on its own, the Auction sale used to be conducted at Hotel Sinclair's Building where the office and Auction Hall were then situated.

Teas to be Auctioned

for

Prime Minister's National Relief Fund

Sale proceeds of all teas printed in this Catalogue will be donated to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund.

The Auction will be conducted by Shri Siddharta Shankar Roy, Chief Minister of West Bengal.

The Chairman
and
The Managing Committee
of the
SILIGURI TEA AUCTION COMMITTEE
have the honor and privilege of welcoming
SHRI SIDDHARTA SHANKAR ROY
The Chief Minister of West Bengal
as Chief Guest
at the Inaugural Celebration of the
Siliguri Tea Auction Centre
to be inaugurated by
SHRI D. P. CHATTOPADHYAY
Union Minister of Commerce,
with SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE
Union Minister for Revenue and Banking will preside
on Friday, the 29th October 1976 at Siliguri.

The foundation stone of Siliguri Tea Auction Committee's own building at its present location was laid by Shri Jyoti Basu, the then Chief Minister of West Bengal on 10th April, 1979. The site being adjacent to the Sinclair's Hotel. The office and the venue of the Auction Committee was shifted to its own building at the end of 1981. The construction of the building was completed by 1985. The Auction Hall was later dedicated to the memory of Late B.C. Bose and was christened as 'BIRENDRA CHANDRA HALL' and has a seating capacity of 205. This building was constructed with funds generated from all three sections of the trade.

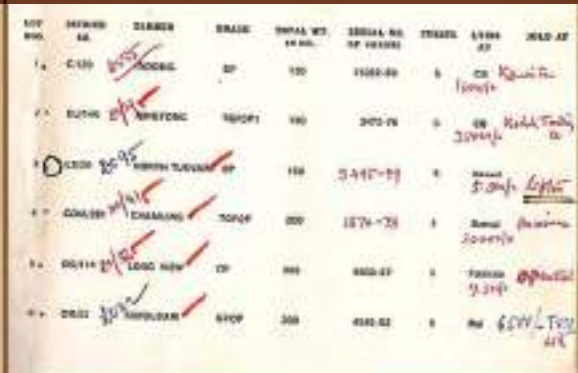
Membership (produce this in a chart)

YEAR	SELLER	BUYER	BROKER	WAREHOUSE SPACE
1976	166	132	7	39,275 Sq ft.
2022	570	452	9	13,97,000 Sq ft.

The second Auction Hall to hold the Dust Auction separately with 75 persons sitting capacity was established in the ground floor of the building on 15th March 1999. A special Auction was organized on the inauguration day. The sale proceeds amounting to Rs. 3,21,000/- was handed over to Shri Jyoti Basu, the then Chief Minister of West Bengal as donation to Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

100% e-auction system was started in Auction Centres during the year 2010. 149 years age old manual auction system in India (started during the year 1861) was fully computerized e-auction system, developed by M/s N.S.E.I.T.

A Tea Time Siliguri Report



LOT NO.	GRADE	WEIGHT	PRICE	BUYER
1	OP	100	1500.00	...
2	OP	100	200.00	...
3	OP	100	300.00	...
4	OP	100	100.00	...
5	OP	100	100.00	...
6	OP	100	100.00	...



Birendra Chandra Ghosh
Chairman



Chairman Speaks

Mahendra Bansal

Chairman of STAC



Late Ramnarayan Agarwal

Mahendra Prasad Bansal, Chairman STAC, Siliguri shares his history and tells TEA TIME how his family arrived into North-Bengal .

In 1932, Sriram Agarwal and Sri Chandan Mal Agarwal, moved to Madarihat in Jalpaiguri district and then within 2 years shifted to Ramjhora Bazar. They belonged to a village named Randhawa in Haryana, where they were farmers. At Ramjhora they set up a cloth and groceries enterprise. Within ten years the entire family moved to Ramjhora Bazar from Randhawa near Hantapara Tea Estate.

The business flourished and between 1938 and 1942, they had established themselves as the transporters for Duncans' teas and were often given orthodox samples to sell to traders in Jalpaiguri. Hence, began their tryst with tea. In 1946, they set up a tea grading and sorting unit at 2nd Mile Sevoke Road Siliguri. They had an office in Siliguri at Khalpara too.

In 1952 they registered at Calcutta Tea Trades Association as buyer and commission agents for upcountry buyers and took on lease Shikarpur T. Ein 1962 which was jointly owned till 1972.

The original firm namely M/s. Sriram Chandanmall had 6 brothers and nephews namely Sriram Agarwala, Ramnarayan Agarwala, Chandanmal Agarwal, Moman Chand Agarwala, Maniram Agarwal and Ghanshyam Das Agarwal.

In 1966 there was a family partition, and there were three separations:

Chandanmal Binod kumar took over Part of Siliguri and garden based

business whereas Bansal Tea Company comprising 3 partners Ramnarayan Agarwal (d 1982) Maniram Agarwal and Ghanshyam Das Agarwal took part of Siliguri and Kolkata based business and the third group namely Sriram ji and Moman Chand Agarwala established Bihar Bengal Tea Co. with branches in Raniganj and Patna.

In 1966, Mahendra P Bansal was a student in Birpara and had completed his graduation in Commerce from Siliguri in 1975 and went on to join the law. With the STAC coming into existence in 1976, Mahendra chose STAC over law and abandoned his studies to join business full time.

Basal Tea Co was registered in the Auctions as buyers and commission agents in Kolkata, Guwahati and Siliguri and had set up warehouses in Siliguri along Sevoke Road.

By 1980 the tea auction in Siliguri was booming thanks to government stipulation of selling teas via the auction system. In 1982, Bansal Tea Co become agents for Wagh-Bakri Tea at Siliguri.

Another successful partition followed in 1992 as the business was expanding with Maniram Agarwal, Ghanshyam Das and the children of late Ram Narayan, headed by his eldest son Santosh separating and establishing their own firms.

Maniram Agarwal took over Bansal Tea Co whereas Ghanshyam Das commenced Bansal Tea





Pawan, Ramesh, Santosh, Mahendra (L-R)



Gaurav, Keshav, Mayank, Yash and Karan (L-R)



Corporation and Santosh along with his brothers namely Mahendra, Ramesh and Pawan formed Bansal Sales (now known as Bansal Agro Beverages (Pvt) Ltd.).

Bansal Sales actively pursued their buying and warehouse business also diversifying into packet teas and continued buying for Wagh Bakri and other upcountry buyers. Mahendra says he will be ever so grateful to Shri Ajay Atal of J. Thomas (Ght) for his introduction to Wagh Bakri. A contract was signed within 5 days of his talks with Wagh Bakri group Chairman the legendary Sri P. O. Desai (Piyush Bhai) in 1982.

Bansal Sales continued to flourish.

- 1998 acquired Rahimpur TE in Dooars.
- 1999 Singtom in Darjeeling in partnership, which was relinquished in 2004.
- 2000 Simulbariein Terai.
- 2014 Mogulkata in Dooars.

They have a packet tea division with several brands such as Bansal's AMRIT, SIMUL, GARIMA and the Green tea brand RAHIMPUR. They sell between 4-5 ml kg of these each year. They have two packaging unit, one in Siliguri and another at Raipur (Chhattisgarh).

Bansal Sales has offices in Guwahati, Siliguri, Kolkata, Raipur, Jabalpur and Nagpur.

The brothers distribute their responsibilities with Kolkata based Santosh handling finance and sales and the branch offices. Mahendra looks after the Tea Estates and Warehouses, while Ramesh operating

out of Kolkata takes care of their Kolkata and Guwahati buying and accounts. Pawan

from Siliguri handles Commission Buying, Blending and the Packaging Units.

Mahendra has held an impressive record of responsibility such as: Chairman-STAC 2022- 24. Terai Indian Planters Association-Chairman since 2018-Vice Chairman-TRA North Bengal Committee-Since 2020.

Chairman-Warehousing Association (2 terms)

The Chairman Tea Park Owners Association-Since 2016.

President-Lions Club Siliguri Greater 1993-94.

Vice Chairman-Greater Lions Eye Hospital Group 2022-24.

The younger generation comprising Mayank (has diversified into organic cotton, is based out of Nantes, France) while Keshav, Gaurav, Yash and Karan have joined the family business.

Happily married with Mala and blessed with two daughters Smita and Sarika and a son Mayank, Mahendra is quite a family man and is a perfect example of balance between family and work.



One Window Services

PC Jhawar and Sons

Manoj Jhawar

Manoj Jhawar has become one of the largest one window of solution for the requirements from blenders and packers both in Siliguri and Pan India.

He offers one window a solution to all packeting services

- Tasting
- Purchasing
- Blend sheets
- Retasting blended product
- Inventory and stock control
- Brand quality monitoring
- Finance

The brands he provides services to, are successful and gaining market share, year on year.

He commenced this tea tasting buying and blending business in 1995 once the excise duty on Tea was removed. The first brand was Nidhi for Bihar.



On the tea trends, he opines:

- The packet tea market has grown in the past 10 years and will continue to grow, as packets are perceived to be safe and pure
- In this market dominated by price wars quality can be the only differentiator to build brand and taste loyalty

On his performance:

- 100% consumer satisfaction
- All clients experienced growth in their relevant markets
- No rejection of any blends since inception
- Consumers have a new experience when they taste his blends

Clients are:

- Dalmia Gold-Premium Segment
- City Gold-Premium and popular segments
- Real Gold-Premium and popular segments
- PATAKA
- MALANI Tea-HARYANA
- SUGANDH
- JAYSHREE TEA
- RUNGTA

More than 15m Kgs sourced through the auctions and more privately.





The brands sell in the following geographies

Bihar-Jharkhand-South Bengal-Haryana-Bareilly-and some even are experiencing growth Pan India

On Market forces and Supply constraints:

There is pressure in the supply of premium teas. And he says that it not only takes knowledge and skills but true dedication and a craftsman's passion for tea to maintain consistent quality blends through the year. Teas vary lot to lot in quality, and densities. He looks at densities closely, which is a prerequisite for any successful blend's consistency and homogeneity. A palette memory too has an added advantage.

On the way to success: He recounts an anecdote from his history of why the BP and OF combination really began his tryst with tea blending. He says that in the 90's, a common auction mark, making DUNCAN type teas (grainy hard-cut and clean), Attiabari suddenly became very popular in certain markets in Bihar. These were economical to buy, compared to the immensely popular DUNCAN's. A market visit and survey revealed the reason for this grade preference. OF added 'liquors'. This was the WORD -LIQUORS. So good liquoring packet teas were offered, with



a clean appearance to match the loose DUNCAN variety - the USP being liquors. And Brand Nidhi was born. The rest is history.

Manoj did his schooling and is a Chemical Engineer by education. He did his education from Kanpur. His family comprises 2 daughters, both successful entrepreneurs and a caring wife.





Late Purshotam Goel

Buying through the years *Eastern Tea Corporation*



Madan Goel

Eastern Tea Corporation is one of the oldest commission agents operating out of Siliguri.

In a conversation with Madan Goel: Founder the Late Purshotam Goel was a commission agent of commodities (food grains) from Haryana. He took part in auctions from 1972 and bought teas from Guwahati center, registered in STAC in 1976 and travelled to Siliguri from Guwahati during the auction days till 1980 after which they shifted to Siliguri.

Madan Goel joined his father's business in 1975. The first company registered was Eastern Tea Corporation followed by Asian Tea Corporation and there after ETC. He prefers the auction system to private purchases as it is more transparent and systematic.

His take on Bharat Auction: It is a new concept and how feasible it will be only time can tell. The existing system is now complete in itself but new

ideas are always welcome provided it caters to all section of the industry.

Markets: • Domestic Consumption is not increasing to the extent expected.

- People are willing to pay premium for better quality.
- Some estates and BLF are producing similar varieties of teas.

While he is mainly a North India buyer, and the markets are packet driven there are still parts of Haryana where good quality loose teas are preferred over packet teas.

Other interests: Madanji, as he is popularly known takes time to work with NGO's. His message to the new generation is, work with dedication and passion for success.



