

CONTEMPORARY

TEA TIME

Dubai: New
port of call
for tea

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Small Tea Growers of India ◻
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Tea Consumption patterns in emerging markets comprising East Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Near East show 2.5% increase in the last decade, states an Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations report, while developed and advanced mature European markets show decline.

The drive for innovation is evident with consumers demanding natural organic ingredients and diversified blends favours. Higher quality specialty teas with flavour are in demand. In parallel, green teas as well as herbal and fruit teas are gaining share in the developed mature markets owing to real or perceived health benefits.

In the producing countries, per capita consumption remains low compared to importing markets, and greater efforts should be directed at expanding demand to explore prevailing market opportunities.

Dubai has taken the lead to become a large hub for the reexport of teas, to cater to growing trends, which we cover in this issue.

A question often asked, is whether rural India is losing the taste for tea—particularly, the younger generation? And can improved quality in packets be an answer?

For exports, should the thrust be on the manufacture of orthodox teas from the Bought Leaf Factories in Assam? Small growers have young plantations, and they can deliver succulent leaf. An appropriate subsidy from the state would be an incentive. Global supply of Orthodox tea is lower than the demand for this variety.



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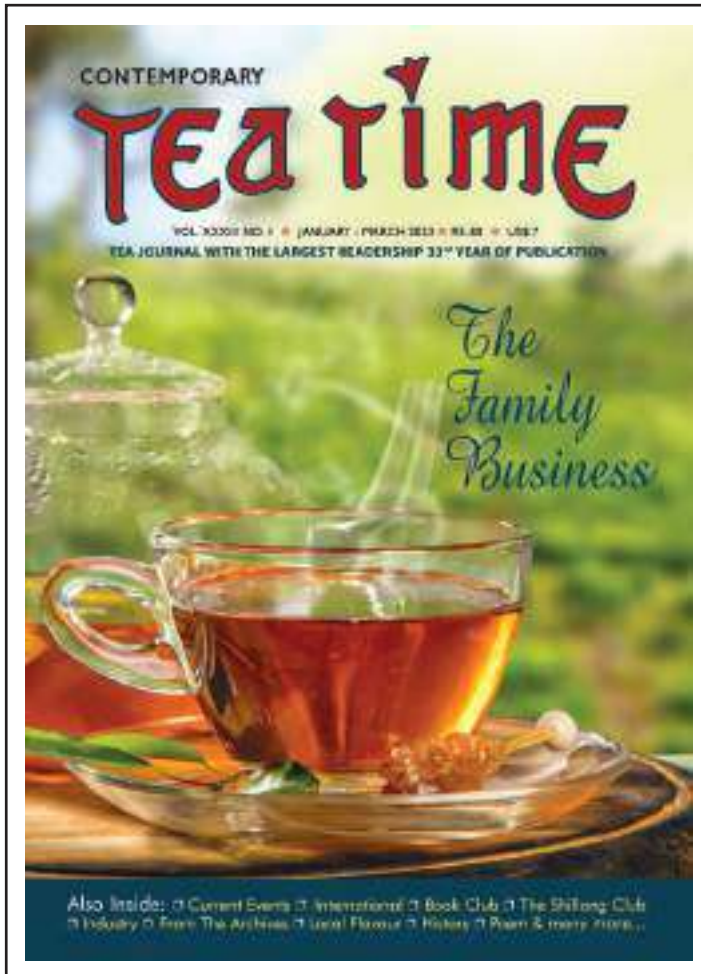
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QUIZ



Errol O'Brien

QUESTIONS

1. When did Americans first taste 'iced tea'?
2. What is given the moniker of the 'world's most expensive tea bag'?
3. Which country produces Yerba Mate tea, a green tea with a very refreshing taste?
4. Name the person entrusted by the East India Company, to smuggle Tea plants out of China.
5. What causes a tea to be described as 'Grapenutty'?
6. How are Random, Herringbone, Gridiron and Interceptor connected?
7. Purple Tea, particularly rich in anthocyanins, are connected to which country?
8. A tea estate in Assam surprisingly carries the name of a Queen Consort of Italy. Name the estate.
9. Historically, what is Planter's Store and Agency well-known for?
10. If the dry leaf in the tea tasting container is described as blistered, what defect can we expect to find in it?

- ANSWERS**
1. The 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis, Missouri. An exhibiting tea merchant had planned to give away free samples of hot tea to attendees. When a heat wave hit, no one was interested in the hot beverage. To save his investment, he dumped a load of ice into the brewed tea and served the first iced tea. Customers lined up to try the invention. Today, Americans drink almost 50 billion glasses of iced tea each year, accounting for more than 80% of all tea consumed in the US.
 2. The most expensive tea bag in the world is a diamond teabag, studded with 280 diamonds by Boodles Jewellers in England. The tea bag is worth for £7000 and was auctioned off for charity.
 3. Argentina.
 4. Robert Fortune, a Scotsman who visited remote parts of China and collected 20,000 plants and tea seedlings. He transported them to Kolkata in Wardian cases, which are like small greenhouses used to transport plants.
 5. Leaves balled in the process of manufacturing. They are all types of drainage systems required in tea-growing areas.
 7. Kenya
 8. The Margherita Tea Estate in Assam named after Queen Margherita Marie Teresa.
 9. It is known for being the first agency which was the predecessor of James Warren to commercially make CTC tea.
 10. Moisture was removed to too rapidly during the manufacturing process, damaging the flavour components within the leaves.



The world's tallest building the Burj Khalifa (above) is in Dubai .
Traditionally , the UAE has been a coffee market but over a period of time the tea segment has also grown.

Why Dubai's the hub of reexport

Black and bold flavours are preferred on the home front, but the list of reexports is long.

by **Karishma Hina Nandkeolyar**

Bhai ek karak chai," becomes an echo by the time it reaches the ears of the man behind the counter in a busy Dubai street café.

It's evening, and shift workers and students alike have gathered for their cups of steaming hot tea. Black tea, boiled for hours, mixed with milk and spices sometimes, and eaten with biscuits or buns depending how hungry you are, this is a staple

in most lives here in Dubai.

The karak, originally the kadak, is a concoction that originated in India, but like most hubs, the UAE adapted the recipe – and the name – to suit its shores. Often the tea is boiled with evaporated milk and as a special service to its clients, a healthy dash of glucose biscuits is added at the time of boiling. Some vendors have gone the extra mile to create what is affectionately called 'biryani

chai'. Sweet and strong, this drink is made with fresh milk.

Indian Shanawaz Sayed, who hails from Mumbai, was quoted as saying by Dubai-based Gulf News daily, "I like Biryani chai - it's kind of herbal tea, it's with ginger and mint and all that."

Dubai a growing nexus of trade

Traditionally, the UAE has been a coffee market but over a period of time, the tea segment has also grown, so now at the moment their growth rate is almost at par, between 3 to 3.5 percent, says Kamalika Mitra, Senior Tea Consultant at T. Choithram & Sons LLC. "If you talk 2025, experts are predicting a growth of more than 5 percent for tea as a beverage in the sector," she adds. She notes that the UAE is mainly a CTC black



Abdullah Ali Saleh
Undersecretary
Ministry of Economy
UAE



Ahmed Bin Sulayem
Executive
Chairman & CEO
DMCC

The DMCC tea center has played a pivotal role in developing the city of Dubai as an International tea hub.

tea market. “Black tea is packed in loose form or tea bag form. Though the Arabs like it in liquor form, but Asians prefer it with milk and sugar,” she explains.

The reason the UAE has become a favourite when it comes to tea is two-pronged: one, it has discovered the key to value-addition, and two, tea itself is growing as beverage of choice across the globe. “Over the past decade Dubai has developed itself as a hub for tea storage and value addition,” explains Sanjay Sethi, Managing Director & Tea Consultant at Gundlach Packaging DMCC. “This has led to many international tea companies being based in the city to transact tea business as well as to store, blend, trade

and value-add teas. Apart from the many Tea traders based in Dubai, the Unilever tea factory, DMCC Tea Centre and Alokozay tea factory have played a critical role in further developing the city of Dubai as an international tea hub.”

The result has been a growing swell in import and export of tea from around the globe. In 2021, for example, the UAE

topped the list of re-exporters of tea, it was revealed at the

Dubai International Tea Forum (DMCC), held at The Address Dubai Marina from April 25 to 27 this year. And it is only poised to grow.

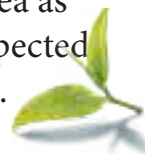
The nation’s proliferous tea trade – which has made it number five in the world, right after tea-producing countries – is also helped by a location that lends itself to transfers, storage and selling; a government committed to supporting trade ties; and state-of-the-art infrastructure. The proof is in warehouses filled to capacity and shelves lining the many super and hyper-markets in the country; a bouquet of brews from loose CTC to infusions from around the globe.

Tea as a commodity

One hiccup when it comes to

5%

Growth of tea as a beverage expected by 2025.





Sanjay Sethi

*Managing Director & Tea Consultant
at Gundlach Packaging DMCC*

the commodity of tea in the stock market is timing – since its quality and volume change with time.

Abdullah Al Saleh, Under secretary of the Ministry of Economy, who spoke at DMCC, told the the Globe Echo: “We seek to establish strong relations with foreign companies ... to package, produce and export tea, and we have applied the necessary health standards and conditions after repeated visits

by the health authorities.” He added: “We have rented land and are currently negotiating with Jafza [Jebel Ali Free Zone] in this regard to expand the tea centre, which is twice as large as the current centre.”

This short shelf-life of some teas also impacts its sales. Teas from the South of India, for instance, explains Mitra, are bought more as fillers in blends than to be sold as stand-alone teas. “Here, people like a very strong tea and

“There is complete transparency and highest level of efficiency both in the public and private sector. Apart from that, the location, infrastructure and connectivity to the region around by both sea and road are some of the main reasons for the continued growth of Dubai.”

A saffron-infused path to success

Keeping things fresh and convenient is Dubai’s home-grown brand FiLLi, which delivers piping hot tea to your home in a carton. The brainchild of Rafih FiLLi, the tea service is best known for its zafran (saffron) tea.

Rafih’s company has grown to include six countries and it all began, he explains on the FiLLi website, when he took over his father’s cafeteria in Dubai’s Al Mamzar area back in 2004. “I just experimented with a tea bag and gave it to the regulars, and they liked it,” he writes. And so, he came up with the drink that would forever change the game: he introduced a cup of milky tea dusted with saffron to his clientele. By 2008, he had opened a second store in the city. The aim, says the brand on its website, is to have 127 stores in the UAE by 2025.



Kadak tea is becoming a popular drink globally

Picture courtesy of Filli Chai Instagram



Kamalika Mitra
Senior Tea Consultant at
T. Choithram & Sons LLC

“Here, people like a very strong tea and with colour; it should be gold in colour.”

with colour; it should be gold in colour; and South Indian teas ...they are not strong, and they don't have that colour. When you add milk to the south Indian teas, they become very pale. So South Indian teas are mainly bought by us or other brands here mainly as a filler and a cost reducer in the blends. South Indian orthodox have good quality because they grow in a higher altitude, so these teas have more flavour and brightness in their cup, and pungency also, but they have a very short keeping quality, so they are generally used in blends which move very fast in the market, for example, in cafeterias, tea shops or institutional segment.”

Ahmed Bin Sulayem, CEO and Executive Director of the Dubai Multi Commodities Center, who spoke at the DMCC fair, said: “Being the second-most consumed beverage in the world

TEA TIME

after water, the popularity of tea is expected to soar in the coming years with the global market value increasing by 40 percent. This is the trend we have seen in Dubai, where the DMCC Tea Center now handles an average of 43,000 metric tonnes of loose tea each year, contributing to the UAE's global leadership in tea re-export.”