A Tea Time Report
by Angshuman De
Contemporary Siliguri



Man for all Seasons

Multitalented Kamal K Tewari

From Clearing and Forwarding, Agency Buying, Packeting and Warehousing

Kamal Kishore Tewari, who started his tea business in Siliguri from zero, has created a different identity in today's tea business world. After graduating from University of Calcutta, Kamal Kishore Tewari reached Siliguri in 1976 with his father, and started working as a clearing and forwarding commission agent. He used to send the tea of big traders of Kolkata by train. During his initial period of struggle he lived in a rented house in Siliguri.

Referring to the turning point of his life, he said that he started his business in 1980 with the Tewari Warehouse in the Mittal Compound. Despite the paucity of capital, he dreamed big and achieved great heights after which there was no looking back for him.

In 1982, he started the business of tea trading in Siliguri and expanded the business in 1997, to Guwahati and in 2007, to Kolkata.

He started Kamal Tewari & Sons Warehouse in the year 2000 and received the distinction of being the largest tea warehousing business in Siliguri, while in the metropolitan city of Kolkata the warehousing business stands in the fifth position. Today his sons Pankaj Kishore Tewari in Kolkata and Pawan Kishore Tewari in Siliguri are taking the business to new heights.

He has been at the helm of various important roles such as being the President of the Tea Traders Association Siliguri and Vice-Chairman of the Federation India Tea Traders Association (FETA), The chairman of the All India Tea Warehouse Association, the President of the Siliguri Tea Warehouse Association. He has also been the Vice-Chairman of Jalpaiguri Tea Promotion Committee, Chairman of the Siliguri Tea Promotion Committee and CII (North Bengal) Chairman in 2019-20.

The message he wishes to send to the youth is that it is not difficult to run the business of the ancestors however, to start a



Kamal Kishore Tewari



Pankaj Tewari



Pawan Tewari



Priti Mishra

business from scratch, only if one puts in hard work, dedication and time can a business reach a better place. Along with this, in today's era, technical efficiency is very important for any business to reach its destination.



The Kejriwal Family

Standing Sandeep, Gopal, Chirag (L-R)

Sitting Kamal, Suresh (L-R)

The Kejriwal family moved to Siligiri in 1930. They commenced business dealing with bulk tea. They recall the olden days when most of the trading commenced after they sorted out the bulk orthodox tea purchased by them, in units located along the Sevoke Road. Value addition was done then as well. The sorting and grading go downs developed into auction warehouse as the Siliguri Tea Auctions developed. They recall other old trading families Mahabir Prasad Binod Kumar, Hind Trading, Chandrasain Mahabir Prasad and Hazara Singh Inder Singh to name a few.

Mahabir Tea Center was established in 1972 by Mahabir Prasad Kejriwal and Suresh Kejriwal. Gopal, son of Suresh is the third generation trader. Their business ranges from Warehousing, Packet teas namely NEHA PREMIUM, NEHA GOLD and NEHA BENGAL, to bag manufacturing. They sell teas to North India states and specially Uttar Pradesh. After establishing Mahabir Tea Centre they went on to established Mukesh Tea House, North Bengal Tea & Allied and Mayank Packers.

During our conversation, Kamal, brother of Suresh reminisced of his days before the auction system were established. The teas were directly sourced from the garden and were all in bulk. Orthodox varieties and later Legg cut varieties



Mahabir Tea Center



Before STAC an auction in progress

were made, before CTC teas came in. These were sorted and graded by these bulk buyers who then sold it after sorting and grading to smaller buyers. The brokerage was 3 paise/kg which was paid by the buyer. The price of tea was between Rs. 5.5 to 6 Rs. kg.

Kamal mentioned that in the early days the auction was held on the top of Sinclair's Hotel under a tent. He recalls how one day the tent was blown away by a strong gust of wind during auctions !!

Kamal remembers a 5 kilogram wooden chest of Duncans tea with a lid on top similar to that of biscuits tin, which was sold in the retail at Rs.13/- per kg.

Talking of the current challenges, Gopal quipped that minimum 30 bags if made mandatory would hurt the small buyer who lends useful support for better price realization.

Mr. Gopal Kejriwal's hobbies and passion revolve totally around tea of various origins and varieties.



Interview by *Angshuman De*, CB-TT, Siliguri.



Water makes a Difference

Milan Agro Company Siliguri

Milan Agro as a firm was registered in 2008 and was dealing primarily with tea imported from Nepal. They registered in STAC in 2010.

Take on his Markets: Quality teas will flourish as less interest is shown in inferior teas. Packet teas and flavored teas are seeing expansion and will continue to grow.

Learnings as a buyer: It has been seen that different areas have different experience when the same tea is brewed. What is even more interesting to note some two separate buyers from the same building will have different liquor for the same tea. In fact it can be said that definition of good tea varies and differs area wise. Top marks might get rejected while lower medium tea might get accepted because of many variables, the most important being milk and water.

CURRENT CHALLENGES: Quality vs Price Wars There has been a significant growth of sale in the plainer category in the market which is hurting the sale of good quality teas. For sustained

growth in consumption and subsequent demand, consumers need to taste and savor good quality. However there is a price war which is preventing this from happening.

Climate Change: The flavor experienced earlier in good liquoring garden are not seen nowadays and the climate change seems to have its impact. We being in the tea Industry have to gear up to meet the challenges that would be set by the climate change.

Core Industry Focus Areas: Quality tea is of prime importance. So is good secure **packing**. Small buyers must receive encouragement to participate in the auctions or else the big buyers will dominate the auctions much to the disadvantage of the industry-price wise. Competition will lead to robust growth of the auction system. His supply destinations are in Central and North India.

Interview by
Angshuman De,
CB-TT, Siliguri.



The only impossible journey is the one you never begin

Anthony Robbins

From Commission Agents to Blenders

Chanakya Warehousing LLP. □ Quality Tea Products
Pravin Poddar & Sons □ Pure Tea Products

This family of Poddars are originally from Amritsar. They migrated to Kolkata over three generations ago and the man was the late Baijnath Poddar. He was spiritually inclined, and in his later years followed the Bhrama Kumari teachings and practices. He was a fair and successful commission agent and trader.

He had three sons and the family divided the business amongst them in the early 1980's. The firm Harchanrai Kedarnath going to Rajendra the

and traders to providing value added services of tasting/blending and aggregating for some of the largest national buyers and packers. They have expanded into warehousing in Siliguri. Initially with 30,000 sqft of space and went on to add an additional 32,000 sq ft in 2022 by the name Chanakya Warehousing LLP.

They have an e-com division udyantea.com which deals with many specialties and other varieties of blends, shipped straight to consumers.

Earlier, once the auctions commenced in Siliguri, Pawan who was a weekly traveler to attend the auctions, eventually moved base there in 1988.

Outlook:

With government business norms undergoing transformations the way of doing business is experiencing massive changes.

More Gen Y are active in business, all across the industry. Technology has found a strong footing. Acceptance that business has to be service oriented is on the rise, and the manufacturers are focused on quality in spite of the huge increase in cost of production.

Packet teas have taken over the loose tea markets and the traditional wholesalers have changed their business model and are not stockist any longer.

Dynamics of survival and growth revolve around adapting to change and embracing it is need of the hour.



Pawan, Pratul and Pravin Poddar (L-R)

eldest, the operations center remained in Kolkata while Pravin Kumar, Pawan Kumar remained with the two younger siblings Pravin and Pawan, operating out of Siliguri and Gunganagar (Rajasthan) respectively.

Today this third generation, Punit and Pratul, sons of Pawan and Pravin have further expanded by opening 3 new companies. Quality Tea Products, Pravin Poddar & Sons and Pure Tea Products extending operations to Guwahati. They have pivoted their business from commission agents



Punit Poddar



Marshall-Fowler
Engineered in Passion

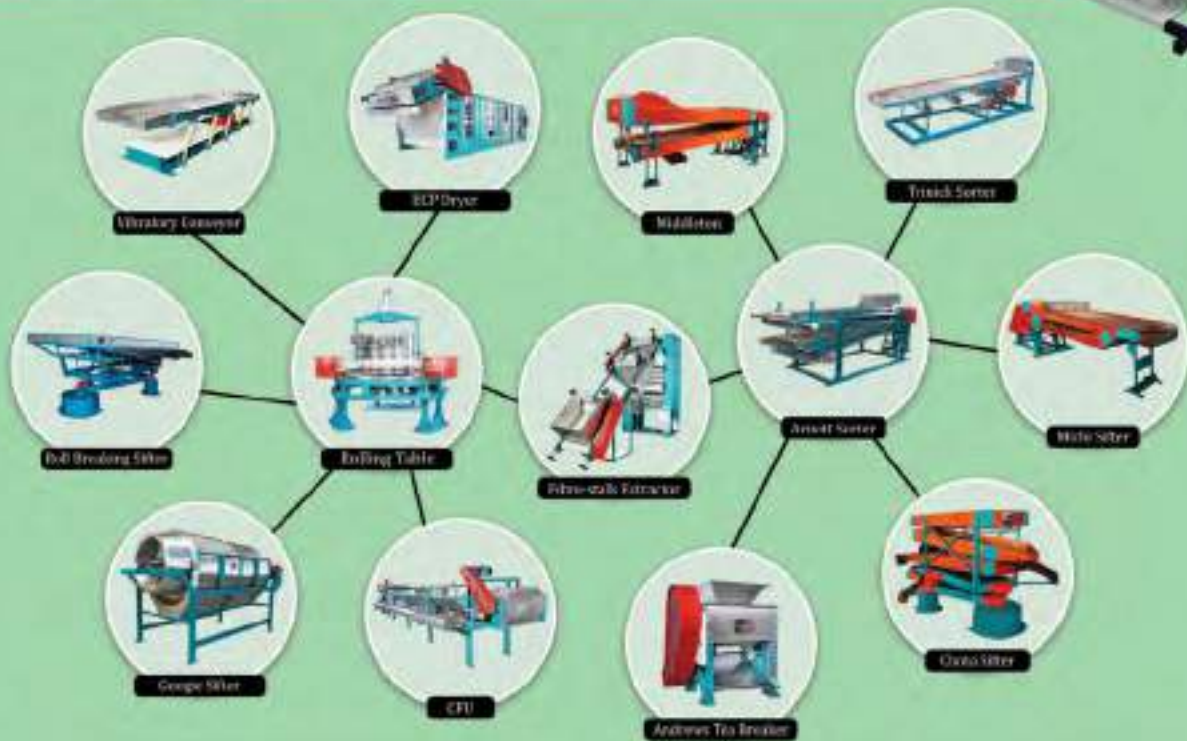
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Orthodox Tea

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



Orthodox Tea manufacturing is a craft for all intents and purpose, catering to the make, taste and Flavors of the discerning persona. The science behind the craft is the key differential that gets unraveled in the Marshall Fowler Products in the Orthodox processing equipments range. The essence of engineering applications in shaping the craft of making tea to perfection are brought to the fore in the Marshall Fowler range of equipment. Fundamentally, the artisan's imagination is brought to life through the detailed engineering of Marshall Fowler, as is evinced through the numerous product validations across tea factories around the world.

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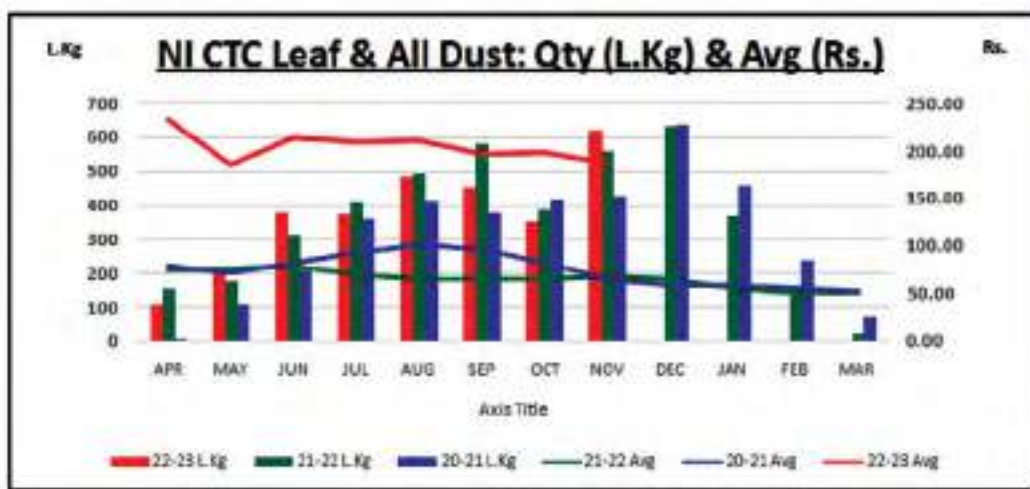
A Solution for the Tea Producers

Balance Supply and Demand

Pawan Poddar speaks to Tea Time

The tea auction prices continue to fall week to week at the primary auction centers in the later part of the season which are primary the cropping months in North India. This is because the buyers can choose from the abundant supplies. Prices are a function of demand and supply. Our supply far out strips our demand.

1. Is to have a compulsory trade able export quota estate wise. (Conversely a domestic quota.) Those who can export more than their quota can buy quota's from those who cannot. In today's technology driven age the monitoring such a system would be the least of all concerns. For example if the production is 1200 and the surplus 300 then there are two possibilities.



To the Indian consumer tea is not price elastic. In any case it's a minute portion of his monthly budget. Just how minute can be seen from the per capita consumption figures of a dismal 750 g per head annually. For a family of 4 this translates to 3kg of teas per year. At the costliest priced CTC packet tea of Rs 600 per kg it is Rs1800 per year or Rs 5 per day. Many pay just Rs 200 per kg for their teas, which translates to Rs 600 per year or Rs 1.70 per day.

Of this the producer receives around Rs 200 per kilogram in North India.

Equating demand and supply is a matter of mathematics. There are several ways in which supply can be curtailed.

(i) EXPORTS quota is 0.25%. OR (ii) DOMESTIC consumption is estimated at 900, the domestic quota would be 0.75% of your crop Ensure the quota is equivalent to the surplus.

2. Quality attributes. Most of the teas consumed, in general, domestically in the hinterland is so laced with either ginger, cardamom, spices, jagghery, sugar or milk that it's become hot brown water. While it does resemble tea, the taste of teas is completed over-ridden by the additives. With quality declining tea could, yes, just could be relegated to a very low interest drink. It has lost its zing. Contrary to this is that to encourage its original attributes of quality, could eventually lead to increased consumption.

TEA TIME

3. Tea fiber, a natural byproduct of the processed leaf, usually termed as tea waste finds its way into the markets in the form of a poor quality, tasteless, tea like substance. This is mostly purchased by some packers and traders to reduce the cost of blends which they market. This does little to excite the drinkers pallet and worse still adds to the already excessive supplies. The Producers suffers.

4. Lastly, with each lot of tea varying and the consumer wanting a homogeneous product through the year, it is imperative that various varieties are mixed-“blended uniformly”. For a buyer where but in an auction is such a range of variety available. It is not entirely incorrect to say that if a sale offers 5000 lots, there could be as many as 5000 variants available. May be some similar varieties, would appear, but in ‘lots’ printed far apart, in catalogs. Further considering that the teas sell on a lot to lot basis, in the auctions, each lot is in focus by the entire buyers community at one particular point in time. Imagine the possibility that exist at this focused point in time. Competition will only excite prices. Now just imagine that there

is just one such window of opportunity for every lot for a buyer. Just multiply this by the entire sales lots say 5000. Imagine the focused demand and completion for each one of them.

In conclusion

The mathematics is simple: (hypothetical figures in mkg)

Production	1200
Consumption	900
Balance	300
Surplus	300

Tea Fibre (tea Waste) 12 1% of production

Balance surplus	288
Export Quota	300
Surplus	-12

The alternate can be a domestic quota, based on the average production per estate, for the last 3 years. Quantity not exceeding the domestic quota can be sold while the rest of the produce must be exported vide the tradeable export quota.



Pawan Poddar

HAPPENING

THE TELANGANA TEA MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION HYDERABAD (TTTMA)



Surender Agarwal – Secretary
Darvesh H Shahid – President TTTMA
Mahender Parekh – Vice President (L to R)

On the 20th of November, the AGM of THE TELANGANA TEA MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION HYDERABAD (TTTMA) was conducted at Platinum Hotel in Hyderabad.

Darvesh H Shahid, President, spoke about the achievements of the Association and challenges being faced by the Tea Trading community.

The event was successful with fruitful discussions of a wide variety of topics ranging from the issue of adulteration in tea, Bharat auction, iron filings limit, Food safety MRL, Grade standardization and free trade sample.

Eastern Enterprise Assam to launch Kumolia Assam CTC line

Tea house offers speciality blends and packaging opportunities

Eastern Enterprise Assam (EEA) is a passion project. Deepak Sarma, who worked in the tea industry for almost four decades, had a dream for his own firm, a tea house where teas could be tasted, bought and blended. And so, EEA was born in 2015.

Initially, we had few clients with small orders, but each and every one of them helped us perfect our business. We started off in an office with just two little rooms, one of which was dedicated to tea tasting. Some days there would be a few cups to taste and on other days there would be none. But we were neither discouraged nor dissuaded. Over time, enquiries trickled in. Sarma's reputation as a seasoned tea taster and blender associated with the company brought in fresh new clients.

Next, we began to create our own brand with signature blends; we started with select Assam teas. Thus, 'Bharati Chai', a line of strong Assam CTC came into being. Soon, we had another offering, 'Sashwat', which featured green tea. Currently, we are perfecting the 'Kumolia' line, which also uses Assam CTC. Our endeavour is to maintain quality through the seasons.

We believe in equality, and that begins with the empowerment of women; most of our employees are women who have learnt about the tea business on the job. Dinki Doimari, our senior manager, for instance, is a skilled taster and tea blender, trained by Sarma himself.

Our marketing manager, Sauvik Sarma, leads a strong, dependable and dynamic team.

EEA wants to give back – we support new tea businesses by offering real tips, sourcing best quality tea at best prices and proposing profitable collaboration opportunities. Not only do we offer customised blending, we also offer bespoke



Deepak Sarma

labelling services.

This year, Eastern Enterprise Assam was the largest buyer of tea exports for the Middle East at the Guwahati Tea Auction. We are the sole buyers for Al Gayathri Trading Co., which is by far the largest tea packer in the Middle East. We source tea for it from both Guwahati and Kolkata auctions.

We remain grateful to all who have helped us in our journey so far and are constantly on the look out for fruitful collaborations. Together, we can touch the sky.

By Prabidita Bharati
Proprietor
Eastern Enterprise (Assam)





OPENING OF A TEA ROOM

Kolkata 19 October 2022: Jay Shree Tea & Industries Limited formally launched their first brand store in Kolkata's tea market district – Lalbazar. This Birla Company has a legacy of over 75 years and owns tea gardens across premium tea growing regions of India. The outlet offers an experiential zone for buyers to evaluate teas through traditional tea tasting. Franchises of the same store model will be available to interested business partners shortly. In the first month, the store sold good volumes of Darjeeling and high quality Assam teas. There is a demand for single estate teas like Mangalam of Assam and Risheehat of Darjeeling. The company expect these volumes to grow substantially as consumers are looking for reliable sources for their teas. Jay Shree Tea has already identified store locations in Delhi and Darjeeling and plans are on to start them by this year end. The USP is quality teas from their own estates at reasonable prices along with the Birla trust. Chief Guest Usha Uthup formally inaugurated the store in the presence of Director Vikash Kandoi, along with members of the promoter family and the top brass of the company. Store Highlights:

- Jay Shree Tea & Industries was founded by B K Birla in 1945.
- Currently, they own 19 tea estates across Darjeeling, Assam, Chachar and Dooars.
- Jay Shree Tea exports tea to more than 45 countries.
- The Company maintains all international standards and certifications in organic production, fair trade, rainforest alliance and sustainability.
- The Company has always remained amongst the top 5 producers and in market cap in India.
- This Store is the Company's first foray into its 'direct to consumer' vision other than it's ecommerce website: www.jayshreetea.com.
- India's largest tea hub is Kolkata's Lalbazar and the Company chose to open in this location.
- All grades and origins of tea will be available at this flagship store keeping in mind the full range of quality and affordability.
- The store carries loose as well as a wide range of packet teas under the brand names - Bagicha, Puttabong and Birla Tea.
- Unique to this store, Industry Standard Tea Tasting facilities are on offer for the consumer. Tea experts are also present to help customers.



Heirloom recipe for success

Five generations on, the Sarmahs' relationship with tea is only getting stronger

While it wasn't unusual to meet sahibs when visiting tea estates pre-Independence, it was certainly uncommon to see an Indian at the reins. And yet, in the 1980s, if you visited the Soklating Tea Estate, you would have been greeted by one of the first Assamese Indians who managed a group of tea gardens. Lt Sjt Someshwar Sarmah, a resident of Bezgaon Village, Sivasagar, had grown through the ranks to become a superintendent of the Mobondha Tea Company.

Once he retired, Sarmah bought the Oating Tea Estate, in Golaghat, from the Jorehaut Tea Company, in 1896. At the time, Oating was a well-known Orthodox tea factory. With the profits he made from his Oating business, Sarmah bought three more gardens: Rajabari, Bugodabari and Padumoni.

The tea business resonated with the entire family. In 1908, Lt Smt Suchandi Devi, the wife of Sarmah, had bought the Madhupur Tea Estate.

Rameshwar was conscientious in his duty, investing in a motor boat so he could take trips on the river Brahmaputra to the garden. When Rameshwar died, his son, Lt Sjt Debeswar Sarmah, took charge. This was, however, a short rein, as he would pass away when his son, Abhijit Sarmah, was only 19 years old. The Madhupur Tea Factory was closed because of obsolete machinery. But not one to give up, Abhijit worked tirelessly to revamp and reopen the factory. His hard work paid off; the quality of tea being produced ensured that the estate was listed among the five best Assam Estates.

He also bought back Oating, his great grandfather's flagship establishment, which had since his death had seen a number of ownership changes.

Abhijit also bought Titabor-based Gobindapore & Bijleejan Tea Estate in 2011.



Someswar Sarmah



Rameswar Sarmah

INDUSTRY



Names of Family members:

Lt Sjt Abhijit Sarmah was son of
 Lt Sjt Debeswar Sarmah
 Lt Sjt Debeswar Sarmah was son
 of Lt Sjt Rameswar Sarmah
 Lt Sjt Rameswar Sarmah was son
 of Lt Sjt Someswar Sarmah

1. Lt Sjt Rameswar Sarmah
2. Lt Sjt Debeswar Sarmah



Debeswar Sarmah



Abhijit Sarmah



Swapna Sarmah

He understood that the way to grow the business would be through superior product. And so he invested in his properties, using superior quality clones and seeds.

Abhijit also had a reputation for being pro-reform and pro-worker. He was a popular Leader of AASU [All Assam Students' Union] during the Assam Agitation and he became a Minister, when AGP [Asom Gana Parishad] formed the government in 1985.

Abhijit died in 2017 at the age of 58. He is survived by his wife, Swapna Sarmah, and their sons, Anjanav and Anubhav, who have worked tirelessly to ensure the integrity of Abhijit's dream remains intact.

Swapna has also expanded the family's business portfolio, Haroocharai Tea Estate in 2018.

Her older son, Anjanav, has joined the family firm, while the younger sibling, Anubhav, is pursuing his law degree and helps out at the estates between terms.

Five generations committed to the brew – and yet, their love for tea never runs out.

Darjeeling tea industry is in peril

The British created the tea industry in India in the 1840s to counter the growing dependence on Chinese tea. What began with the great tea heist from China by Robert Fortune, a Scottish botanist, plant hunter and traveler, ultimately led to the dislocation of indigenous Lepchas from erstwhile Darjeeling and then the migration and oppression of Nepalis. These migrants were vital for creating engineering marvels such as the Toy Train, highways on the steep hills of Darjeeling and the carving out of plantations on hills originally occupied by ancient forests. All this was done to quench the demand for tea back in London.

But despite its complicated history, fame, and the growing global demand for fine teas, Darjeeling's premier position in the trade is in peril today. Recent news reports have relayed what planters were warning. Over half of the 87 tea gardens are up for sale due to large-scale bankruptcy or out of fear of default. This is happening despite the demand for Darjeeling tea rising worldwide and its production reducing annually, pointing to structural problems rather than a bad business cycle. A dangerous combination of factors has brought Darjeeling to the cusp of a crisis. The first is the inability to enforce the Darjeeling Geographical Indication Status. Second, labour laws, Darjeeling and Nepal are not only separated by the Mechi River, but also by different tea traditions, seasons, and the quality of their products. Nepal teas are cheaper due the absence of adequate labour unionisation rules. Third, in 2017, the 104-day Gorkhaland agitation strike prevented the production of Darjeeling teas

during its primary harvest months. This created an opportunity for smugglers and unscrupulous tea traders to capture the domestic and export markets. Fourth, there has been a general lack of concern from local politicians, and the state and central governments.