Bin Sulayem also spoke about instant silver contracts that will be issued in accordance with the provisions of Islamic law, which are in the pipeline and expected later this year.

Transparent transactions

Dubai has an eye on constant improvements, making it an increasingly viable hub of business. It also prioritises the ease with which one can do business here. “There is complete transparency and highest level of efficiency both in the public and private sector. Apart from that, the location, infrastructure and connectivity to the region around by both sea and road are some of the main reasons for the continued growth of Dubai,” confirms Sethi.

Tea in the country is delivered to the end user in value-added form. “Some of the largest brands' factories are based in the country. There is no concept of bulk tea sales across the counter to consumers in this region as all teas sold to consumers are in packaged form (tea bags or loose retail packets),” says Sethi.

Brands that occupy the top tier of retail in the UAE include

Alokozay, Ahmed, Dilma, Neon, Twinings (Specialised) and Brooke Bond in the tea bag segment. In both loose and tea bag categories however, Lipton has the lead.

Who leads?

From Dubai, the teas are primarily re-exported to the other Gulf Cooperation Council countries, the Middle East and Commonwealth of Independent States countries. As for which companies lead the charge, it really depends on the country itself. Sethi explains: “Unilever, now Lipton Teas & Infusions, is the largest tea company in this region, with the Lipton brand being the most popular. In each of the countries, there are also many local and semi-international brands that are very popular, too. For example, in the UAE, Lipton is the biggest brand and apart from this, Alokozay, Ahmad Tea, Leone are also prominent. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, besides Lipton other prominent brands are al Kbous and Rabea. In Oman, Lipton and Mumtaz lead. In Egypt, Al Arosa is the biggest brand followed by Lipton, whereas in Jordan, Lipton and Al Kbous lead,” he says.

The region of GCC, Middle East and CIS countries are traditionally big consumers of teas and most preferred is a cup of hot black tea, adds Sethi. For the higher income group, it would mostly be a cup of black tea with milk and sugar; however, also growing



in demand are green teas and small volumes of flavoured teas, he says.

Mitra concedes that the demand for green tea has been growing. However, she says, “It is growing at a slow pace... Green tea is showing some growth, because people have become very health conscious. Of late what we have seen, over the past one year or one-and-a-half year, the momentum of growth has reduced a bit.”

The call for strong Black tea, however, is growing steadily.

Every day, in the UAE, gallons of hot water are boiled, infused with CTC teas, mixed with hot

Which origin teas are most popular in the Middle East?

Sanjay Sethi, Managing Director and Tea Consultant at Gundlach Packaging DMCC, says: “To name a few countries/regions, the GCC primarily consumes multi origin blended CTC teas in tea bags and in loose retail packets and in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia long leaf orthodox teas are also popular. Kenyan black teas are very popular in Egypt and Pakistan packed in loose retail packets, with tea bags growing steadily. Sri Lankan and Indian leaf teas are widely consumed in Iran. Sri Lankan low grown black teas in Iraq, Syria, Jordan and other Middle East countries. Kenyan and India black teas in Kazakhstan. Chinese green teas and Sri Lanka and Vietnam leaf teas in Uzbekistan.”

milk – evaporated or fresh – and (as people argue which brew served to passers-by looking for is best) and mended splits (as a pick-me-up. Sweet, strong they talk over a cuppa). No visit and delicious, these are drinks to the UAE can be considered that have caused many a rift complete without a sip or two.

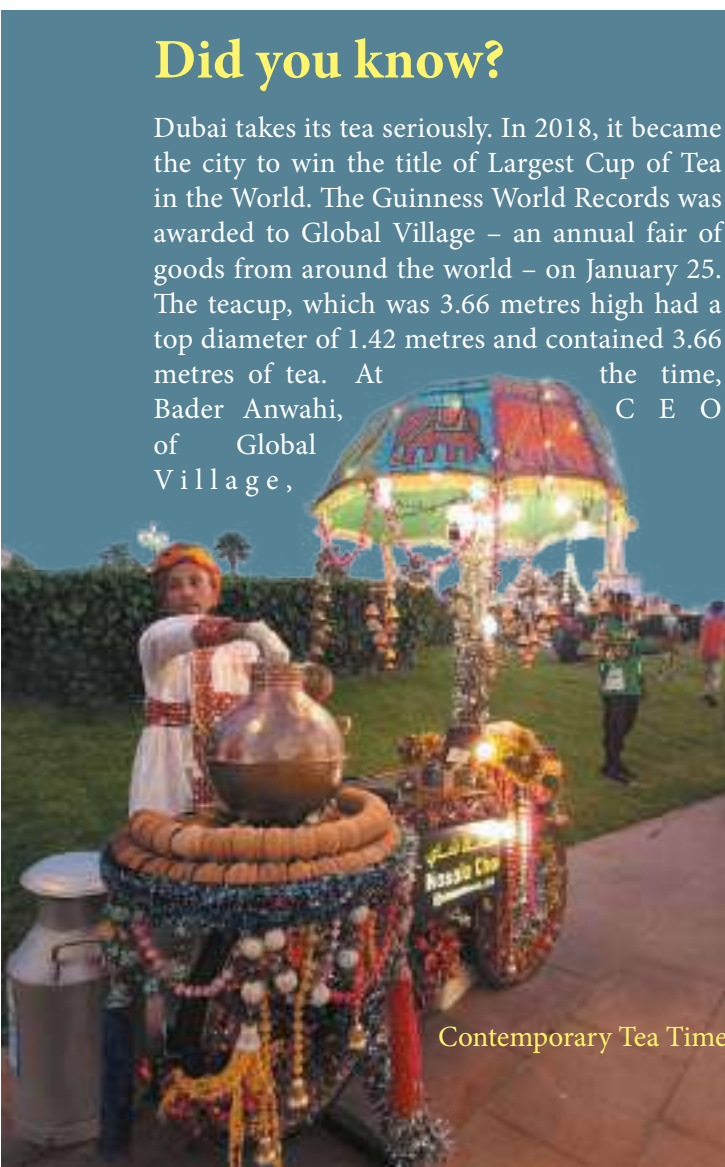
Did you know?

Dubai takes its tea seriously. In 2018, it became the city to win the title of Largest Cup of Tea in the World. The Guinness World Records was awarded to Global Village – an annual fair of goods from around the world – on January 25. The teacup, which was 3.66 metres high had a top diameter of 1.42 metres and contained 3.66 metres of tea. At the time, Bader Anwahi, CEO of Global Village,

said, “It is a special moment for us to have achieved the Guinness World Records title with this singular achievement. Tea drinking is an integral part of our culture in the UAE. We are proud of achieving this new record, which shows our drive to be the best in the world and another achievement for the UAE, and we are passionate about being the best family destination for culture, shopping and entertainment in the world. With every season, we extend our capabilities to make our guests happy.”

UAE news agency reported that a total of 120 chefs took several hours to make the 5,000-litre cup of Karak tea, which was served free to over 50,000 guests at Global Village. The ingredients used by the chefs to prepare the tea, as well as the vast amounts of water, included 155 kilogrammes of tea powder, 270 kg of milk powder, 360 kg of sugar, 4.5 kg of cloves, 135 kg of ginger, 27 kg of cinnamon sticks, and 27 kg of cardamom powder.

These days there are no huge cups of tea in Global Village but visit and you’ll find men in colourful outfits bedecked in Rajasthani outfits standing in strategic corners, asking visitors if they’d like a steaming cup of tea.





Tidings from BANGLADESH

Monjur Hossain



BANGLADESH TEA SCENE

Bangladesh is a very small player in the global tea scenario but tea plays an important role in the national economy. Its contributions in terms of employment and welfare to rural backward areas is highly significant. It employs about 150,000 people of ethnic minority directly, 51%, of whom are women. Besides, more than 100,000 people are indirectly dependent on its marketing, distribution, supporting industries,



2022 against 96.5 million Kg in 2021. Despite the target of producing 100 million kg of tea in 2022, the country's tea gardens have failed to meet the target due to adverse weather conditions and labour strikes. A 20-day strike in the middle of the year hampered total tea production in the country. As a result, production dropped significantly in July and August which could not be recovered till closing of the season.

Bangladesh, which was the world's fifth tea exporting country until 1990s, is now a tea



transportation and packaging industries etc. It contributes about 3.3% to the national employment 1% to GDP and about 1.0% to export earnings. Tea is grown on such land of the country where no other agricultural crop could be produced on commercial basis. It pays about BDT 800 million to the govt. as VAT, LD Tax, tea cess, Income and other taxes every year.

Bangladesh produced 93.8 million kg of tea in

importing country, procuring around 8 million kilogram (kg) from abroad annually.

However, tea imports dropped 93% over the past four years. The import was 8.73 million kg in 2017 and decreased to only 0.62 million in 2021. The reason behind the drop is just simple, a sharp surge in local production. The imports were 7.44 million kg in 2018, 1.52 million kg in 2019, 0.67 million kg in 2020.



Table: Tea Production, Export And Consumption For Last 10 Years

Year	Supply/Production (M Kg)	Absorption/Consumption (M.Kg)	Export (M.Kg)
2013	66.260	64.00	0.54
2014	63.880	67.17	2.66
2015	67.380	77.57	0.54
2016	85.050	81.64	0.62
2017	78.950	85.93*	2.56
2018	82.130	90.00*	0.78
2019	96.070	95.20	0.60
2020	86.390	99.00 (approx.)	2.17
2021	96.506	103.00 (approx.)	0.68
2022	93.829	106.00(approx.)	0.78

*Source: BTB * Shortfall covered from the import*

Top brands are continuing imports to meet the demand for premium tea products.

The export decreased gradually since 1990 and in 2022 the country exported only .78 million kg of quality tea.

Although the local production of tea leaves increased and imports declined, the exports of tea leaves saw ups and downs in the past years.

In 2021, the country exported 0.68 million kg of tea leaves, a sharp drop from 2.17 million kg in 2020. The exports were 0.6 million kg in 2019, 0.65 million kg in 2018 and 2.56 million kg in 2017.

Industry insiders have said the gradual rise in domestic consumption and ups and downs in productions were the reason behind the zigzag export trend. Besides, the quality of the local leaves was also a fact.

According to Bangladesh Tea Board (BTB) data, local consumption of tea in 2013 was 64.00 million kg and in 2022 the consumption rose above 100 million kg, almost double over the past 10years.

The above table clearly shows a steady growth in overall volume of tea consumption in the domestic market thereby ensuring a guaranteed market for the tea producers now and in future also since number of tea consumers are increasing every year along with the increase in per capita consumption of tea.

It would be revealed from the table that, the supply side is increasing slowly, on the other hand the demand side is showing an increasing trend as such market growth is evident. Further the per capita consumption of tea is increasing every year, which will lead the demand side further.

The above table and figure show a gradual increase in per capita consumption of tea in Bangladesh and these figures also give an indication of a guaranteed market for Bangladesh tea locally in future.

** The writer is Managing Director of PMTC (Bangladesh) Limited*

This is first part of this article. the second part will be continued in our upcoming issue.



City Gold Goes Pan India

A brand with a generational history in all aspects of the tea industry, made the national leap with every indication of carrying on the momentum of success in the future.

During a trip to North Bengal, especially by train, if one looks carefully, the presence of City Gold Tea would become really obvious. And with good reason. This more than 70 year old brand has been growing steadily under the stewardship of the current Managing Director Mr. Srawan Chowdhury and its presence is felt in all the stations of North



Mr. Srawan Chowdhury

Bengal. After a tiring journey, a good cup of tea naturally leaves an indelible impression on the weary traveller.