What is the way forward?

Consumers in India must become more conscious about tea sourcing. On the supply side, Indian producers require proper protection for their teas. We can start with more significant funding and a stronger mandate for the Tea Board of India, which needs to become the focal point for tackling the contraband tea problem. This effort must involve enforcing rules with local producers, traders and intermediaries, the national and international corporations that purchase tea, and most importantly, local tea shop owners.

In addition, producers and local elected representatives should join their efforts to support and defend this crucial industry rather than engage in bickering. This involves serious conversations around land rights, the climate crisis, and a radical reimagining of the space of the tea estate from the model of a plantation to a more just and inclusive garden.

Darjeeling has elevated tea production to an art form. Its name is as ubiquitous as Cuban cigars, French wine or Russian caviar. Losing this industry would be a tragedy, and an irreparable loss of heritage and identity for all.



Sparsh Agarwal is the co-founder of Dorje Teas and a member of the management committee of the Tea Research Association of India.

The views expressed are personal

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For : CTC/ Orthodox/ Green Tea



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Registered office: 71- Park St, Park palza (N), 7th floor. Kolkata- 700016

Marketing office: 1-C, Tangra 2nd Lane, Kolkata- 700046

Corporate Office: Stesalit Towers, Sector-V, Kolkata- 700019

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Withering-its Role in Quality Tea

Value Addition begins with Withering

Withering, is the most important tea processing step. In the Planter's Perception "Withering makes or mars the tea". Proper withering is an insurance for good quality. This article revisits its basics then goes into details of the technique involved.

Quality Withering: Makes tea shoots flaccid, concentrates saps in the cells, and removes desired moisture and preserves greenness.

Critical Factors: Good quality green leaf as well as low withering temperature are prerequisites as with high temperature liquors may develop colour, at the expense of quality.

Ideal Parameters: Low Wet Bulb Temperature, Hygrometric Differential of 4 - 6 deg F with ample air supply. Withering temperature beyond 90 deg F (32 deg C) have serious detrimental effects on chemical characteristics, hence on cup quality.

Adverse Weather: Results hourly / periodical changes in Dry Bulb Temperature and more so with WBT, affects even withering. Conventional process of heating trough air from 70 deg. F (21 deg. C) to 90 deg. F (32 deg C) definitely reduces Relative Humidity from 90% but its WBT also goes up beyond any control. Sometimes to get desired H.D., heating to 95 deg F (35 deg C) results undesired reddening.

Even (Uniform) Withering: Trough air to have H.D. between 4 & 6 deg F and DBT not crossing 90 deg. F (32 deg C).

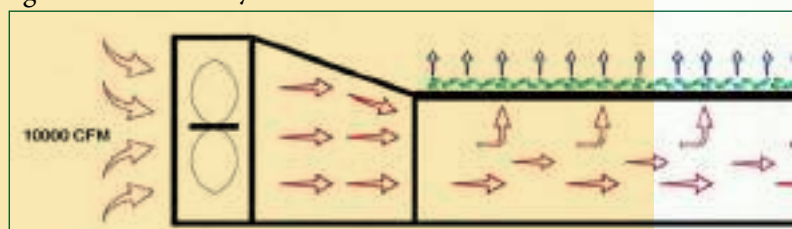
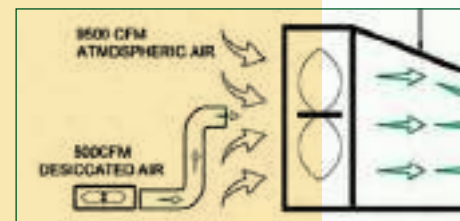
Conventional Trough Withering: During monsoon, to reduce humidity approx. 10% hot air (e.g. 1,000 cfm) is blended with 9,000 cfm of moist ambient air to blow 10,000 cfm of mixed air through trough's green leaves.

Heat-Less Trough Withering: A meticulously designed smaller quantity of bone dry air mixed with balance quantity of moist ambient air to form same 10,000 cfm but this time diluted air having H.D. between 4 & 6 deg F.

System Design restricts mixed air temperature's DBT within 5° F of ambient DBT e.g. if DBT of ambient is 70 deg F (21 deg C), then mixed air's DBT shall be never cross 75 deg F (24 deg C) which is much lower than the safe limit of 90 deg F (32 deg C) as recommended by T.R.A., Tocklai and T.R.I., Ceylon.

Hot Air Vs. Dry Air: Say, at 5,000 ft during monsoon, air of 70 deg F & 90% R.H. contains moisture of 17 gm/kg of air. Heating this air to 95 deg F, its R.H. decreases to 40% but its absolute (actual) moisture remains same 17 gm/kg of air. Whereas by

De-humidifying, air's R.H. decreases to 7% and also moisture content to 9 gm/kg of air i.e. to half of hot air's moisture. As such **De-humidification** removes more moisture than by heating, hence more effective to achieve Quality Withering. Further 16/18 hrs. withering period during monsoon reduces to designed 14 hrs. saving substantial costs of both Energy & Manpower which nowadays are costlier and scarcer.





Moreover, though Conventional Heating works well to remove both Condensed Moisture (water droplets) and Surface

Moisture, it cannot extract **core moisture** that much effectively due to **inadequate vapour pressure differential** between core moisture and hot air.

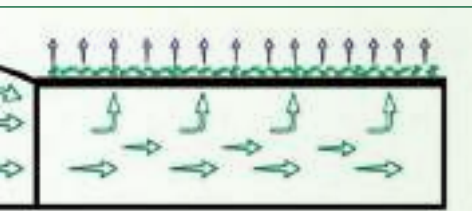
Whereas in Dry Air Withering, high **vapour pressure differential** between very high moisture content in Leaf Core and Dry Air's very low moisture content is "The Key" to extraction of Core Moisture.

Benefits:

Withering at **near to ambient** temperature results in slow extraction of core moisture through capillaries of G.L.

Maintains H.D. of **4 – 6 deg F**, even during peak monsoon.

Green & Flaccid withered leaves mean better maceration as high pressure is not applied at **rolling table**.



Yields improved **Leaf Grade**, hence **Value Addition**.

No change in **TF/TR** ratio in absence of heating.

Brighter **Infusion**,

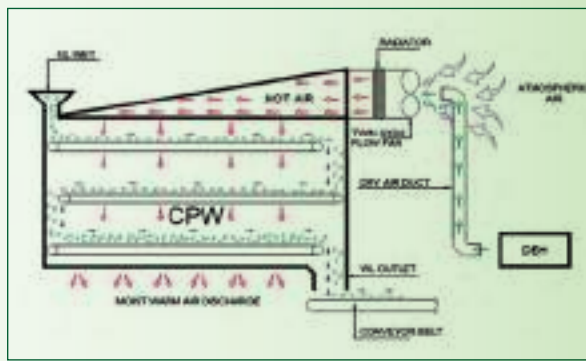
Mellower **Liquor** and Superior **Cup Quality**.

No loss of **Flavonoids & VFC** in absence of heating.

Attractive **Return On Investment** between 12 & 18 months.

Installations: **Chamong T. E.** (Chamong Tee Group) and **Sungma & Tarzum T.E.** (Jay Shree Tea Group) both at **Darjeeling**, removing **66%** moisture since **2016**.

CPW Withering: Good for bulk quantity processing requires much less floor space and man power. However to compensate highly reduced physical withering time of **3 to 4 hrs**, its withering temperature is as high as **45 deg C**; at times reaching **53/54 deg C** during **monsoon**.



Solution: Incorporating a carefully designed **dehumidifier** creates a very high H.D. of **15 deg C (27 deg F)** i.e. W.B.T. of **30 deg C**

or even lesser. This can also lead to withering temperature reduction of **5 deg C** thus saving huge energy cost that goes for heating through the radiator (by steam or hot water) which handles very high air flow of 50,000 cfm.

Benefits: As withered leaves become more **even greener** and **flaccid**, it means **value addition** to made tea. **No loss** of withering days in monsoon means higher production hence **more** revenue.

Note: As **evaporation** takes place along the **Wet Bulb Temperature** line, same being kept below **32 deg C** results in the **greenness** of leaves, even though air's DBT is quite high (Source: TRI, Ceylon)

Installation: **Havukal Estate**, The Nilgiris removing **44%** moisture from 3 nos. CPW machines since **2018**.

Conclusion: With the above proven technique of replacing hot air with much less quantity of dry air adds value to made tea. Further considerable energy **cost** for heating conventional trough's air for about **1,100 to 1,200 hours** p.a. towards burning coal, wooden briquettes, CNG, LPG etc. is saved.

Acknowledgement: **T.R.A.**, Tocklai & Kolkata, **UPASI-T.R.F.**, Coonoor and **T.R.I.**, Ceylon.

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Personality

L N Gupta

(Tea Time spoke with Mr L N Gupta the President of TABAC and traced his career and success. Below are some salient extracts.)

Mr. L. N. Gupta commenced tea business in the year 1977-78 at Calcutta. He traded in teas and sold through their branches at Delhi, Rohtak, Kanpur, Indore and Ahmedabad. And soon became a leading tea merchant.

In 1982 he joined Tea Auction Buyer's Association of Calcutta as a committee member and in 1983-

84 he joined Federation of All India Tea Traders

Association & CTTA as a committee member. He had been Vice Chairman of FAITTA & Chairman of CTTA.

Mr. Gupta is also socially attached with NGO Purwanchal Nagarik Samity running, School, Hospital and a Diagnostic Center. He is attached as a trustee to the Lion Club of Calcutta Kankurgachhi Netralaya & Research Institute which runs a very big Hospital.

In 1998 he purchased Jadabpur Tea Garden as well Ramsai & Kalipur. At present they produce very good quality green tea, very famous in Srinagar. They produce 6 lacs kg green tea made in a brand new 55000 square foot factory with a capacity to manufacture 8 lac kgs. In addition, they also produce 9 lacs kg CTC in a newly constructed factory in the same premises.

Mr. Gupta has been recently selected as Vice-Chairman of Indian Tea Planters Association.

Tea, Tourism and Diversifications

Jadabpur Tea Garden boast of a 10 bedroom Resort, very near the Gorumara Forest.

Their other business interests include a factory manufacturing material for mattress near Falta in Kolkata. And another to produce animal feeds at Siliguri.

Tea Exports and value-added teas is an area where they have ventured into too.

Mr. Gupta has 2 sons Mr. Jugal Kishore Gupta & Mr. Navneet Kishore Gupta. who look after the business.



POWDER PUFF

The Times of India, April 22, 1983

Nayana Goradia

I OPENED THE DOOR to a massive hulk of a man clad in dirty white clothes, with hands like shovels. “You the missus?” he asked with a glance of piercing scrutiny. “Mrs. Mehta in Greater Kailash send me to you,” he said. I did not dare question the giant for he had already planted on large foot inside my door.

“Okay,” he said satisfied with the introduction. “Give one glass water.” For a minute I debated whether to risk my house being burgled or my getting punched in the nose. I then opted for the former; insurance companies can be persuaded to cover stolen knick-knacks, but broken bones I felt were a different proposition.

When I returned, he was squatting on his haunches critically peering at a small patch of my verandah mosaic. He had sprayed a flaky white powder over it. Taking the water from my hand, he sprinkled it over the patch. For a whole minute he watched the mixture curdle before swooping down upon it with a large grey handkerchief and rubbing it dry. “Look! Excellent clean, no? All because Magi-Clean!” He thrust a small cardboard packet into my face.

I looked. It was true. In what I had hitherto taken as a clean floor, the singled-out patch stood out in stark, dazzling contrast like things only seem to do in detergent ads in the colour supplements. By now the booming voice had attracted a sizable crowd in my living room. The servants,



my neighbour’s mother-in-law and the grocer’s delivery boy had collected and were gazing at him in wide-eyed wonder. “Now I go kitchen,” he announced. “Yes, yes,” chanted the audience. Once there, with slow deliberation he opened the cabinets, took out the pots and pans and laid them out in a relentless file. “See stains? He asked, sternly.

“Nowadays which servant clean? How you expect servants clean? Only for nice housewife to clean and clean.”

“There has to be acid in your powder,” I said provocatively.

But even that could not pierce his merciless armour. With a resigned air he balanced a pinch on his finger and raised it to his mouth. “See clean my teeth. How can have acid?”

“Wah, wah,” said the chorus.

“Okay, give me a dozen,” I said. “Only one dozen?” he said in a pained voice. “Your house require minimum four-five dozen. For proper clean. Floor too much dirty.”

I tried a different approach.

“Too expensive,” I said.

“Oh! ho!” said my inexhaustible salesman. “Money? No take money. For you I give free. What is there? Your clean house, my clean house. The audience nodded their heads in affirmation.

I bought six dozen packets.

L N Guptas speech at the TABAC AGM (extracts)



From left Sanjay Shah, Chairman FAITTA, L. N. Gupta, Chairman TABAC, Sourav Pahari, IAS Chairman Tea Board of India, Paras Desai, Vice Chairman FAITTA



L N Gupta presenting a memento to Sourav Pahari, IAS Chairman Tea Board

Sri Sourav Pahari, IAS, Chairman Tea Board of India, Ms. Nayantara Palchoudhuri (Chairperson) Indian Tea Association and Sri Sanjay Shah, Chairman Federation of All India Tea Traders Association.

Ladies and Gentlemen, It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the Annual General Meeting of the Tea Auction Buyers' Association of Calcutta. I thank you all for attending our AGM and gracing the occasion with your presence.

The Tea Auction Buyers' Association of Calcutta, which is popularly known as TABAC was established in the Year 1977 by the buyers who operate in the Calcutta Tea Auction Centre, comprising of all sections of the buying community that is local buyers, internal buyers, merchant-exporters and packeters. The function of TABAC is to create awareness of the requirements of the tea buying community, find solutions to the difficulties faced by buyers and to coordinate with the Tea Board, the State Government and the auction committees to ensure that the auctions are conducted in a smooth manner and that the rules are implemented in a manner which is fair to all sections of the tea trade.

As buyers of tea we depend on the guarantee given by the producers and auctioneers and we purchase the teas assuming that they are in conformity with the FSSAI Standards. I would take this opportunity to request all producers to safeguard the interests of the buyers by using only those plant protection materials which are allowed under the Tea Board's Plant Protection Code and by ensuring that pesticide residues are below the MRLs fixed by FSSAI. It is the common interest and goal of every stakeholder in the tea trade and industry to provide safe tea to all tea consumers in India and abroad.

We know that every Invoice of tea is different and that without trade samples it is impossible for the buyers to evaluate the quality of the teas on offer. Without trade samples, it is not possible for the buyers to operate effectively and to purchase the teas required by them. Price discovery will suffer if trade samples are not issued to the buyers. As buyers, we feel aggrieved that there is persistent effort to either reduce the quantities distributed as trade samples or to put a price on the trade samples. I am sure my producer friends understand the importance of trade samples and its positive impact on the sale of their teas.



Most of the buyers whom all of us know as Local Buyers and who supply teas in bulk to towns and villages in Bengal and neighbouring States suffered tremendously due to the effects of the Covid lockdown and their businesses have not recovered. It is my earnest request to the Tea Board and to CTTA that they should look after the interests of the local buyers so that they can remain in the tea trade.

TABAC has given a very detailed representation to the Tea Board about the Bharat Auction model. The Bharat Auction model is being used in the South Indian Auction centres for more than 2 years and I am sure that the data available will enable the Tea Board to analyse the effectiveness of this model and to make an informed assessment when to roll out the Bharat Auction model in North India.

I am thankful to Sri Sourav Pahari,



Chairman Tea Board of India and others officials of Tea Board Mr. S. Soundararajan, Mrs. Rajanigandha Naskar Seal, Mr. Samaresh Mondal for the extended support and advice.

I am thankful to Ms. Nayantara Palchoudhuri Chairperson ITA for the support and advice and I am also thankful Sri Sanjay Shah, Chairman FAITTA for the support and advice. I am also thankful our TABAC committee members particularly Secretary Mr. Ketan Shah, Treasurer Mr. Rajiv Sharma, Mr. Gopal Poddar, Mr. Pravin Bajaj, Mr. Mukund Bhai Patel, Mr. Harish Vora, Mr. Pradip Bansal, Mr. Ronak Nagrecha, Mr. Nilesh Choudhury, Mr. Jatin Bhansali, Mr. Pritesh Patel & Ms. Meeta Nuvaid for the support extended during my tenure.

I am also thankful to Mr. Kalyana Sundaram, Secretary General CTTA for the support.

I have served as Chairman of TABAC during the long tenure. I thank each and every one for your support and advice during my tenure.

TRIVIA

SINGAPORE TEA CULTURE

TEH or tea as it is popularly known in Singapore was first brought in by the Chinese immigrants specifically from Southern provinces of Fujian and Guangdong who brought the Oolong and Pu-Er varieties of teas. These Chinese immigrants enjoyed tea on its own without condiments and flavor.

However the turning point in Singapore's tea drinking culture happened when the Indian immigrants came ashore and brought in their own tea drinking culture. Indians, liked their tea strong and flavorsome.

This mix of Indian and Chinese tea drinking patterns gave rise to a new form of Tea, black tea with condensed milk and sugar and came to be popular amongst all races in Singapore and TEH, came to be widely served in public food courts and hawker Centers and is also called Kopitiam.

In the recent times tea drinking has been on an upward roll and there have been number of new entrants in this segment - local brands as well as some international brands like Kittea, Kusumi and

London New by Tea.

A local high line tea retailer - The 1872 Clipper Tea Company organises a Tea festival which is all about a weekend of eating and drinking along with tea museum exhibitions, workshops and crafts sessions.

Tea in Singapore is also being incorporated in cocktails and food, Kusumi tea brand's Matcha tea is used by French chefs who use the brew in their recipes. Many high end eateries use tea brews not only in their confectionery items but also in their main dishes and chefs around the world are considering tea not only as a basic ingredient but also for tea smoking and tea marinade.

In Singapore tea or Teh is also replacing coffee as a wellness drink and a healthier option. Along with the basic TEH, there is Teh Tarik, Bubble tea, Teh oh, Teh Halia, Tea Frappe enjoyed widely by all Singaporeans young and old.

Visitors must try out the various forms of tea and enjoying their unique tea drinking culture while in Singapore.

Rekha Bhan



Solidaridad Asia in partnership with Indian Tea Association organizes First India International Small Tea Growers' Convention in Kolkata



Experts from the tea industry deliberated on the challenges faced by the small tea growers and discussed solution that can address the sustainability issues in the tea industry.

The highlight of the event was a display on innovation in sustainable tea production and consumption, which can empower smallholders. This included SoliTrace, a QR code technology that facilitates direct communication between consumers and producers, SoliProbe, an instant soil analyser, SoliMet, a hyper-local weather station, and Ballotronix, an instant tea leaf reader

Kolkata, 11 November 2022: Tea is the most consumed beverage in the world and employs millions of smallholder farmers. The small tea growers, in particular, face numerous economic, climatic, and other difficulties. A conference with more than 150 participants from across India and several other countries, including Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, and Nepal, was held in Kolkata to discuss and address these challenges.

The inaugural session of the day-long convention was graced by Moly Ghatak, Hon'ble Minister, Labour, Law & Judicial Departments, Government of West Bengal as the Chief Guest, and Saurav Pahari, Chairman, Tea Board India as Guest of Honour.

Among the other prominent attendees were Dr. Shatadru Chattopadhyay, Managing Director, Solidaridad Asia, Nayantara Palchoudhuri, Chairperson, Indian Tea Association (ITA) &

TRINITEA Programme Committee, Atul Asthana, Vice Chairperson, ITA, Hemant Bangur, Additional Vice Chairperson, ITA, Arijit Raha, Secretary General, ITA, Henry Heyneardhi, Partnership Director, Indonesian Tea Marketing Association, Senaka Alawattegama, Chairperson, Planters' Association of Ceylon (Sri Lanka), M Shah Alam, Chairperson, Bangladesh Tea Association, Suresh Mittal, Chairperson, Nepal Tea Producers' Association, and Bijoy Gopal Chakraborty, President, Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers Association (CISTA), among others. Several small tea grower representatives from Assam, WB and South India viz. All Assam Small Tea Growers' Association, All Bodoland Small Tea Growers' Association and Jalpaiguri Dist Small Tea Growers Association and Small Tea Growers Association of South India also attended the convention.

Through interactive sessions, the participants discussed the role of smallholder farmers in the tea industry and ways to promote their health and wellbeing and make their businesses environmentally sustainable.

In his inaugural speech, Hon'ble Minister Moly Ghatak said: "We have gathered here to talk about the challenges small tea growers face and to look for solutions to the sustainability problems hurting the tea industry. The tea industry has to struggle with several issues. Small holder farmers have always been an impacted group. Over the years, ITA and Solidaridad have been launching



Solidaridad and Indian Tea organised a panel discussion on 'India International Small Tea Growers Convention'. The conference emphasised on the challenges and hardships faced by small tea growers nationally and internationally and the ways to address the sustainability issues in the industry. The display of innovation in sustainable tea production and consumption, which can empower smallholders, was the event's highlight. The Solidaridad Network is a global civil society organisation which was founded in 1949. The network's main objective is facilitating the development of socially responsible, ecologically sound and profitable supply chains. It operates through eight regional expertise centres in over 30 countries across the world.

INDUSTRY



sustainability initiative involving smallholder tea farmers), which is a QR code technology that would allow consumers to interact with the tea producers, as well as learn about the safety and quality standards adopted. More than 92,000 small



various initiatives to meet these challenges and help the farmers to lead a better life. We must praise Solidaridad Asia and the ITA for their remarkable work and my best wishes to them for achieving many more milestones. The West Bengal government will always lend a helping hand when needed and in my opinion, the governments of all other states ought to do the same to aid small holder farmers secure

a better future. I thank ITA and Solidaridad for inviting me and making me a part of this initiative.”

Saurav Pahari, Chairman, Tea Board India, said, “We are all aware of the struggles the tea industry and farmers, particularly the small growers face and some organisations actively work to improve these conditions. It is amazing to see Solidaridad and ITA making every possible effort to give farmers a better future. It goes without saying, the Tea Board will always support such endeavours which compliments the efforts of the Tea Board.”

Dr. Shatadru Chattopadhyay, Managing Director, Solidaridad Asia, said, “Over a million small tea growers in India and from other countries depend on the tea industry for their existence. The tea business is critical to rural livelihood as well as the economy of the producing countries. Promoting long-term health, wellbeing, and environmental sustainability in the tea business should be a top priority, but the sector is facing a crisis because of persistently low tea prices, which are crushing the small tea farmers. Hence, to empower the farmers to turn their business into a purpose-driven brand, Solidaridad is planning to introduce SoliTrace (under TRINITEA, a make-in-India

tea growers have already become members of the TRINITEA programme and by the end of 2022, the target is to engage 1,00,000 small tea growers. Such innovation will gradually empower the small tea growers and workers’ associations by helping them build independent, democratic organisations, improve their negotiation position with buyers/employers, achieve economic stability, make joint investments, and increase their collective influence.”

At the conference, Solidaridad also introduced other innovative products specially designed for farmers like SoliProbe, an instant soil analyser, SoliMet, a hyper-local weather station, SoliBot an interactive chatbot, and Ballotronix, an instant tea leaf reader. Solidaridad Asia wants to connect with more farmers and offer them affordable farmer-friendly innovative solutions. To realise this aim, it has a dedicated team of engineers integrating mechanical, telecommunications, electrical, and electronics systems with robotics, artificial intelligence, and machine learning for the best results.

Stressing upon the challenges of the small tea growers, Nayantara Palchoudhuri, Chairperson, ITA said, “The tea industry as a whole is being adversely impacted by factors that are detrimental to social development, economy and environment. These factors include the growing effects of climate change, price stagnation, high input cost which has a bearing on cost of production, as well as the mismatch between demand and supply that results in oversupply. In addition, the industry has to bear high transaction costs while facing difficulties in realising fair prices. In spite of all these handicaps, the industry is committed to pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN. Meanwhile, the way ITA-Solidaridad

TEA TIME

partnership has been working on and bringing about a holistic development of the tea industry by way of overall improvement in the livelihoods of STGs - is commendable.”