This journey started when the Late Kashiram Chowdhury moved from Haryana to Jalpaiguri to work in the tea estates of North Bengal in 1942. Quite quickly he was able to establish his own loose tea business in 1953. From then on it was a slow but steady rise. In 1977, his son the Late Brijmohan Chowdhury moved the company to the





Late Kashiram Chowdhury

Late Brijmohan Chowdhury

Srawan Chowdhury

Shubham Chowdhury

picturesque Siliguri. As the Chairman of the KBT Group, he expanded the scope of the operations to outside the state.

Mr. Srawan Chowdhury joined the business quite young in 1980 and since then took the business in a different direction to keep up with the times. In 1995, City Gold Tea was established as a brand for quality packaged tea. It slowly gained traction to the point that it has become household names in certain parts of the state and finally expanded operations in over 18 states in India.

Select CTC Teas from Assam, Dooars and the Terai region are carefully tasted before getting the stamp of approval from the experienced tasters. City Gold Tea is now the official channel access partner of Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. It is also listed as a supplier of Canteen Stores Department (CSD) and Indian Railways.

Mr. Chowdhury is involved in all aspects of the industry – from tea manufacturing (Manakamna Tea Industries Pvt Ltd) to producing (Alma Tea

Estates). In his own words, the well-being of the industry is very important to him, not simply from the point of view of livelihood. He has seen first-hand the vital communities that have grown around his own business and people, he says are the most important part of any enterprise.

His son and successor Mr. Shubham Chowdhury joined the industry in 2018. While he wishes to take the brand to greater heights, Mr Shubham Chowdhury considers the integrity of the brand to be paramount. The quality of the tea cannot bear compromise, so even if there is a move towards new products like flavoured tea and tea pre-mixes, the thrust of the brand remains on a good old-fashioned cuppa for which there is no substitute.

City gold has set up a state-of-the-art packaging unit and is also looking into tea tourism. Mr. Chowdhury hopes to uphold the values established by the generations before, as he continues to lead City Gold Tea in the days ahead.

HELPING HANDS

Corporate Social Responsibility Project taken up by Kharikatia Tea Estates, Rossell Tea (Division of Rossell India Ltd.)

Washrooms built by Ms Rossell Group for school children was inaugurated by the by Mr J S Chahal at a function organized by the Principal of Gatanga High School at Ujani Na Noi Gaon in Jorhat, Assam.

Here are some pictures of the event, held in March 23.



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Siliguri Terai Lions Club: Blood Donation Camp

The Siliguri Terai Lions Blood Bank organised the 300th Blood Donation Camp in 9 months. Sri Akhilesh Kumar Chaturvedi, IP, Commissioner of Police attended this historic camp as Chief Guest.

The Terai Lions Blood Bank started in the year 2005 and since that first year they started to promote Blood Donation Awareness among the general public. In the beginning they had a difficult time convincing the public to participate in the blood donation camp. But slowly, through extensive ideological promotional programs, the public started to understand the importance of donating blood and started to come forward enthusiastically for the blood donation camps. Eventually it became a regular feature in the community. This year they are organising events which can raise up to 1000 units of blood with the help of local social organisations. During the pandemic events that required large public gatherings could not be convened. But recently

they received a huge support from all the local businesses and social organisations in conducting blood donation camps. In 281 days today they have organized 300 Blood Donation Camp with the support of the Terai Lions. "Our Terai Lions are like a family. All our members and their family members have donated blood in this very special 300th Blood Donation Camp." says Mr. Sanjay Agarwal, responsible for public relations for this project.

In these 281 days they have collected 13716 units Blood in the camp and 7686 units Blood in house and we have issued 31126 units of blood. During the period they have organised many Centurion camps.

Atul Jhwar (Past President & Past Chairman of Terai Lions Blood Bank) & Kamal Singh Kundalia (Chairman Blood Donation Camp) are working tirelessly in organising these camps, with full support from Surendra Jain, the current President, Anil Goyal, Chairman, Blood Bank.



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70 Per Cent Red Dust

Dear Editor,

In 1968, I had been transferred to the Cochin branch of a tea broker. One afternoon we got news that the President of one large client company was visiting its Pollachi garden whose tea we were handling. Could a representative be sent to meet the senior gentleman? So I was deputed although I was only 31 years old. I drove up on the appointed forenoon.

Soon after giving me a cup of tea, the President joked: what magic has the broker-taster brought for us? In similar tenor, I replied: if I knew magic, would I not be like a P.C. Sorcar? Why should I sweat day in and day out six days a week for a few thousand rupees? In such a mood, we walked to the factory. On reaching, I asked the General Manager: should we not make much more Red Dust than we are making now? The grade sells at between Rs. 6/80 paise per kg. (that was the level of prices in those days). The reply was: certainly, only if you show us the way how?

I don't know the way but lets find it together. First, let us increase the speed of the fast rollers by 50 per cent – all three of one CTC bank. That did not take long and in about an hour, we increased the percentage of Red Dust. Thereafter,

the teeth shoulders of all three fast CTC rollers of one bank to 900r.p.m from 600. (In those days the speed ratios were 60:600 and the diameters of the rollers six inches. I gather they are now up to 75:750). This re-sharpening or rather sharpening of new rollers took the factory the rest of the day.

We returned the next morning early and resumed the experiment. In a matter of less than three hours, we knew that we had achieved about 60 per cent Red Dust. The CTC bank had the new roller speed ratios of 60:900 as well as two-thirds shoulder length on all the three machines of the same bank. Being Tamil Nadu, we did not have to change the degree of the wither. The practice of hard withering prevails across the entire South. Had it been anywhere in the North-east, I would have thought of hardening the wither first.

Within a week of my visit, the garden was able to touch 68 per cent Red Dust and some four per cent of powdery dust which was unknown

before in the South. What it was named, I have forgotten now; 55 years in a long time!



Yours,
Prafull Goradia



In conversation with Mahendra Odhavjibhai Patel



Mahendra Odhavji Bhai Patel
LAXMI TRADING CO.
Old Madhupura, Ahmedabad.

This shop is 61 years old. His Father started this business 61 years before, and also remained an active member of Gujrat Tea Traders Association for 41 years from 1976 to 2017 as Convener.

Q: When did you get started in the tea trade?

A: My father Odhavjibhai Patel started this tea business 61 years ago in the 150 year old Market in Old Madhupura in Ahmedabad as a wholesaler. I finished my degrees in BBA and DMSM and joined him. It's been almost 30 years since.

Q: So what type of tea is popular here?

A: Gujarat, if it's considered in the context of the all of India, it might be the most quality-conscious state and mostly premium quality Assam is the most consumed. In terms of gradation, in middle, north and south Gujarat BP, BOP, BOP Assam – these leaf grades are the most popular. In the Sourashtra region – Surendranagar to Kachch to Amreli and Junagadh – PF, PD Grades are mostly consumed in these areas. The main consumption is still from Assam, with Dooars and Kachar a close second.

Q: Is there a good market for southern tea here?

A: Yes, there is a lesser influx of tea from the south here, but sometimes if the North Indian market has a record-high prices in auctions there is a greater flow of tea from the south in Gujarat. Otherwise it's has a small presence in Gujarat.

Q: So, what grade of tea do your clients prefer?

A: Our clients generally prefer premium quality tea from Upper Assam. In Gujarat, tea is most often prepared with almost 50% milk. So taste is what they look for first and foremost, strength is a secondary consideration in this case.

Q: The recent pandemic has effected the tea gardens and the tea market. Was there a significant impact in your area?

A: Yes, during the pandemic there generally wasn't a drop in consumption per se, as tea was promoted by the medical fraternity, the ayurvedic fraternity and even the government, as something which could boost immunity and protect from covid. But because of the lockdown and social distancing, etc. the hotels and eateries, the small tea shops and restaurants had to be closed down. So there was a definitely a drop which did not recover till one year or one-and-a-half years later.

Q: What do you think of the young entrepreneurs like 'MBA Chaiwala' who are also opening up tea stalls?

A: Yes, this is a good thing for the industry. The younger 'educated' people saw that there was a market for tea everywhere – in offices and homes, in religious places and hospitals – tea is accepted and consumed. So they thought that this commodity will be easier to sell than others. They joined this field and attracted the youth to tea, who were moving towards coffee.



TEA TIME

Q: What is the future trend for Tea, in your consideration?

A: The trend is generally good of course. But there because of the pandemic and the economic downturn, there has been a drop in consumption of A-grade teas. Instead there's been more consumption of B-Grade tea. However the public in Gujarat has always been quality conscious. They will revert to their original preferences soon.

Q: So where do you buy your teas from?

A: Ninety percent of our tea purchased privately through the agency line network. We have been procuring our teas from the same source for a very long time – my father started getting tea from Mcleod Russell, which used to be



Late Sri Odhavjibhai
Jadavjibhai Patel

world's number one tea company – they had over 60 tea estates, millions of kgs of consumption – in 1970. We have maintained this relationship till now. I think there may not be a second example of such a longstanding relationship in the industry. We've been providing tea to Jivraj group, Wagh-bakri group, and many other big and small retailers in Gujarat for the last 50-60 years. If you look carefully, the quality of tea in

Gujarat has gone up in the last twenty years. We have done our poor best to supply better quality tea to them, so the public can have a better tea experience.

Q: As your father before you, do you also mean to leave your business as a legacy to the younger generation?

A: My son does hold a degree in computer engineering. But he has grown up within the business, he is very aware of the industry and means to join. I hope that as a more educated man with a wider vision he will bring our work

from within Gujarat to a national level or even be able to start exporting to a wider market.

Q: You are working with bulk loose tea, but what do you think is the trend for future teas?

A: If you look at the trend 10 years ago, you'll see that premium leaves from upper Assam were very popular. Then as the MRP increased with inflation, companies started branding B-grade teas from Dooars, as 'strong' teas. With more inflation now, even C-grade level leaves

are finding a market.

Q: With your wealth of experience, what advice would you give to tea-growers, or manufacturers or anyone in the tea industry?

A: Tea producers should concentrate on preserving the quality of their product. Even if they produce common teas, they should take care of their particular quality teas as special as separate brand. Maintaining their own identity is integral.

Q: Is there anything you would like to add?

A: I think this industry is a very vibrant industry, there are still many innovations that are being thought of – fusion teas, pre-mixes and tea bags are getting more popular. These have a new market among young people, as women are moving away from being housewives, the tea markets are opening up to new demographics who don't have time to portion out tea properly. So tea bags and pre-mixes are very helpful. Finally, I'd like to add that Gujarat always loves good quality tea, if you make good tea, Gujarat will always welcome you.

Contributor :

T. S. Dawar is an experienced professional working as a Sales Trainer, Sales Faculty, and Consultant. With over four decades of expertise in these fields, Dawar brings a wealth of knowledge to his role.



Small Tea Growers of India

The story of how small drops add up to an ocean.

The Tea Board of India defines a Small Tea Grower as a person who has tea cultivation of up to 25 acres. But in the current scenario, most growers own less than 2 acres of land. STGs are often based at far-flung areas and are scattered. Small tea growers, on their parts, have been confronted with multiple existential challenges via finance, land problem, labour supply, lack of training in tea culture and practices, marketing of green leaves, natural disasters like flood, erosion, climate change, poor infrastructural facilities, despite producing nearly 52 per cent of India's tea. Here's a 360 degree look at this vast socio-economic sector.