At the convention, Bijoy Gopal Chakraborty, President, CISTA, said, “I am extremely thankful to ITA and Solidaridad for organising the first India International Small Tea Growers Convention and providing an opportunity to the smallholder tea growers from all tea-producing countries to share their experiences and success stories.”

The day-long event also saw technical sessions featuring presentations and talks by captains of the industry and experts including Small Grower representatives about various aspects of value and supply chains as well the innovative digital tools demonstrating their advantages. The event concluded with an award ceremony felicitating 15 small growers for their exceptional achievement in producing specialty teas followed by a cultural programme.

An exhibition of teas produced by the small growers was also organized and inaugurated by the Hon’ble Minister after the inaugural session.

About Solidaridad

Solidaridad as a global sustainability organisation has vast experience in supporting sustainability programmes nationally and internationally involving tea, among other commodities. Solidaridad has been a frontrunner in sustainable economic development and champions the cause of the small and marginal farmers, workers, and miners. The organisation fosters sustainable and inclusive supply chains, focusing on bringing prosperity, harnessing inclusivity, and producing in balance with nature.

With over 50 years of experience in developing solutions to make communities more resilient, Solidaridad employs around 1,000 expert staff as boots and brains on the ground, operating in over 40 countries across five continents through eight independently supervised regional offices. Recognising markets as pivotal to realising positive changes in the society and environment, Solidaridad looks at public-private partnerships as an increasingly important mechanism for

testing innovations, speeding up change, and taking success to scale. With improved scale and speed, the organisation aims to create a pervasive impact in society toward a more inclusive, climate-resilient, and sustainable economy.

A pioneer in developing and implementing national sustainability, Solidaridad engages in joint programmes with businesses, investors, governments, producers and producer organisations, service providers, labour unions, and other CSOs to bring about effective transformation in the agriculture and mining sectors towards sustainable farming and responsible mining practices.

About Indian Tea Association

Founded in 1881, the Indian Tea Association (ITA) is the premier and oldest Association of tea producers in India. ITA, since its inception has remained the principal advisory and supervisory body in the tea industry. Initially set up to promote orderly growth and collective thinking in Tea, ITA has evolved into a progressive organization, incisively reading industry trends, encouraging innovative thought, benchmarking best practices and their adoption in industry – thereby serving as a strong bridge between various segments of the tea industry, trade and Government. ITA continues to discharge a multidimensional role, formulating policies and effectively liaising with the Tea Board, central and state governments and a wide spread of quasi-governmental and regulatory agencies.

ITA has also emerged as a driver of corporate social responsibility for the tea industry as a whole, administering several projects and programmes that strive to make a difference to the lives of people who reside within and around the tea estates. ITA has over the years reinforced its reputation as a research-backed think-tank for the tea industry, the resources and competencies of which continue to be widely valued. ITA serves as the Secretariat of the Consultative Committee of Plantation Associations (CCPA) – the apex body of the tea producer associations in India.



CSR Projects 2022-23

Rossell Tea

(Div of Rossell India Ltd)



Rossell takes up CSR projects each year. In this year's projects, in tea growing regions, five schools have been taken up.

Facilities such as class-room furniture, toilets for students, and the setting up of new class rooms have been undertaken.

These schools are close to their estates DIKOM, NOKHROY and ROMAI Tea Estates. One school in Jorhat near KHARIKATIA TE. One school near our NAGRIJULI TE.

Some flood relief work also has been undertaken near for two villages near NAGRIJULI Tea Estate.

J.S.Chahal
Vice President

J. S. CHAHAL (Vice President), production Rossell Tea addressing school teachers, students and managements during the handing over the school furniture. The room we were the function held, the roof will be redone by the company this year only.



The students and the teachers being addressed while the Vice President is handing over the school furniture.



The management staff of Rossell Tea, along with the school principal on the Dias.





RIDING ADVENTURES IN NORTH BENGAL

One day in July 2021, post the second phase of Covid and Partha's recovery, we donned our masks and helmets and rode to the Coronation Bridge at Sevoke.

What began as random forays turned into "longer" rides upto Kurseong. Bhupi, joined us in September and rode to Dudhia, Shivhola, Phuguri, Mirik, Giddapahar, and even ventured to Sittong in quest of Namthing Pokhri, towards Tindharia innumerable times and one afternoon, for a change, to Gajoldoba.

HOME STAYS

Lepchajagat, a tiny hamlet at almost 7000 ft, is literally a stretch of road with home stays on both sides and turned out to be a charming outing. Sangmu Kanya Home stay was a winner, as the sunrise from the terrace equaled the experience from Tiger Hill, sans the crowd.

Achuley Home stay at 4000 ft, nestled in a valley in the midst of Dooteria Tea Estate, is a gem of a place. It is actually located 6 kms from Ghum. Host Dipen heard we are coming on our bikes, he advised us to avoid the regular 4-wheeler route, and he suggested a shortcut which turned out to be THE most adventurous one till date and turned out to be somewhat risky at a couple of points. This narrow road literally dived down from Rangbull Phatak (which is situated between Sonada and Ghum). Rangbull is at about 6700 ft and this trail to Achuley covered 7 kms with the cliff wall on one side and a sharp drop on the other. As we approached the end of the road we spotted the bamboo "bridge" that Dipen had mentioned.

Sandakphu was on our minds ever since our trip to Lepchajagat. Enroute is Maney bhanjang is situated on the border of Nepal. Tonglu (located within India) is at 10,070 ft and then Tumling (situated within Nepal) is actually a tad lower at 10,000 ft altitude. The first check point we encountered on our way up was at Meghma manned by a single army personnel with one table and chair sheltered on 3 sides by a tarpaulin. The security jawan there asked for the ID proof and contact. Interestingly, he pointed out that no photography was permitted towards the right, Indian sector. There were no objections to us clicking on the Nepal side!

The preferred transportation is the Land Rover and The Singalila Land Rover Taxi Association is the largest such operator in South East Asia, with well-maintained Land Rovers of British vintage.

By Kuheli Dey





Ganesh Prasad of Baruapara speaks to Niladri about his company

Ganesh Prasad of Baruapara, has a candid conversation with Tea Time's, Niladri Saha.

Baruapara situated in Bhaktinagar, Jalpaiguri manufactures approx. 10 lakh kgs of teas and they sell through the auctions at Kolkata and Siliguri.

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

No, it's not only because of family legacy. The reason why tea business is so interesting for me is because tea has been of great cultural importance throughout history. It is a part of every social ritual, big as well as small ones. Also, it has a huge market as a business point of view, where we can find a lot of deals at every corner. There are obviously ups and downs, sometimes there are challenging situations but that's alright because that's the real joy of doing business.

2) Who is your business role model and why?

I have several different business role models in life, simply because there are different areas that I'm passionate about and therefore I look up to certain people within each area. For example, I look up to people like Ratan Tata because of his work, and innovation wealth in every field and for various other reasons, Elon Musk as he is a visionary and innovative person determined to achieve his goals

despite the obstacles in his way to positively impact the world and the list goes on.

3) What are your aspirations for your company?

My ambition is to make my company one of the largest tea manufacturing and tea exporting company in India.

4) What do you perceive as threats to the industry?

The tea market faces four key issues: (i) Supply continues to outstrip demand (ii) international trade is becoming much more of a challenge to the entire supply chain (iii) under leveraging of tea's healthfulness and (iv) sustainability.

5) What do you see as opportunities for your company?

Being a tea manufacturer there are many opportunities for my company such as making our own brand of tea, trading, exporting etc.

6) In general, do you see an interest among young entrepreneurs in tea?

Yes, I do find and see many interested entrepreneurs showing up to me with the curiosity to know about the tea business and that I think is because of multiple business opportunities tea provides to every business man/women.

7) Who has been your greatest teacher?

My greatest teacher is undoubtedly my father because to be honest he takes care of me very well when I am in trouble, confusion and in tension. He taught me so many things with not only his words but also with his action which is very important for me.



A Tea Time Report by Niladri Saha Contemporary Kolkata

HAPPENINGS

Election of Office Bearers of the Association



Vinodhan Kandaiah
Vice-Chairman

Mr. T. J. Varghese Vaidyan, Senior General Manager of Matheson Bosanquet Enterprises (P) Ltd., Nilgiris District, and **Mr. Vinodhan Kandaiah**, Coffee Planter, Yercaud, have been elected as the **Chairman** and the **Vice-Chairman** respectively of The Planters' Association of Tamil Nadu (PAT) for the year 2022-23, at the 69th Annual General Meeting of the Association held on 01.10.2022, at Coimbatore.



T. J. Varghese Vaidyan
Chairman



Sunset at Samabeyong TE Retreat Lava

READ THIS SLOWLY

@_JAKEWOODARD

The Universe responds **to your frequency**. It doesn't recognize your personal desires, wants or needs. It only understands the frequency in which you are vibrating at. For example, if you are vibrating in the frequency of fear, guilt or shame, you are going to attract things of a similar vibration to support that frequency. If you are vibrating in the frequency of **love, joy and abundance**, you are going to attract things to support that frequency. It's like tuning into a radio station. You have to be tuned into the radio station you want to listen to just like you have to be tuned into the energy you want to manifest in your life.



MS. PALCHOUDHURI HAS BEEN APPOINTED AS THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE ASIA TEA ALLIANCE OF WHICH INDUSTRY BODIES OF INDIA, SRI LANKA, CHINA, INDONESIA, NEPAL, AND BANGLADESH ARE MEMBERS



A NEW GOODRICKE TEA ROOM



Date : Saturday, the 20th August 2022
Venue : Siliguri Tea Auction Committee Hall, Mallaguri, Pradhan Naga

45th & 46th A
SILIGURI TE
Monda
Venue : Siliguri Tea Auc

STAC AWARDS : HIGHEST AVERAGE & THIRD LARGEST QUANTITY SOLD. NIMESH BHUJAL, COLLECTS PRIZES



International
Tea Day
2022

“A true warrior, like tea, shows his strength in hot water”

Chinese Proverb

International Tea Day is celebrated on Dec 15, since 2005, in tea producing countries like India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Vietnam, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Kenya, Malawi, Malaysia, Uganda & Tanzania.

Tea is the most preferred beverage in the world. India is the second-largest producer & fourth- largest exporter of tea in the world. Assam is the largest tea-producing state in India.

Around 3,000 different types of tea exist on the planet. Tea has more caffeine than coffee.

Tea was so valuable in the 18th century that people used to keep it in a locked chest (tea caddy). Researchers have found that regular tea drinkers are less likely to die prematurely!





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DUTCH TEA TRADE HISTORY

HOW THE DUTCH EAST INDIA COMPANY BECAME THE FIRST CARRIER OF TEA TO EUROPE—JAVA TEA BECOMES AN ARTICLE OF COMMERCE—PROMINENT JAVA TEA FIRMS—SUMATRA TEAS ENTER THE MARKET—OUTSTANDING COMPANIES IN THE SUMATRA TRADE—THE DUTCH TRADE AT AMSTERDAM—THE PAKHUISMEESTEREN VAN DE THEE—AMSTERDAM TEA ASSOCIATIONS—DUTCH IMPORTING TRADE—TEA BROKERAGE FIRMS—THE WHOLESALE TRADE—PACKING TRADE—MULTIPLE TEA SHOPS

A COMPANY of Dutch merchants fitted out and armed a fleet of four ships that sailed from the island of Texel April 21, 1595, bound to the Indies for spices and oriental produce. They reached Bantam, Java, in 1596 and used that harbor as the base for trading operations in the Spice Islands. Everywhere they found the natives willing to trade with them, and they returned home with valuable cargoes in August, 1597, amid the booming of cannon and much popular enthusiasm.

Without waiting for the return of the first fleet, other companies were formed and other fleets dispatched in pursuit of the profits awaiting those who risked and won. By 1602, some sixty-odd Dutch ships had made the round-trip voyage to India. However, with so many companies in the field the arrivals of the ships at the home ports were not well timed, and markets were sometimes glutted, accompanied by falling prices. This depreciation proved ruinous to some of the companies, and was severely felt by all; therefore, upon the initiative of the States General the surviving companies were induced to unite their funds into one general commercial body, and on March 20, 1602, a new corporation, known as The Dutch East India Company, was formed at The Hague.