STG: Present state of affairs

Small is not only beautiful, but powerful also. The Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers Associations (Cista) — the apex body of small tea growers — has recently handed over a status paper to the Union commerce ministry, seeking interventions to boost the sector that produces nearly 52 per cent of India's tea. This assumes significance in the wake of the fact that the sector, as indicated by the growth of the sector, is a major employment generator in remote areas. As of now, around five lakh people are directly involved and another 10 lakh people are indirectly associated with it, which means that the livelihoods of 15 lakh people depend on the sector.

Few months ago, the Tea Board of India had formed a nine-member core committee to address the issues of small tea growers. Interestingly, earlier, the Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Textiles, Piyush Goyal, while addressing the Indian Tea Association's (ITA) International Small Tea Grower's Convention, had said that

small tea growers will have the biggest role to play in shaping the future of the tea sector in India. Interestingly, small growers are responsible for the vast majority of production in the Badagas, a local agricultural tribal group. Tea cultivation at a small scale level was initiated during 1930s in the Nilgiris of South India. Earlier the farmers of this region grew only vegetables like potato, carrot, garlic.

Looking back:

In South India and Himachal Pradesh tea was traditionally cultivated in small scale by the growers along with other crops. In Tamil Nadu almost 62 per cent production comes from the small growers sector. There are about 61,980 number of small tea growers and more than 98 per cent of the plantations are located in Nilgiri district. Similarly in Himachal Pradesh there are some 900 small growers mostly in Kangra valley and a few in Mandi. After the introduction small scale tea cultivation in Assam, the hilly states of North East India like Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram etc. and some other non-traditional states have also started tea cultivation. Chabglang, Dibong valley, East Siang, Lohit, Longding, Lower Dibang Valley, Papum pare, Tirap, Upper Siang and West Siang are the areas where tea cultivation has been started. In Meghalaya, East Khasi Hills, Ri-Bhoi and West Garo hills are the main growing district. In Nagaland the tea cultivation is found in Mon and Mokokchung district. Presently the traditional tea growing tract in Darjeeling of West Bengal has witness the growth of small tea sector. The small tea growers movement began in late 1990s. There are about 800 small growers registered with Tea Board in Darjeeling district. The other areas



where small scale tea cultivation has been started are Alipurduwar, Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Uttar Dinajpur. The small sector of West Bengal now contributes about 54 per cent of the state's tea production.

When it comes to Assam, the small tea cultivation forms an interesting field in socio-economic history of the state. The economic contribution and employment opportunity generated by these small tea cultivators have great significance in Assam. It has also greatly contributed in changing the socio-economic development as well as land use pattern of the region. Growth of small tea growers was needed to provide hopes and productive employment for thousands of young unemployed youths and accelerate the reduction of extreme poverty. Growth of the small tea cultivation in Assam transformed the economic, social and cultural life of the rural masses to a significant extent. It succeeded in providing better and well diversified work opportunities, improved a new awareness among the rural people towards a better life- style. The small tea growers who are mainly from the weaker sections

of the population have succeeded in making a serious mark on the rural economy of Assam.

Cut to Present:

At this backdrop, let us now come back to the present state of affairs. In the 68-page status paper submitted to the commerce ministry, Cista has sought a number of central interventions such as in crop insurance and irrigation. Mind you that unlike farmers, tea growers don't get Kisan Credit Cards. So they rely on private moneylenders. There is no minimum support price for tea leaves. A number of times, growers sell tea leaves at rates lower than their production cost.

The status report prepared by leading consultants engaged by Cista pointed out that small tea plantations are located in some of the remotest parts of the country with limited job opportunities, but interestingly it is a major employment generator in remote areas. The report surveyed tea-producing districts across India to find around 2.4 lakh growers, who own around 2 lakh hectares of plantation. In all, India has 722 bought-leaf factories (BLFs) that buy tea leaves from growers and process them. The

small growers sector saw unprecedented growth since 2011. A key reason for this is the high yield of tea bushes in small tea plantations that are comparatively younger than those in tea estates. Nearly 86 per cent of bushes in tea estates are 10 to 50 years old or even more, with a yield of around 1,549 kilos of tea leaves per hectare. In small tea plantations, bushes are at best 15 to 20 years old and the yield is around 3,500 kilos per hectare. The growers, mostly concentrated in Bengal and Assam. The current trends in the rise in domestic consumption of tea, along with exports, indicate a shortfall of around 330 million kilos of tea in 2030. And to bridge this gap, it is necessary to encourage the small tea sector. More BLFs are also needed, feel experts.

Core Committee & Its Role:

Going by the Tea Board of India statistics, 1,278.07 million kilo tea was produced in India from January to November 2022, to which the small tea sector contributed 660.73 million kilos,

around 52 per cent of the total. In Bengal alone, nearly 57 per cent of tea (the state produces around 400 million kilos), comes from this sector. Among Bengal’s three tea belts — Darjeeling, Terai and the Dooars — the small tea plantations’ contribution is highest in Terai. Under existing rules of the tea board, a tea grower owning a plantation area of less than 10.12 hectares with no processing unit is classified as small grower.

It has been a long pending demand of the small growers that a special committee be set up to look into the concerns of the small growers. Now the core committee set up by the Tea Board, would be an informal platform for the exchange of ideas and deliberations on the status

of the industry, its challenges and solutions. The director of tea development is the committee secretary and convener. The other eight members are representatives of small tea growers’ associations of tea-producing areas like north Bengal, Assam,



TEA TIME

Nilgiri, and Kangra. The Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers (Cista), the national body of small growers, has also been included in the committee.

The government, as an enabler, had apparently taken various steps to support our small tea growers, such as implementation of online licensing system, auto-renewal of 3 types of licenses i.e. exporter license, tea waste license and tea warehouse license etc. Darjeeling Tea was the 1st GI Tag product, now 2 other variants of it Green & White also hold GI Tags. Development of Chai Sahyog mobile app is another landmark of Indian tea ecosystem.

Moves are also afoot at the government and at the non-government levels to support small growers to improve quality with sustainability, increase production to meet domestic and international demand, by all means.

But often, things which are on paper, does not get translated into action or do not percolate down the line. The government and other bodies will have to ensure proper and timely execution of all these.

Private Initiative towards Best Agricultural Practices:

Meanwhile, in another important development, anticipating a rise in the demand for quality tea, Hindustan Unilever (HUL) has collaborated with sustainability consultant NRB Estate to impart knowledge of good agricultural and manufacturing practices to small tea growers (STG) or small holder farmers (SHF) and bought leaf factories (BLF) staff. In the pilot project launched by the tea major in 2021, a team of experts from NRB has been assisting STGs and BLFs in Assam through knowledge-led interventions on field, hands-on training and use of mobile apps. With this medium- to long-term project, NRB experts are fine-tuning STG-BLF production procedure. They are already thinking

in terms of expanding the scope of project depending on the desired result.

These types of initiatives for the small tea sector promise to enhance quality and sustainability in income of small tea growers.

How STG movement started & evolved

And now for those who are keen on knowing the history and evolution of small tea growers a research study by the department of history, Dibrugarh University, which traced the history of small tea growers in India with particular reference to Assam, can be of some interest. The tea history in India dates back to 1823, when Robert Bruce met Beesa Gaum, a Singpho Chief of Upper Assam region (Sadiya) with the help of Maniram Dewan. Beesa Gaum offered a sample of tea plants, which was growing wild in that region. Bruce sent the sample of tea to Calcutta Botanical Garden for its experiment, given by the Singpho Chiefs. But Robert Bruce's discovery in 1823 did not get quick approval from the scientists of the Calcutta Botanical Garden. Therefore the potentiality of Assam's forests remained unknown. Almost a decade later the tea discovery went to Lieutenant Andrew Charlton of Assam Light Infantry.

The rapid growth of tea plantation had happened only after the proposal of waste lands grants. As early as September 1827 David Scott proposed a plan of granting waste lands on condition that the grantee should bring one-fourth of the allotment into tillage by the expiry of third year, one fourth by sixth year and another one fourth by ninth year, after which the grantee should be entitled to hold the land in perpetuity on paying usual rent upon three fourth of the whole. The object of the agent was defeated when the applicants were required to deposit a security equal to the first two years revenue and in default of payment at the expiry of fourth year his holding was liable to be resumed. To remedy the defect, Robertson allowed the occupants to hold these lands rent



INDUSTRY



He established two tea estates successfully in spite of the all obstacles, Chinamara and Senlung. Maniram Dewan was hanged by the British in 1858 for taking part in the Indian freedom movement of 1857. The execution of Maniram Dewan acted as a setback for Assamese people but towards the end of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century a number of Assamese pioneers took up tea cultivation. The prominent amongst the pioneers Assamese tea planters were Rasheswar Barua, Hemadhar Barua, Rai Bahadur Jagannath Baruah, Krishna Kumar Boruah, Col.

free for a period of three years after which a graduated system of taxation was to be paid for every year until the tenth year when three fourth of the entire area was to be assessed at full rates.

Another one of major factor of growing tea plantation was the introduction of Fee Simple Grants in 1861. Under this grants land was sold at a rate of, ranging from Rs.2 to Rs. 5 per acre. From 1862 onwards, grants were put on auction sale. From 1876, the sale of fee simple land was stopped and a new system of thirty years leases, also on liberal terms, was introduced.

Thus we can say that the British Government policy of making Waste Land Grants Rule and Fee Simple Grants had vehemently impacted upon the tea plantation economy in Assam. A few numbers of native people also individually came up to take the initiative of tea plantation. The pioneer native tea cultivator of Assam was Maniram Dewan. However, the British could not tolerate that a “native” would go for tea plantation competing at par with them and put many obstacles. Maniram Dutta Baruah was a great patriot and a person of firm determination.

Sibram Bora and Sarbananda Barkakoti. Amongst them Rasheswar Baruah of Lahdaigarh was of the foremost

Until the 1980's, the plantation of tea dominated by the big companies or estate owners. After the 1970's there had emerged a new trend of cultivation tea in Assam. The trend was started by some of the local people, who had begun to cultivate tea in a small plot of land with their homestead land. These new trend emerged as the small tea cultivation movement in early 1980s.



Ritwik Mukherjee, an independent journalist and author with more than three decades of experience in business and economic journalism, has worked with almost all leading business dailies and magazines. He has worked with the Economic Times, Financial Express, Financial Chronicle, Hindustan Times, Business Today, Hans BIzz Buzz, among others.



A Sip of Tea and a Glimpse into the Future: The Art of Tea Leaf Reading

Since ancient times, people have regarded tea as a mystical beverage and it is not surprising that an art of prophecy through tea has become a part of the esoteric divination arts in many parts of the world.

In a small village in Europe, an old woman had been revered as a tea leaf reader for many years. She had a small shop in the village where she sold tea leaves and other spices. People from far and wide would come to her to have their fortunes read through the leaves. The woman's method was simple. She would take the customer's tea leaves and place them in a cup of warm water. After a few minutes, she would remove the leaves and examine them carefully. Based on her experience, she could interpret the patterns and shapes of the leaves to give the customer advice and guidance. For example, if the leaves formed a crescent shape, it meant that the customer would receive some good news soon. If the leaves were in the shape of a cross, it meant that the customer should be careful and watch out for danger. If the leaves formed a triangle shape, it meant that the customer was about to embark on a new journey. The woman had a long list of satisfied customers. People who had consulted her tea leaves had often experienced positive changes in their lives, and the woman was credited with bringing them happiness and good luck.



Tea leaf reading, also known as Tasseography or Tasseomancy, is an ancient practice of divination that originated in China. It is believed that tea leaf reading was first practiced during the Tang Dynasty (618–907 AD). Just like tea, the practice has since spread to many parts of the world, including Europe and North America.