The new company, capitalized at approximately 6,500,000 florins, was much more than a trading venture, for it was empowered by charter to discharge the functions of government in the remote Indies, assist in the war against Spain and Portugal, and regulate trade. The actual centralized control was vested in seventeen directors, who came to be known as "The Lords Seventeen."

The Company at once began operations [1602], sending out fourteen ships in the first fleet, and, as Dutch merchants had reached China the year previous [1601], the produce of that country began to be added to the return cargoes to Holland. The first tea was

transported from Macao, China, to Java in 1606-07, and in 1610, Dutch ships carried the first tea from Java to Europe.

Tea first became a regular article of European commerce when, in 1637, The Lords Seventeen of the Dutch company wrote to the Governor General at Batavia, "as tea begins to come into use with some of the people, we expect some jars of Chinese, as well as Japanese tea with each ship." This antedated by thirty-one years the first order for tea by the directors of the English East India Company.

The Dutch still were bringing tea to Europe in dribbles as late as 1650. Ships' papers found among the archives of the Dutch East India Company, covering eleven ships that sailed from the Indies at the end of that year, show that they carried to Holland a total of "twenty-two catti [about 30 pounds] Japanese Thia [tea], in five casten [boxes]."

In 1685, the situation had change somewhat for The Lords Seventeen wrote the Governor General at Batavia:

We have resolved to augment the demand, lately made by us, to 20,000 pounds, on condition that it be good fresh tea, and packed in such a way as we have exposed in our demand; for as we have formerly written, tea deteriorated by age and bad tea are naught worth any money.

During the half century following, the tea trade of the Dutch company grew steadily. The statement of goods carried to Holland in the year 1734 shows 885,567 lbs. of tea. By 1739, tea had reached a position of prime importance among the Dutch East India Company's imports, when, for the first time, this commodity led in value all cargo items brought by a fleet from the Indies. About 1750, black tea began to displace the green teas previously brought to Holland. It also displaced coffee to some extent as a breakfast beverage.



The D. E. I. Company's Ship
"Thee-Boom"



A Tea Godown in Batavia

There was a four-fold increase in the amount of tea imported into Holland by the company over the fifty-year period from 1734 to 1784, during which the figures rose to 3,500,000 lbs. a year. However, rivalries and hostilities with the East India companies of other countries not only cut down the profits of the Dutch company, but finally resulted in the expulsion of the Dutch from the mainland of British India and the island of Ceylon. They had important factories in both places.

The Dutch retaliated by strengthening their hold on the Dutch East Indies, but at the cost of solvency. By the beginning of the eighteenth century they were in financial difficulties, and were heavily bankrupt when the conquest of Holland by Napoleon in 1798 brought about the final dissolution of the company and the abrogation of all its powers.

Java Tea Enters the Market

In 1835, the first consignment of Dutch-grown tea, raised and manufactured under Government monopoly in the island of Java, reached the Amsterdam market. The quality, however, was poor and the price realized—150 to 300 Dutch cents—was much below the cost of production. The Agrarian Act of 1870 changed the whole situation by allotting



Founders of Tiedeman & Van Kerchem

Left-Mr. P. Tiedeman, Right- Mr. C.F.W. Wiggera van Kerchem

government lands to private planters. However, capital for tea culture at first was not readily forthcoming, as coffee and cinchona were looked upon as much more promising financially. For this reason, the Java teas of the 'seventies continued inferior, and the prices low as compared to British India teas.

At length, in 1877, Mr. John Peet, founder of the Batavia firm bearing his name, succeeded in awakening Java planters to the commercial possibilities of Dutch East India tea, and sent samples to London to be tested by English brokers. The latter obligingly pointed out the defects in the Dutch teas, and sent back samples of good tea from British India for comparison. The ultimate result was a switch by Java planters from China tea plants to the Assam variety, and the adoption of machine manufacture. By slow degrees through the 'eighties and 'nineties the quality of Java



Tea Sampling Room, Batavia

teas improved, and in the pre-war period Batavia was gaining an increasingly important position in the tea trade.

The Batavia market continued to develop consistently in the post-war period, and now ranks as one of the important primary tea markets of the world. The rules of contract governing the purchase and sale of tea were formulated by the Handelsvereeniging te Batavia, or Trades Association in Batavia. Buying is mostly in the hands of British firms, some seven or eight of whom are established or represented. The quantity of tea sold annually in Batavia varies somewhat, but averages close to 50, 000,000lbs.; the principal outlets being England, Australia, and the United States.

Prominent Jaa Tea Firms

The oldest agency firm in Batavia is TIEDEMAN & VAN KERCHEM, established in 1854 by Messrs. P. Tiedeman and C. F. W. Wiggers van Kerchem. Branches were opened at Amsterdam, in 1892, and Soerabaya, Java, in 1915. Mr. O. van Vloten, one of the tea pioneers of Java, was a partner from January 1, 1912, until



TEA TIME

December 31, 1916. The present partners are: Messrs. P. A. Waller and E. Ploos van Amstel in Amsterdam; Mr. S. W. Zeverijn in Batavia; and Dr. J. Baron van Slingelandt in Soerabaya.

The firm of GEO WEHRY & Co., Batavia, was founded in 1867 by Messrs. J. G. Wehry and K. A. B. Froelke as a general importing firm, with head offices at Batavia and a buying branch in Amsterdam. The firm has been interested in tea distribution and exportation since the 'nineties, and now controls as manager or agent seven estates with a total annual outturn of 6½ million pounds of dry leaf. Among the partners who have figured prominently in the development of the firm's tea business, may be mentioned the late Messrs. Albert Mohr and Albert Wehry. The present partners are Messrs. E. W. Scholten, D. M. Kan, E. J. Weenink, G. J. Wehry, H. van der Vaart, J. Bijl, K. H. Raben, and J. W. Scholten.

Another of the older tea agencies in Java is the firm of JOHN PEET & Co., established at Batavia in 1870 by the late Mr. John Peet, previously mentioned as the pioneer grower of the Assam variety tea plants, now universally cultivated in the island, and the introducer of tea manufacturing machinery. Upon Mr. Peet's retirement from active management in the East, he opened an office in London, where he continued as

an active partner until his death in 1909. The present Batavia partners are Messrs. F. N. and M. Neumann.

MR. FERDINAND N. NEUMANN, the present senior partner in both the Batavia and London firms of John Peet & Co., was born in Hungary, and shortly after his birth was taken by his parents to Vienna, where he received his preliminary and commercial education. His first business experience was gained in a brief connection with Adler Bros., at Acheen, Sumatra, with whom he was employed when eighteen years of age.



Mr. Albert Mohr



Mr. F. N. Neumann



Indian Tea occupies an exalted status on the global tea map. The country is the largest black tea producer in the world accounting for 23% of the total global production. India is also the world's largest consumer of black tea with the domestic market consuming more than 1000 million kgs of tea. In terms of exports, India is the fourth largest exporter in the world. Tea industry, being labour intensive, directly employs over 1.2 million workers and also looks after more than 3 million dependants who are resident in the tea estates. Women constitute 50% of the workforce. While the industry is making consistent efforts at improving quality, diverse product mix, market expansion, it is confronted with several challenges which are threatening its long term viability.



Estimated World Production of Tea										
Calendar Years	Million Kg									
	The figures represent made Tea									
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Bangladesh	62	66	64	67	85	79	82	96	86	97
China Mainland	1790	1924	2096	2249	2405	2496	2610	2799	2986	3063
India	1126	1200	1207	1209	1267	1322	1339	1390	1258	1343
Indonesia	138	145	144	133	137	134	131	129	126	127
Iran	15	14	14	13	21	21	21	20	19	20
Japan	86	83	81	76	77	79	82	77	70	75
Korea,Rep.	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Malaysia	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Mynamar	20	20	20	20	21	21	21	22	21	20
Nepal	21	21	23	24	24	25	25	24	24	24
Sri Lanka	328	340	338	329	293	308	304	300	278	299
Taiwan	15	15	15	14	13	13	15	15	14	15
Thailand	19	19	19	20	20	20	21	21	20	20
Turkey	231	235	246	259	253	255	280	268	280	282
Vietnam	174	180	175	170	180	175	185	190	192	180
Total Asia	4030	4271	4451	4590	4803	4956	5123	5358	5382	5572
Burundi	9	9	10	11	11	11	11	12	11	11
Cameroon	4	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	5	5
Congo, DRC	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Ethiopia	6	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	7	7
Kenya	370	432	445	399	473	440	493	459	570	538
Malawi	42	46	46	39	43	46	51	48	45	51
Mauritius	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
Mozambique	6	6	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Rwanda	23	22	25	25	26	28	31	32	33	33
South Africa	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3
Tanzania	32	32	36	32	29	32	35	34	28	26
Uganda	58	61	65	59	56	54	72	72	77	82
Zimbabwe	13	13	14	15	16	16	15	15	14	14
Total Africa	572	643	668	608	681	654	736	700	806	782
Azerbaijan	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Georgia	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	6	5	5
Russian Fed.	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Total CIS	8	8	8	8	9	9	10	10	9	10
Argentina	83	80	82	82	84	82	80	77	73	74
Brazil	6	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	3	3
Ecuador	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Peru	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Total S. America	94	91	92	91	94	91	89	86	81	82
Australia	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Papua New Guinea	6	6	6	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Total Oceania	8	8	8	8	9	9	9	9	9	9
Grand Total	4712	5021	5228	5306	5595	5719	5967	6162	6287	6455

Source: International Tea Committee



Month wise District wise Auction averages : 2022

● CTC Leaf & All Dust ●

Assam : Estate

Month	2022	2021	Diff (+/-)
April	280.07	231.20	48.86
May	212.55	235.07	-22.52
June	256.77	263.23	-6.46
July	258.83	228.45	30.38
August	258.55	211.02	47.53
September	234.49	214.29	20.20
October	231.39	213.27	18.12
November	213.42	223.03	-9.61
April to November	239.03	222.56	16.47

Dooars & Terai : Estate

Month	2022	2021	Diff (+/-)
April	257.17	240.63	16.54
May	205.59	220.86	-15.27
June	241.23	237.60	3.64
July	223.82	207.77	16.05
August	218.97	197.91	21.06
September	202.05	187.76	14.30
October	209.07	190.43	18.65
November	198.51	205.99	-7.48
April to November	216.09	207.01	9.08

Cachar : Estate

Month	2022	2021	Diff (+/-)
April	237.73	206.44	31.29
May	182.99	202.45	-19.46
June	182.20	202.87	-20.68
July	190.18	176.95	13.23
August	200.91	163.55	37.36
September	192.89	159.83	33.07
October	187.01	159.94	27.07
November	180.36	169.34	11.02
April to November	189.25	171.67	17.58

Tripura : Estate

Month	2022	2021	Diff (+/-)
April	227.34	187.58	39.75
May	160.47	175.96	-15.49
June	151.56	177.98	-26.42
July	153.80	152.42	1.38
August	161.65	136.01	25.64
September	157.57	134.09	23.47
October	149.58	130.82	18.76
November	146.68	135.71	10.97
April to November	155.02	144.13	10.89

Assam : BLF

Month	2022	2021	Diff (+/-)
April	196.08	182.39	13.69
May	157.74	188.55	-30.81
June	164.39	198.17	-33.79
July	166.68	164.21	2.48
August	178.46	148.52	29.94
September	172.62	150.74	21.88
October	173.51	152.34	21.16
November	163.15	159.03	4.12
April to November	169.39	163.20	6.19

Dooars & Terai : BLF

Month	2022	2021	Diff (+/-)
April	159.63	161.49	-1.87
May	131.46	170.07	-38.61
June	123.53	155.69	-32.17
July	121.20	134.50	-13.30
August	127.60	126.38	1.22
September	128.30	122.99	5.31
October	135.18	123.83	11.35
November	134.97	131.46	3.51
April to November	130.61	136.25	-5.64

South India

Month	2022	2021	Diff (+/-)
April	104.52	123.91	-19.39
May	101.39	128.65	-27.26
June	96.05	110.99	-14.94
July	92.65	100.51	-7.87
August	103.99	99.09	4.90
September	107.04	100.85	6.19
October	110.30	95.17	15.14
November	120.66	101.56	19.10
April to November	104.31	104.07	0.24

● Orthodox ●

Assam

Month	2022	2021	Diff (+/-)
April	282.51	258.25	24.26
May	265.71	241.60	24.11
June	354.47	258.83	95.65
July	355.10	254.15	100.94
August	343.30	238.42	104.87
September	284.86	243.61	41.25
October	278.51	230.47	48.04
November	284.07	216.47	67.60
April to November	309.34	239.45	69.88

South India

Month	2022	2021	Diff (+/-)
April	139.38	157.80	-18.41
May	160.43	154.89	5.54
June	161.63	158.27	3.37
July	167.62	155.69	11.93
August	160.19	137.37	22.82
September	170.60	138.45	32.15
October	165.89	140.06	25.83
November	172.00	142.50	29.49
April to November	163.59	148.36	15.23

Compiled by Soumen Bagchi





Ms. Nayantara Palchoudhuri, Chairperson, Ita



Dr. Saurav Pahari, IAS, Chairman Tea Board



Mr. Arijit Raha, Secretary General, Ita

Indian Tea Association holds 139th Annual General Meeting on 10th November, 2022 at Taj Bengal Hotel, Kolkata.