Tea leaf reading involves interpreting the shapes and patterns that are left behind in a cup of tea after drinking. The shapes and patterns that appear in the cup are believed to hold special significance and can be used to provide insight and guidance into the future. In tea leaf reading, the reader will look for symbols, shapes, and patterns in the leaves of the tea. These symbols can be interpreted in various ways, depending on the reader's experience and intuition. Common symbols include hearts, moons, stars, and cups. Additionally, the shape, size, and location of the symbols can also be taken into account

when interpreting their meaning. In addition to interpreting symbols, the reader will also take into account the color of the tea leaves, the size and shape of the cup, and the overall texture of the tea. All of these factors can be used to provide further insight into the situation being discussed.

Tea leaf reading can be used to provide insight into a variety of topics, including love, relationships, career, health, finances, and more. It is important to note, however, that the practice of tea leaf reading should not be used as a substitute for professional advice or medical treatment.

Keeping this in mind, here are few facts on tasseography.



- Unlike other forms of divination, tea leaf reading does not require any special tools or materials. All that is needed is a cup of tea, the leaves of which can be interpreted by the reader.

- Tea leaf reading is believed to be most accurate when the tea is consumed by the person for whom the reading is being conducted. This is because the reader can use the physical characteristics of the tea leaves to gain insight into the person's feelings and emotions.

- Tea leaf reading is believed to be an intuitive practice, meaning that it is up to the reader to interpret the symbols in the leaves. Different readers may have different interpretations of the same symbol, making it important to find a reader with whom you feel comfortable.



Contributor :
Ena Bandyopadhyay
Contemporary Brokers

TEA TIME

Party for well wishers, friends and
business associates hosted
by Contemporary
on 24 March 23 at the Taj Bengal.





EVENT 



A New Direction: Young Indian Tea Entrepreneurs

We explore some of the ways in which new directions in the Indian Tea market is emerging from the niche, artisanal tea companies headed by young entrepreneurs who think outside the box.



Ami Bhansali of Chai Diaries

An important and puzzling topic which comes up when discussing the tea industry is how to engage the young consumers, as compared to other beverages on the market, tea is seen as a drink for the older generation. Turns out, that the charm of tea often transcends age, especially if it is well-curated by dedicated and knowledgeable young professionals.

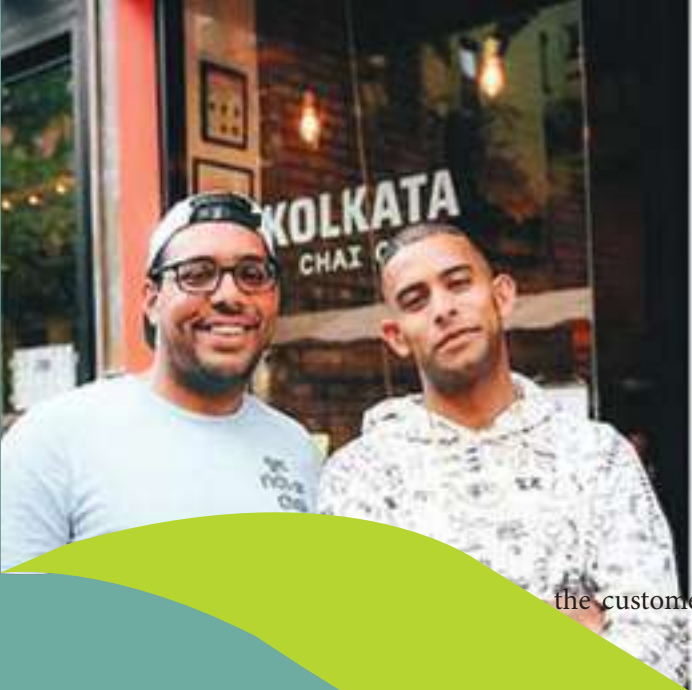
Chai is often an object of nostalgia for many Indians living away from their homes – its taste and flavour relates directly to the feelings of home that they miss. One start-up that’s sharing the flavours of home in far-away United States is *Kolkata Chai Co.* A collab between two brothers Ayan and Ani Sanyal, this project began from a sense of mystery and awe that had been engendered in them for the taste of the tea at the street stalls of Kolkata. They wanted to let the world explore this taste which can be found nowhere except their hometown. The rolls, samosas and other accompanying snacks are a natural addition to the *chai* experience.

A similar story can be heard from Ami Bhansali, the CEO of *Chai Diaries*. Ami’s family Tea

estates in South India inspired her to venture into tea as a final project for her business school. *Chai Diaries* is inspired by fashion, art, culture and diversity. It is about clean ingredients, beautiful packaging and a superior tea experience. Sourcing teas from the world-over, their signature blends are hand-made at their California shop. “At the end of the day, we sell tea—fresh, delicious *camellia sinensis* leaves blended with fruits and botanicals. We realise we’re not selling the pathway to world peace, but we are selling just a sliver of that,” she writes on her website.

And then there are those like the Ishaan Kanoria and Sparsh Agarwal from *Dorje Teas*. This pair of friends left their high-paying financial sector job, to revive the decaying tea garden in their family at the historic Selim Hills Tea Garden. Their take on the tea experience is to offer the consumer a whole, rounded engagement with the ‘champagne of teas’. They offer an interesting subscription model where customers get to know all the various moods of the Darjeeling tea, like the lesser known Autumn and Monsoon Flushes. Darjeeling is well-known in the world, but in India most of it is exported out. So *Dorje Tea* works with the Selim Hill Collective to offer a chance to get to know Darjeeling tea in a whole new way.

Snigdha Manchandani of *The Tea Trunk*, a gourmet tea company, offers a range of rare and exotic tea blended with fruits and botanicals which are said to address health concerns like boosting immunity, balancing hormones, sleep care, hair care and of course, weight management. Addressing health customer’s health concerns, for



TRADE

the customer

Flower, Lemon Ayan Sanghi also kept with sachets made material without

Brothers Ani and Ayan Sanyal started Kolkata Chai Co. to share the true taste of their hometown.

themselves or their friends and family, offers a chance of greater long term brand engagement. Manchandani, a qualified



Snigdha Manchandani of the Tea Trunk, a trained Tea Sommelier.

Tea Sommelier, is passionate about chai in all its forms and makes sure that her tea is crafted in small batches with genuine ingredients, emphasizing freshness and flavour. She was inspired by the gifts of tea she got from friends and relatives travelling all around the world.

bleach and other chemicals which affect not only the taste of the tea but also the health of the consumer over time.

It can be seen that in the new generation of tea consumers, building brand loyalty depends on many factors, the most crucial being the authenticity of the product experience. New flavours and health benefits are also an ever-growing concern among customers.



Rashi Sanghvi of Gardner Street Tea.

Rashi Sanghvi of Gardner Street Tea was also inspired in her tea journey while traveling, by the exotic spice markets of Turkey. She

environmental awareness of the brand is also important. But as always the thing that binds tea-lovers together are small intangible things like a moment of calm in the chaos of the day, laughter and companionship and sharing the warmth that we have experienced with others.

noticed the lack of quality in the new green teas, marketed in India as “healthy” and she wanted to create a brand that offers quality teas, processed in the way so as to maximize their flavour as well as their health benefits. Their signature collection includes Berry Good, Chinese Whispers, Flower



Sparsh Agarwal and Ishaan Kanoria, Dorje teas



Harki Sidhu – “Overview of the Tea Industry”

VisionSpring is the social enterprise accelerating the use of eye-glasses in emerging and frontier markets and its mission is to increase lifelong earning, learning and well-being through eye-glasses for people vulnerable to poverty.

The International organisation which has a country office in India has conducted more than 80,000 eye screenings in Assam tea gardens and distributed 40,000 eyeglasses to tea pickers since it started its operations in the state since 2014.

A 2018 study conducted with tea pickers in Assam had found that with reading glasses, productivity had increased by 22 per cent on average and up to 32 per cent among workers over 50. This is BIG, even if we get 50% of this increase across the board the industry gains a lot and the workers too earn more and have a better life.

There are 11,32,000 Tea Workers in the Indian Tea Industry with 64% Permanent loss of vision. Harki Sidhu, in his overview of the Tea Industry & its challenges, bought up challenges facing the workers & their families:

- Insufficient family earnings
- School Education– causes of challenges
 - Absenteeism – alternate earning / help at home / illness / cash paying jobs – brick making, road building etc
 - Age related learning – Many children drop out of school as they can not see the black board – disastrous effect on their future. Once fallen back in relation to their age students they tend to drop-out.
 - Little motivation or push to pursue studies
 - Eye Sight – an area much neglected. This programme will be able to improve the VISION of the industry’s future. Some areas it will help in are:-
 - Productivity of workers – pluckers, sprayers, pest monitors, factory workers,...
 - Safety at work – prevent accidents
 - Improve quality of life



*Anne Coolen, Global VP Programs
Harki Sidhu
Mr. N. Kumar Chairman Vision Spring India*



*Mr. Ansh Taneja –
MD Vision Spring with
Harki Sidhu, Rainforest Alliance*



A section of the participants



Lighting of the Lamp



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Contact us:-

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E.mail: info@a2zteasolutions.in
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TEA TIME

A Merry Evening with Friends and Associates at Siliguri on 12th May, 2023





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Packing & Blending Unit - Manager

We require an Experienced Manager to join our Tea Blending and Packing unit in Indore - MP. The person should be well versed with Tea Blending/Packing operations for domestic markets and have at least 5-10 years experience in leading/managing such unit. The person should be proficient in labour, man - management and handling various packaging/blending machines.

Educational – Graduate with good knowledge of Hindi/English and computer skills.

Age : Between 30 - 45 years

Tea Taster - Purchase

We require an experienced Tea Taster who can independently taste and purchase tea in the North India Auctions. He will be in-charge of developing and leading a team of tasters for this purpose as well. The position is based in Indore - MP.

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Age : Between 30 - 45 years.

Please apply via email to newteamarketing@gmail.com



Dr. Johnson

TEA TIME

DR. JOHNSON AND TEA: The Passion and the Feud

Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709 – 1784) was one of the most influential literary figures of 18th Century England. As a prolific writer he has made indelible contribution to English literature. He was a multifarious talent – in his day he was famous as a poet, moralist, essayist, critic, biographer and not least, lexicographer.

A little known fact about him is that he was also an ardent tea-drinker. So much so that, he could be said to be obsessive about tea – and that makes him the quintessential tea drinker! Dr. Johnson was an advocate of drinking tea, despite it being considered by many in his time as unfit for human consumption and an unhealthy beverage. In some ways his predilections became the standard of British tea-drinking. He was most famous for compiling a huge Dictionary of the English Language, (no doubt under the stimulation of tea) and when he received a significant sum for this publication the first thing he bought was an expertly crafted silver teapot!

Anna Williams, his trusty housekeeper and companion, was completely blinded due to cataract, and she, when pouring his tea, to make sure the cup never overflowed, she would put her finger in the cup to gauge the level.

A tea fanatic...

Dr. Johnson himself confessed to being “a hardened and shameless tea-drinker, who has,

for twenty years, diluted his meals with only the infusion of this fascinating plant; whose kettle has scarcely time to cool; who with tea amuses the evening, with tea solaces the midnight, and, with tea, welcomes the morning...” He often ran out of money and lived in debt. But, despite being poor and unable to afford tea, he was very capable of cleaning out others of theirs! Contemporary household records reflect the horrified incredulity of hosts and servants at the vast quantities of tea he would consume. Once, at the house of a distinguished lady, he kept passing his cup for more and more, until he had ingested thirty-two cups. The lady said: “*Dr. Johnson, you drink too much tea.*” Johnson said “*Madam, you are insolent.*”

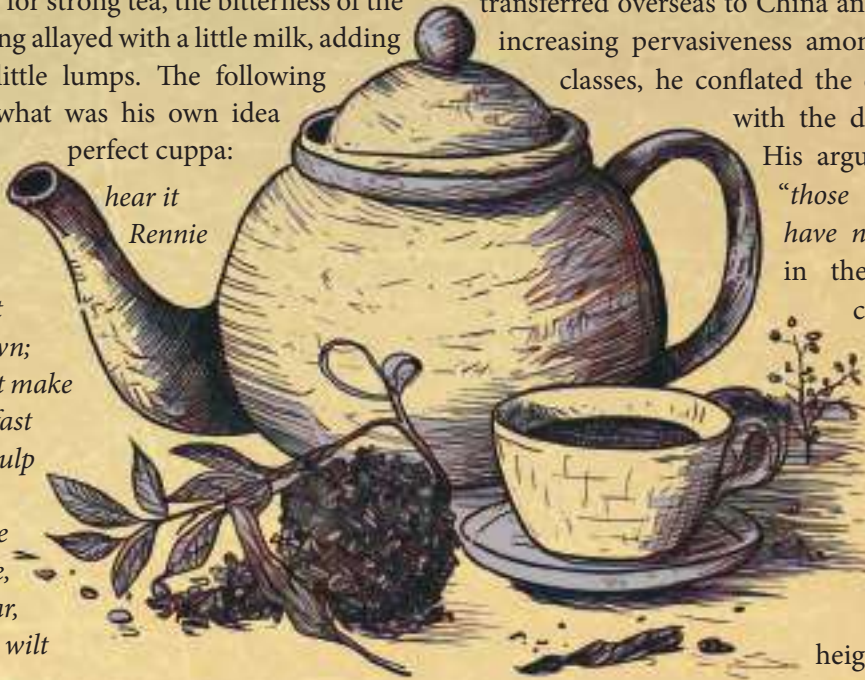
Tea parties were the ubiquitous entertainment of the eighteenth century. Once at such a party, Dr. Johnson was kindly reminded by the host that he had finished off eleven cups of tea! “*Sir, I did not count your glasses of wine, why should you number my cups of tea?*” he replied, “*Sir, I should have released the lady from any further troubles if it had not been for your remark; but you have reminded me that I*





want one of the dozen, and I must request Mrs. Cumberland to round up my number.” He had a preference for strong tea, the bitterness of the tannin being allayed with a little milk, adding sugar in little lumps. The following sums up what was his own idea of the perfect cuppa:

“Now then, my dear,
Nor hear it with a frown;
You cannot make the tea so fast
As I can gulp it down.
I therefore pray thee,
Rennie dear,
That thou wilt give to me
With cream and sugar softened well,
Another dish of tea.”



drinking risked ruining the English nation. He was concerned that British wealth was being transferred overseas to China and because of its increasing pervasiveness among the working classes, he conflated the drinking of tea with the drinking of gin.

His argument was that “those have tea who have not bread” – as in the poor simply could not afford to have tea on the regular without affection their daily nutrition. His absurdity gained new height when he said children of poor

mothers were dying because of drinking tea “this liquid fire” during breastfeeding and the money at home was spent on tea.

Johnson, the “hardened and shameless tea-drinker,” not surprisingly, took exception to Hanway’s assertion that “the consumption of tea is injurious to the interest of our country.” The result was a long review exceeding four thousand words, all to examine and refute Hanway’s “spurious” claims for the “injurious” nature of tea. He stated roundly in this review that “I have drunk it twenty years without hurt, and therefore believe it not to be poison.” The wonders of tea was exhorted upon liberally, perhaps somewhat exaggeratedly. The argument between the two continued back and forth, as Mr. Hanway was as furious with Johnson’s review as Johnson had been scathing about Hanway’s original work.

Dr. Samuel Johnson, renowned for his gigantic tea appetite, sums up tea’s place in the world by saying... “Tea’s proper use is to amuse the idle, and relax the studious, and dilute the full meals of those who cannot use exercise, and will not use abstinence.”

A famous feud...

Jonas Hanway, a philanthropist and traveller, published an essay on the effects of tea drinking in 1757. It strongly opposed the drinking of tea “as pernicious to health, obstructing industry and impoverishing the nation”. According to him tea had a severe debilitating effect on the constitution of women: “How many sweet creatures of your sex, languish with weak digestion,

low spirits, lassitude’s, melancholy, and... nervous complaints? Tell them to change their diet, and among other articles leave off drinking tea, it is more than probable the greatest part of them will be restored to health.” But, more than that, Hanway believed that tea-





TEA TIME

A Tea Taster's Journey: from Junior to Entrepreneur

Tapan Kumar Das

The industry churns out stories of success as well as failures every day, and it takes a special kind to make a mark in this difficult and often risky work. One such person in the tea industry is Mr. Tapan Kumar Das.



Starting as a very junior tea taster, Mr. Tapan Kumar Das is now a name with some recognition in the gigantic Indian tea industry. With a Master's degree in Bengali from North Bengal University and a passion that kindled

while working his part-time BPO job, Mr. Tapan decided to pursue a career in Tea Tasting and slowly climbed the ladder of success with the resources provided by Sancheti Tea and the encouragement of his friends.

Tapan Kumar Das, a graduate from Alipurduar College, was all set to begin his working life with a part-time BPO position after the completion of his degree. However, destiny had something else in mind and a chance encounter changed the path of his fortunes.

One day while picking up his salary from the bank, he spotted the office of Sancheti Tea and decided to have a look. After speaking to the manager, he found himself with a job offer within a few days. As a Junior Tea Taster and a Tea Boy, Mr. Tapan worked 8:30 am to 8:00 pm under the guidance of Mr. S.M. Sancheti. After a month, Mr. Sancheti tasted his tea-tasting skills and he slowly started taking interest in brokering and packaging too. Soon he showed great promise,

mastering tea blending and tasting and eventually taking on responsibility for the dust auction.

Although self-taught, he was helped by his friend, who helped him gain an understanding of the subject academically from the extensive program in Tea Management at IIPM Bangalore.

He goes on to say that "Working in Sancheti Tea was a great learning experience, and Mr. S. M. Sancheti (his boss) was very supportive and protective of me". Under the guidance of his mentor, he learnt the nuances of tea tasting, blending, buying and packing.

The pandemic in 2020 allowed him to look deeper into his own ambitions. Encouraged by a good friend from Maharashtra, he decided to make the big leap and quit his job at Sancheti Tea to start his own business. With an open-minded and protective Mr. Sancheti, Tapan launched Tea Leaf India in 2020-2021. Today, Mr. Tapan handles the full buying process for O2 industries and a few reputed packetiers from various states. He credits much of his success to the guidance and care of his mentor, Mr. Sancheti.

At present, his office is running with a small team of five people and, as an owner of a tea business, he has many hats. He takes on the roles of a tea taster and blender for different kinds of teas, a quality consistency advisor and he also has plans of launching his own brand.

It was in 2018 that he came in contact with Mr.



Kaushik Bhattacharjee, the director of the Darjeeling Tea Research and Management Association (NITM). Mr. Bhattacharjee requested Mr. Das to travel to Nepal Tea and Coffee Development Authority to give a teaching seminar on Tea Marketing and Plantation of CTC and Orthodox teas. This seminar was very successful, and since then, Mr. Tapan has been teaching various classes on tea tasting in the prestigious Institute of NITM.

When asked about the challenges faced by the Indian tea industry, Mr. Tapan said that there is a lack of knowledge among the young people in the tea industry, often focusing more on quantity rather than the quality and Indian tea is not significantly highlighted in the world market as much as it should be. He stresses the importance of tea tasting which he calls an art, along with knowledge of who drinks what kind of tea, which part of India needs which type of tea, the current tea industry of India and the world tea industry.

As an adviser in quality consistency, Mr. Das conducts tea tasting and performs valuations for tea gardens and bought-leaf factories. He has also been making plans to set up his own tea brand in the future.

In his free time, he enjoys going to peaceful places, listening to music, and biking to the mountains. He has also been much encouraged through the words of wisdom given by Mr.

Amarendra Nandkeoylar (Contemporary Brokers), who said “Understanding the choice of cup pattern destination wise. The cup pattern depends on water and milk”.

To the young generation entering the industry, Mr. Tapan offers them advice to bring about a good change, while taking guidance from experienced people in the industry and to remain patient as success is not an overnight matter but requires dedication and hard work. His team currently consists of 6 people, for which he is thankful to his ‘guru’ Mr. S.M. Sancheti, the entire Brokers and Sellers team and Mr. Kaushik Bhattacharjee. He also mentions his immense gratitude to his teacher, Mrs. Sumita Mukherjee, for providing him with guidance and mentorship throughout his life. She has been a pillar of support for him in all his highs and lows.

Mr Tapan Kumar Das’s story is inspiring and serves as an example to the youth and all tea industry professionals. His accomplishments are a testament to the power of determination, hard work and the right guidance from mentors. As the tea industry of India moves onward, stories like Mr. Tapan’s will continue to bring hope and encouragement for aspiring professionals.



Contributor :
Ena Bandyopadhyay
Contemporary Brokers

DOCTOR IN TEA

(Dr. S.K. Vohra
talks of the passing
on of “a golden era”
in tea)



Year 1960: managed to pass out of Edinburgh University with a MRCP. I was on cloud nine. Pub-crawling was on every evening, but soon the pocket was getting lighter and the liver heavier. With no funds to fall back upon - the days of filthy rich fathers financing their third division progeny to unknown American Universities for undergraduate studies was still three decades away - a job was top priority. Luckily, the National Health Service in U.K. was still heavily dependent upon Third World products. That made getting a place as a Senior Registrar in hospitals fairly easy. That is how I landed in Wakefield. The main attraction of the job was the proximity to Leeds with its harmless nightlife and a vintage Rolls Royce (1935) driven by its owner one 'old geezer', as he was affectionately known. It was in this

regal mode I travelled from hospital to hospital. History was to repeat itself when I joined tea and travelled from garden to garden, but that is where the similarity ended. My driver in tea, perpetually drunk, reeked of “La Pani” and was given to the disturbing habit of wildly zig-zagging over the road.

The job in U.K. was only for one year and a firm footing back home was becoming increasingly imperative. Just then the post of Chief Medical Officer in Bishnauth Medical Association in Assam came up. The interview at Mincing Lane was conducted by a benign gentleman called Danny White. He stared pointedly at my starched collar and the shining black shoes, which I had bought only 40 minutes back and asked me what I thought of the Australian Cricket Team that

was playing MCC at Lords on that day. My reply appealed to Mr. White (specially the bits about Redpath's onside game)! I was handed over a ticket (cheapest) for the day's play and the job was mine.

Flew back to India after a week's celebrations. Those were the days of the Beatles and Carnaby Street and Pd.1.50 lunches at corner tea shops.

In Calcutta, I was introduced to half a dozen Burra Sahibs





as the new CMO of Bishnauth and I informed that three of my predecessors had not completed six months on the job. I squirmed but there was no turning back. I had to go through the drill of buying clothes, shoes and shirts and half sleeves which would have gone down better on an Earnest Hemingway safari than a doctor on hospital duty. Suitably equipped, I was put on a World War II Dakota along with several gunny bags, vegetables, fruits and live chickens. Every time the plane hit turbulence, the luggage got loose and fell all over us. My neighbour (a Kabuli moneylender) would catch hold of my arm and cry "Sahib Bachao" Little did he know that I was equally terrified. The plane was expected to fly low over the tea gardens, so as to signal to the Mem Sahibs to come and collect their market supplies and also to inform the airfield keeper to clear out the ground for landing.