L to R - Mr. Arijit Raha, *Secretary General, ITA*, Mr. Hemant Bangur, *Addl. Vice Chairman, ITA*, Ms. Nayantara Palchoudhuri, *Chairperson, ITA*, Dr. Saurav Pahari, *IAS, Chairman, Tea Board*, Mr. Atul Astana, *MD & CEO of Goodricke Group*.

Addressing the gathering, Chairperson ITA Ms Nayantara Palchoudhuri highlighted the sustainability challenges confronting the tea sector. She stated that economic viability of the industry is under threat owing to the unsustainable increase in the cost of production.

Ms Palchoudhuri in her address lauded the pro-active role of the Hon'ble Finance Minister, Government of India for speeding up the process of improvement of Banking infrastructure in tea garden areas which has enabled gradual transition to digital payment of worker's wages. She flagged several issues for intervention of the Ministry of Finance, Government of India :

- Inclusion of power and fuel, including Natural Gas under the purview of GST
- Enhancement of working capital limit for tea

gardens to tide over the liquidity crunch

- Interest subvention @3% on working capital loan
- Inclusion of Tea Sector under the purview of MSME Schemes

Other key issues which featured in her speech were :

- In the backdrop of oversupply situation prevailing in the country, suspension of Sections 12 to 15 of the Tea Act relating to control over the area of tea cultivation could trigger unfettered expansion of tea areas and therefore the decision merits a review.
- Strengthening of the import inspection regime is crucial to prevent influx of low-quality teas in the country.
- To aid fair price discovery, the proposed Bharat Auction model needs to consider the suggestions of producers pertaining to Base Price, Reserve



Price, timeless system with fixed number of lots per session, rationalization of sampling costs etc.

- Need for creation of a dedicated fund by the Government for scaling up of tea promotional campaigns – both domestic and overseas.
- The industry has a vision to export 350 million kgs of tea. However, support of the Central Government is necessary for which restoration of Tea Board's Orthodox Subsidy Scheme and enhancement of the RODTEP Reward rate for tea are crucial interventions. In this regard, Chairperson, ITA thanked the Government of

Presently, low MRLs for important pesticides are causing trade disruptions. The ITA is working closely with Tea Board and Commerce Ministry for an early solution.

- The Code of Wages 2019 provides that valuation of in-kind benefits is to be limited to 15% of the total wage. This would adversely impact the tea plantation sector as a significant component of wage of a tea garden worker comprises of in-kind benefits. The Association has urged the Labour Ministry to amend Rule 3 of the Code on Wages (Central) Rules to allow full adjustment of in-kind benefits while computing the cash wage for the tea sector.

- Institutionalizing of Government welfare schemes for tea garden workers would mitigate employer's costs and would also benefit workers.

- Adoption of new technology including solar power is gaining momentum.

- Tea industry needs to tap the growing



Tea Board Chairman Speaking With Press

Assam for enhancing the Orthodox incentive rate for Assam orthodox teas from Rs 7/- per kg to Rs 10/- per kg under the Assam Tea Industries Special Incentives Scheme (ATISIS).

- In view of depressed price realizations of tea producers including small growers, introduction of a Floor Price of Tea needs immediate consideration. The Association has submitted a Report to Tea Board and Commerce Ministry which is pending final decision.
- A fiscal revival package for the Darjeeling tea sector needs favourable consideration. This has also been recommended by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce in its 171st Report.
- The advent of climate change and increased incidence of pest infestations reinforces the need for a wider basket of approved pesticides with realistic Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs).

carbon market.

- ITA's Sustainability cell, with its twin objective to achieve the Sustainable Developmental Goals of the United Nations as well as pursuing family friendly policies in the estates has strengthened its partnerships with eminent global NGOs.
- The ITA has focussed its attention on workforce nutrition through its joint pilot programme with the Global alliance on Improved Nutrition (GAIN).
- In West Bengal a new dimension on Corporate Social Responsibility has been added with the Prevention of Child trafficking initiative under the ITA – UNICEF project. The Govt. of West Bengal has supported and encouraged the engagement.
- The TRINITEA program in partnership with Solidaridad has further strengthened the small holder initiative in West Bengal and Assam.



TEA TIME

More than 75,000 small tea growers have been covered so far under Trinitea program in Assam and West Bengal. Emphasis continues to be laid on good agricultural practices and harvest of quality leaf. ITA firmly believes that the STG sector would benefit greatly from this integrated approach.

About the Asia Tea Alliance meeting and the India International Small Tea Growers' Convention scheduled to be held on 10th and 11th November, 2022 respectively, Chairperson, ITA stated as follows:

“It is indeed satisfying that the AGM today will be followed by the Asia Tea Alliance Meet and tomorrow, the India International Small Tea Growers' Conference which the Association and Solidaridad Asia are jointly hosting – both for the first time in India. I extend a warm welcome to all our guests from abroad who are here to participate in the Asia Tea Alliance Meet.

The forum of Asia Tea Alliance comprising leading industry bodies from tea producing countries viz. ITA, Tea Board of Sri Lanka, China Tea Marketing Association, Indonesian Tea Marketing Association and Central Tea Association of Japan was set up in 2019 and facilitated by Solidaridad Asia with multiple objectives of strengthening mutually beneficial ties by way of sharing of Information, trade promotion for boosting tea consumption, enhancing technology

exchange etc. In view of the pandemic the agenda of the Asia Tea Alliance could not be progressed in 2020 & 2021 but now with the gradual return to normalcy this meet will focus on forging a Memorandum of Understanding among the members of the alliance to achieve the objectives.

The small holder tea segment currently shares more than 50% of the total production and is a vital source of green leaf for many estate factories manufacturing out of bought leaf. The Conference of Small Tea Growers that follows tomorrow is an endeavour to expose the small growers to presentations from different countries under the Asia Tea Alliance about the industry's progress and development in those countries which in turn would serve to not only amplify their knowledge but also becoming providers of good quality teas for domestic and international markets.”

Our Honoured Guests for the AGM were :

1. Dr V. Anantha Nageswaran, Chief Economic Adviser, Govt of India addressed the AGM online. [He gave an overview of the Indian economy in his address.]
2. Shri Saurav Pahari, IAS – Chairman, Tea Board dwelt upon the various issues confronting the tea industry.

TEA ACADEMY SILIGURI - WEST BENGAL

Courses offered:

- 3 months' course on Tea Management - Rs.30000/-
- 3 months' course on Tea Tasting and Tea Blending - Rs.30000/-
- 5 days' crash course on Tea Tasting and Tea Blending - Rs.15000/-

Address: Tea Academy, Military Camp Road, Halermatha, Shivmandir, New Rangia P.O., Dist. Darjeeling, West Bengal -734013

TEA ACADEMY COIMBATORE - TAMIL NADU

Courses offered:

- 5 days' crash course on Tea Tasting and Tea Blending - Rs.15000/-

Address: St. Joseph's ITI, Big Bazaar Street, Town Hall Area, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu - 641001

TEA ACADEMY BANGALORE - KARNATAKA

Course offered:

- 5 days' crash course on Tea Tasting and Tea Blending - Rs.15000/-

Address: The Malleshwaram Association, 110 7th Cross, Margosa Rd, opp. Malleshwaram, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560003

Contact: Mr.S.S.Selvam - 9434045584(Whatsapp) / 8617039200
Ms.Sareena Selvam - 8617036906

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sareena.selvam@gmail.com
teaacademycoimbatore@gmail.com



Goodricke bags the the first and second prize at the Gold medal tea competition 2022 at North American Tea Conference, Canada.



Shiv Bhasin receiving the award



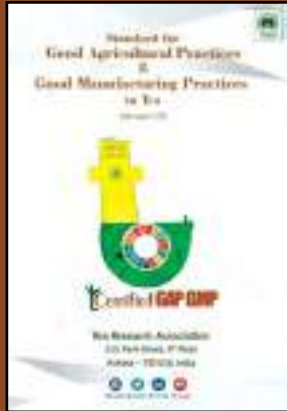
Nishwarth Sports Meet

The *First Sports Meet, for Specially Abled Tribals of Tea Gardens,* was held at Bagrakot Tea Garden Football Ground, on 10th of December 2022 at 10 am.

Participants will be (a) Deaf & Mute (b) Blind

(c) Cerebral palsy (d) Autistic (e) Polio and physically/ mentally challenged persons. Chief Guest State Tribal Minister Sri Bulu Chik Baraik, Sri Karimul Haque (Padmashri) **.

Organised by Harsh Kumar founder Niswarth



TRA Tocklai launches world's first R & D led sustainability code

Tocklai Tea Research Institute of Tea Research Association has been the pioneer R & D organization globally in the field of tea research and engineering since 1911. Through its wide range of R & D activities over 112 years, TRA Tocklai has actually made tea plantations economically viable in North India and have made significant contributions by developing more than 200 tea cultivars, suitable agro-techniques and location specific package of practices for nutrition, crop protection, tea processing, methodology of sustainable tea plantations and production. TRA Tocklai invented the CTC tea and Rotor vane machine which revolutionised tea production and consumption in the world.

TRA is now integrating its Good Agricultural Practices and Good Manufacturing Practices in the form of TRA-TOCKLAI GAP-GMP Standard, aligned with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals. The Standard supports strategies which will contribute in improving overall farm practices, management systems and sustainability performance. The idea of having a homegrown sustainability certification was mooted by Joydeep Phukan, Secretary TRA to the Council of Management of TRA on 29th June 2022 which was unanimously accepted.

TRA-TOCKLAI GAP-GMP Standard which will start from 1st January 2023 recognizes the challenges faced by the tea industry due to climate change and prescribes climate-resilient practices to adapt and mitigate climate change impacts, improving resilience of the industry. The recommended practices on maintaining healthy soils, conserving water and energy

resources, avoiding deforestation, encouraging afforestation programme, planting climate-smart planting material, protecting natural ecosystems and biodiversity, reducing GHG emissions etc. would significantly contribute towards a climate-resilient tea industry.

TRA-TOCKLAI GAP-GMP Standard is being supported by Tea Board of India unlike other standards. It was launched at the 58th Annual General Meeting of Tea Research Association on 28th September at Kolkata by Shri Saurav Pahari IAS Chairman Tea Board of India in the midst of all industry stakeholders. Shri Paban Singh Ghatowar, former Union Minister and President ACMS was also present in the launch function.

Shri Prabhat Bezboruah Chairman TRA stated that Tocklai should come out with climate resilient tea clones after it has successfully sequenced the tea genome. This will go a long way in addressing the problems of drought and pest incidence.

Mr. Saurav Pahari emphasised on the need for industry paying more attention to research and development to address some major problems of the industry.

Chief Guest of the AGM Prof Alok Dhawan, an eminent scientist of India spoke on the need for GAP GMP standards and safety of tea.

Ms Nayantara Palchoudhuri of Washabarie Tea Co & Mohorgung Gulma Tea Co was elected as the Chairperson of TRA and Mr Atul Asthana, MD & CEO of Goodricke Group as Vice Chairman TRA.

J Phukan
Secretary TRA

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(Uniform Green Leaf Feeding)

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(For Dryer Mouth Tea)



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