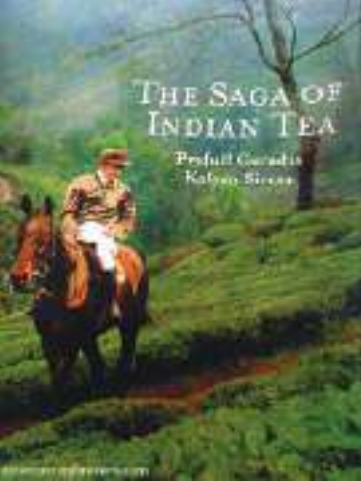
My area of operation ranged from Dekori to Nya Gorga Tea Estate and I spent quite some time on the roads. The work was fascinating and besides routine work included minor operations like Caesarian sections. The people were kind and the weather was marvellous. Sunday lunches after a few Pink Gins were memorable with some engrossing yarns about the early tea planters. One story I cannot forget was about an old Superintendent who was supposed to be dying of some mysterious disease in a remote garden. He was a type halfway between Curzon and Kipling. Scenario in the

evening would be that the 'Burra Sahib' would be cleaning his gun with favourite Spaniel lounging around on a rug front of raging log fire and occasionally looking at the master with one eye. As rumours of his end filtered across the North Bank, senior managers of the area started arriving for the funeral. A China 'mistri' was brought in to rig up a coffin. He started hammering nails into the wood. The loud noise, however, woke up the old planter who promptly stepped out of bed, put on his dressing gown and came out to reprimand the mistri for making such an awful din. The Chinaman bolted thinking that he has seen a ghost. The old Superintendent lived for another four years thereafter!

And then there was another one when Company Pilot was ferrying a Senior Director from Pertabgarh to Upper Assam. Halfway he quietly switched off the Petrol gauge and told a very frightened Director that by an oversight he forgot to fill up petrol which is now finished. The foot long expletives that flew around after landing would make any hard-boiled Planter blush.

I feel that my ten years in Assam were the finest and the most enjoyable of my life. When the bridges started coming up over the rivers, M.J.K. Smith, popularly known as 'Gaon Burha' of Dhullia T.E. said in one of his reflective moods. "Young lads, for you it is progress but I think it is the end of an era - a golden one at that". How right he was!





The Tea Board

The Tea Board, a regulatory body, was set up in 1953 to promote development of the tea industry. The ancestry of the Board, however, goes back to 1903 when at the request of the industry, Government of India passed the Tea Cess Act to levy a cess on export for tea propaganda for India's own tea, as well as for joining the united campaign for teas of other countries like – Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Dutch East Indies (Indonesia). After the 1930s, it was agreed that vigorous efforts should be made to expand the market by means of generic promotion of the beverage

To regulate exports, country-specific quotas were introduced. For market expansion by generic promotion, the International Tea Market Expansion Board (ITMEB) was established in London in 1936. In 1952 India withdrew its membership from ITMEB and set up its own Indian Tea Market Expansion Board.

With Independence in 1947, new economic thinking was in the air and it became almost a faith that economic activities needed to



be controlled, regulated and directed by the state or its agencies. Some industries were nationalised; others came under state regulation. For tea, through an appointed board with an officially nominated chairman from outside the industry, a regime of regulation by the state was instituted. The Tea Board consisted of thirty

members who came from growers, exporters, traders, manufacturers, trade unions, state government representatives, Members of Parliament, consumers and other interests. The core functions of the Board revolved round the control and regulation of cultivation and exports, as well as in increasing the consumption of tea in India and elsewhere and conducting propaganda for that purpose. The additional functions included agricultural research, marketing, promotion of exports, securing better conditions for labourers, among other.

A different picture emerges when the figures of India's output are juxtaposed with her



international position. In 1950, India's share in the total world production of tea was 43 percent. By 1995, this figure was down to less than 30, which showed that tea production in the rest of the world taken together grew faster than in India. The comparison however is considered by some to be misleading as several areas in Africa and New Guinea are new or virgin.

There was another way of looking at the increase in tea production. This was by asking whether the increase had been sufficient to meet the domestic as well as the export requirements. The answer was negative. Higher and higher proportions of the Indian output have been consumed in the country. While this was desirable, its one consequence was that the export markets tended to be starved of Indian tea. The world as a whole exported 40 percent of its production. If India was excluded from the world figures, over 50 percent of the production of the rest of the world was exported. The luxury of a high internal demand proved expensive for Indian exports before long. The collapse of the USSR and the sharp reduction of its imports proved a gap difficult to fill. By 1994, shipments fell to 145 mkg from the peak of 220 mkg.

How much could the Tea Board, or the industry be held responsible for this state of affairs? Not a great deal; nevertheless it is a complex question whose answer has been attempted in the chapter on Indo-Soviet trade. The Tea Board provided long term finance to the estates from 1961 onwards when there were few alternate sources of agriculture or plantation.

The first scheme taken up was for the supply of machinery to the estates on hire purchase basis. The scheme covered machines required for modernisation – for example CTC lines –

and the list has been expanded over the years to include standby generating sets, irrigation equipment, jeeps, light commercial vehicles, tractors etc.

The impact of development finance has been considerable. Since the establishment of the Tea Board, over a hundred thousand hectares have been added to the area under tea. About 22 percent of the new area was planted with the help of loans made available by the Tea Board. In addition, the area replanted or infilled totals another 26,000 hectare. Over the years, the Board has disbursed about Rs 100 crore or a billion rupees.

One of the statutory functions of the Tea Board is undertaking, assisting, or encouraging scientific, technical and economic research as well as the maintenance of demonstration farms and manufacturing stations. By the time the Board came on the scene in 1954, both the research stations at Tocklai in Assam and Valparai in the Anamallais in Tamil Nadu were well-established centres of scientific research. The Board established an ad hoc Research Liaison Committee. The intention was only to establish liaison with those institutions of the industry that were actually conducting research. Over the years, the Board has largely refrained from entering directly into the field of research. It has no station of its own except the one at Kurseong – devoted to special work for the improvement of the Darjeeling estates. In all other areas and even in Darjeeling, the Tea Board has been supporting and assisting research activities of the industry and the industry-supported associations. It also provides grants to some of the universities, like the Calcutta University for producing soluble tea from green leaf, or the Assam Agriculture University for conducting technical training courses.



been going on for a long time. For various reasons, including the rise in population and greater urbanisation, the consumption increased steadily. By the mid-sixties, the internal market absorbed about half the total Indian production. It was then that the domestic promotion was discontinued.

The Tea Board is also responsible for regulating the disposal of tea waste and various welfare grants for tea workers.

In research, the Board thus played the role of a catalyst, a promoter and a coordinator. It has also helped to tackle technical problems at the international level like those of pesticide residue, ISO 9000, packaging regulations and complying with the specifications of importing countries. The Tea Act has placed a direct responsibility on the Board for the promotion of overseas aid for improving the marketing of tea.

Labour welfare activities are only a marginal activity of the Tea Board. Whereas the expenditure on tea promotion averaged over rupees six crore and that on research over rupees two crore annually, the expenditure on labour welfare averaged only about Rs 25 lakh per year.

Starting from scratch, the Tea Board set up its organisation abroad in Brussels (1953), London (1959), New York (1960), Sydney (1960) and Cairo (1963). There have been changes over the years and subsequently the overseas offices were established at Brussels, London, New York, Dubai and Moscow. The Tea Board's officers based abroad, or representatives from the Indian embassies, gradually started participating in the work of Tea Councils that were set up for promotional campaigns in the USA, Canada, West Germany, Australia, United Kingdom, France, New Zealand and Ireland. Later, India remained a member only of the Tea Councils in UK and Germany.

The Board is an agency of the Central Government to promote the development of the tea industry. Its functions are directed towards extension of area under tea cultivation, increasing production, productivity, encouraging research, undertaking the promotion of consumption, increasing exports et al. It has also served as a link between the industry and the government. The organisation has always been alive to the problems of the industry and trade. The Board has over the years developed. With liberalisation, many irksome regulations have been abolished, yet those pertaining to orderly marketing of tea have been retained. The Tea Board of India enjoys prestige with international organisations, foreign governments and importers.

The promotion of tea domestically had



G Paul & Sons: an Enduring Legacy



It is a tale of a business that has kept its family together through its Business. G. Paul & Sons was founded by Late Gobardhan Paul, a visionary, who, in 1972 saw the big picture at a very early stage. He was a great entrepreneur; after a successful venture in the Fire-cracker business, decided to excel in the Tea Trade.

Since then, two of his sons, Mr. Ganesh Chandra Paul (Managing Director), and Mr. Gobinda Chandra Paul (Chairman) of G. PAUL & SONS (P) Ltd. have taken forward the legacy. Currently, the Third Generation, Mr. Gourab Paul (Head of Purchase and Tasting Department), Miss Olympia Paul (Head of Wholesale Department), and Mr. Gouresh Paul (Head of Retail Department) is establishing trust among its customers and lifting the business to newer peaks of success every day on the strong foundation laid by the previous generation.

Unlike the generation past, the new generation focuses on exploring different avenues, and provide the finest of the finest Teas to the customers of India.

“Tea, being the most consumed drink after water, has great scope in the market. India has the capability of becoming the highest exporter, if wisely supported and co-ordinately worked on”, Mr. Gourab Paul remarked in conversation with us. “Packed Teas also have a good

demand in the Indian Market and beyond.” Keeping this in mind G. PAUL & SONS (P) Ltd. Has launched its first packet Tea under the brand of “G – 1”. A Rs.10/- Pack of 30Gms of selected CTC & Darjeeling Teas.

In the recent years, the Indian market has experienced a huge rush of blended packed CTC teas that are being mixed with different flavoured edible oils like ‘Elaichi’, ‘Tulsi’ which are perhaps, far removed from the essential flavour of pure Organic Teas. G Paul and sons has been focused on delivering pure organic teas to its customers for more than 50 years now.

G. Paul and Sons is the first company in West Bengal to repack 500g of teas in tin cannisters which have proved to be a great success in the market, selling more than 3000 cans in a time span of just 1 month, keeping in mind, metal containers are best for storing quality teas.

According to Gourab, “The company focuses on quality, quality and only quality. We believe that the quality of the product determines the brand image and the overall success of the firm.”



by Niladri Saha
Contemporary Brokers.

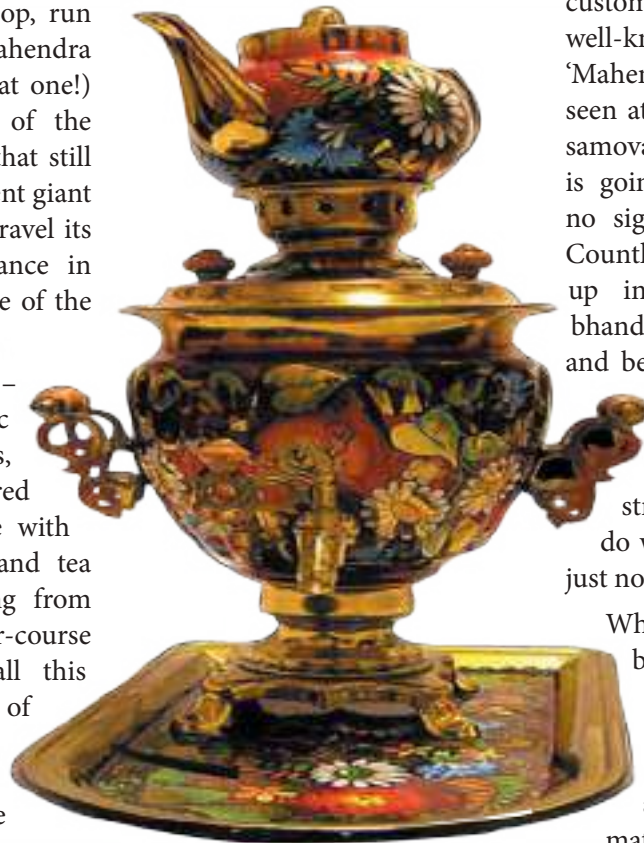


‘Tanki Chai’: The Samovar Tea Shop

The Samovar Tea Shop, run by 66-year-old Mahendra Singh Dhoni (not that one!) in Kolkata, is one of the few cafes in Bengal that still brews tea in the ancient giant copper kettle. We unravel its history and significance in the cultural landscape of the city.

Picture a long street – rife with the foot traffic of busy office-goers, the pavements covered and near impassable with various food stalls and tea stall, selling anything from an omelette to a four-course meal and amidst all this busyness, an island of calm. A small tea-shop, unremarkable but for the presence of a giant large copper samovar prominently stood in front of the shop, in the corner of Bentinck Street in Kolkata, has been serving tea to the toiling masses of office workers of the area for over a century.

Affectionately known as ‘Tanki Chai’ to the locals and the regulars, this little shop is a hidden gem in the hubbub of the city. The crowds ebb and flow in synchrony with break times at the myriad offices in the area, but there is always a steady flow of



Samovar Tea Shop, run by 66-year-old Mahendra Singh Dhoni (not that one!) in Kolkata, is one of the few cafes in Bengal that still brews tea in the ancient giant copper kettle. We unravel its history and significance in the cultural landscape of the city.

customers. The owner is well-known to customers as ‘Mahendra-da’ and it can be seen at a glance that the last samovar tea shop in the city is going pretty strong with no signs of slowing down. Countless cups are served up in the iconic ‘mati-r bhand’ (clay cups) to soothe and beguile the souls of the masses. So extra, do you say? A regular customer tells us straightforwardly ‘Can’t do without it – breaks are just not the same.’

What makes a samovar-brewed cuppa special? To explore that we have to look a little bit into the history and geography of the matter.

The ornate samovar we may be familiar with in beautiful Russian illustrations and the unassuming 20-litre cylinder sitting in front of ‘Tanki Chai’ is, in essence, the same thing. A samovar is a metal vessel with a tube-like metal portion which can be filled with slow-burning fuel like charcoal, to slowly heat or boil water. When the vessel is hot enough, a tea pot is placed on top to make tea concentrate, which can then be diluted to make tea.



Mahendra Singh Dhoni hard at work at his shop

The original intention was to have a source of constantly heated water during a time when electricity was but a madman's dream.

The name 'samovar' comes from 'self-boiler' in Russian, meaning it requires no external heat source. Invented in the latter part of the 18th century, it has become one with the art, culture and language of the Russian community and through them spread all across the world including India. They may be found in many places in Kashmir and South India, where they are also used for coffee.

The samovar is often a treasure, an object of mystery in many Russian fables and a focus of many works of art and literature. This rather common household object in conjunction with tea had become such a central part of social life that it had been elevated into proverb, where 'to have a sit by the samovar' is equivalent to a what 'adda' means to a Bengali. This has imbued a common kitchen utensil with a certain vitality – a soul, perhaps, which at once, evokes a sense of comfort and community that is unmatched.

The tea-concentrate brewed on a samovar gets infused with a smoky flavour which is particularly suited for malty black teas like Assam which lends a more nuanced complexity to the tea. Copper has long been known in India as an immunity-booster. In recent years, this has been a major draw, so the all of these

factors combine to make 'Tanki Chai' a unique existence.

It all started in 1920, when Juhuri Singh, the father of Mahendra-da, moved to Calcutta from Uttar Pradesh in search of a livelihood. He opened a tea shop in the busy business district of the city. Samovars were a good way to save fuel and keep a large amount of water boiling throughout the day. At that time a samovar teashop wasn't a curiosity, but the inexorable tide of time has swept away the slowly bubbling samovars, leaving only Mahendra Singh guarding a piece of history. He has been running this shop for the past 40 years with no signs of slowing in business, despite the competition from other tea-shops. He attributes this to the copper-boiled water which lends an unmistakable taste to the tea. Despite the regular maintenance required, he is determined to brew tea in this tradition to preserve the taste which he is known for. When asked if a samovar is not obsolete in the days of fast food, he categorically denies it and says that once it's hot and bubbling, it's much faster to make tea from a samovar than any kettle.

Tanki Chai does not use a gas stove; it continues to use charcoal and wood to make the fire which is part of the flavour of slow-brewed tea. Then milk is added to cater to the local palate and served in disposable clay cups for a perfect sip of tea to get rid of the fatigue of the work day.

Lifestyle of the Traditional Tea Planter in Assam



The original planters were a tough breed. They had to be.

It's hard to imagine Assam in the early 1800s when the tea industry was just beginning, but back then the majority of the state was a jungle – a wild, impenetrable jungle – and the first-generation planters who established the tea estates had to hack it out in order to create the gardens, those neat and orderly rows of bushes interspersed with shade trees bordered with drainage ditches, that we see today. They had to control the workers made up of local and imported tribes, keep the elephants, rhinos, tigers, hyenas and other wild animals at bay as well as fight malaria and other killer diseases. And of course there was also the heat.

They had a constant battle with nature: encroaching jungle, marauding wildlife, fatal sickness, and relentless humidity.

It was also a very lonely existence. In the early days only a few plantations had been established, all in remote areas, and typically the Britishers who ran them were rugged, self-sufficient and unmarried. After all, what woman would be

open to taking on such an isolated and dangerous life? Every garden had its own history of sweat, toil and not uncommonly, death.

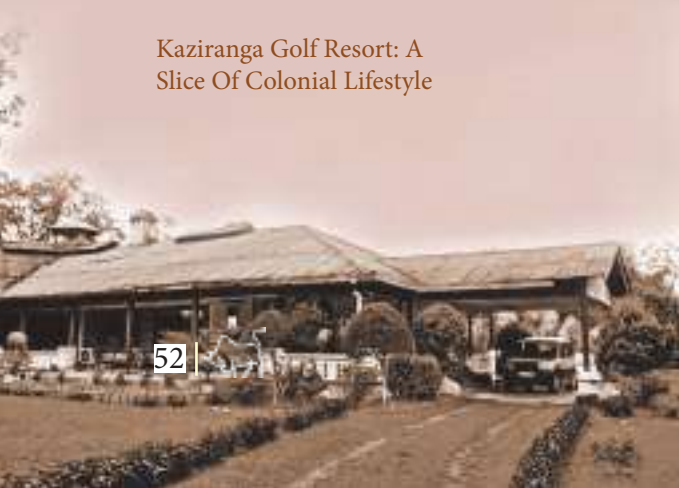
The planter's relaxation would be to pit his strength and cunning against the local wildlife: perhaps spend days tracking a leopard or tiger, or taking a boat up river in search of a massive mahseer to land. And in the evenings, by the light of oil lamps, he would read.

As time passed, the infrastructure and population improved, the planters banded together to form clubs which became the social centres of life in the hills.

A typical day in the life of a planter revolved around mealtimes. The beginning was marked with a bed tea before early morning rounds, then breakfast afterwards. Lunch would follow a few hours of work, along with a siesta. Another hour of industriousness perhaps, and then the most important afternoon tea, the lynch pin of plantation life.

After another few hours at work, the planter would return to his bungalow at dusk. Finally he could relax and quaff a couple of pegs of whisky

Kaziranga Golf Resort: A Slice Of Colonial Lifestyle



Tezpur station club



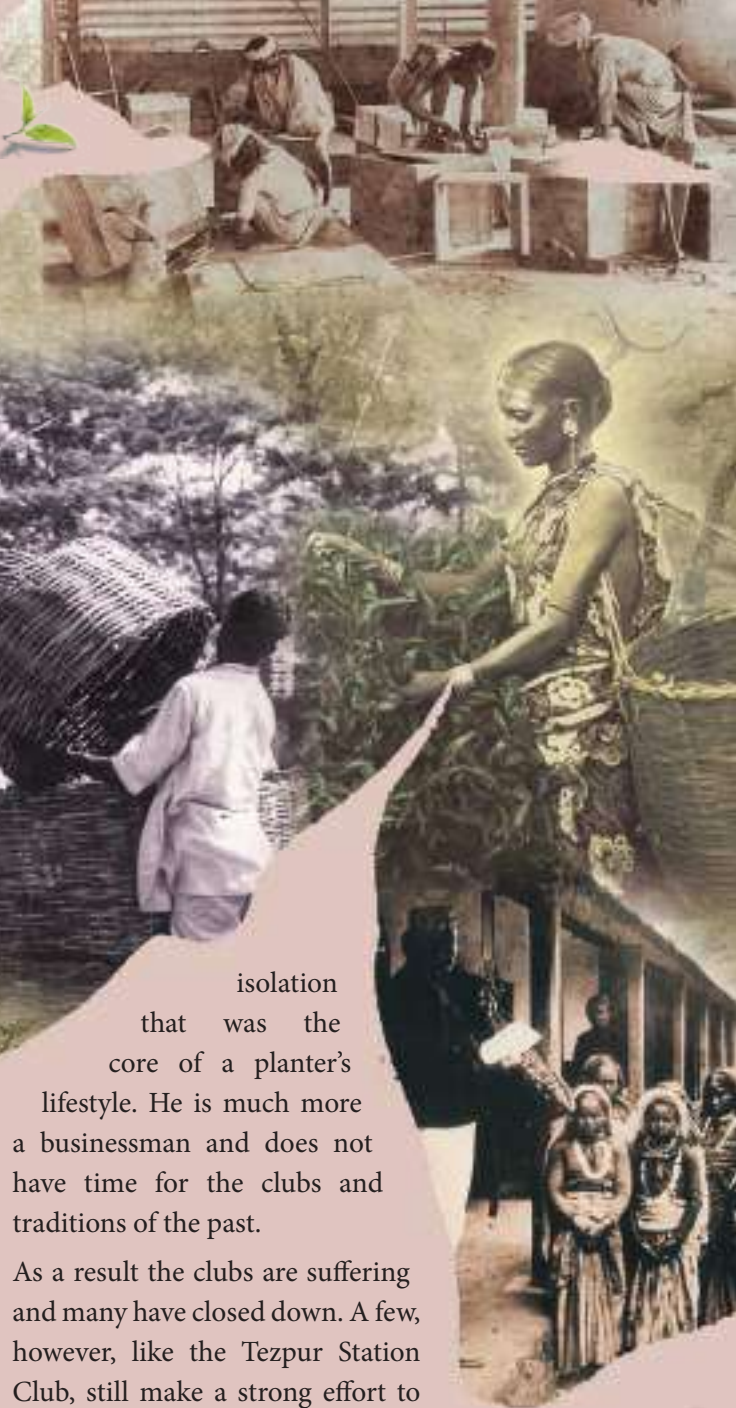
HISTORY

on his verandah while looking out at the snow-capped Himalayas in the distance, before taking a hot bath, eating dinner and falling into bed.

Both lunch and dinner would include a mix of Indian and British dishes and over the years some traditional British recipes became tailored to the planters' maturing, assimilated palates as Assamese and Indian cooking fused with the traditional Scottish and English fare and a repertoire of dishes evolved into the Anglo-Indian cuisine of today. The isolation was hard on the families of the planters as well. The wives of the family had to make everything at home – even potato chips to go with the drinks for visiting bigwigs. When flimsy bamboo bridges would be wiped away by fierce monsoons, life necessities had to air-dropped by light planes.

Even a century after the tea industry began in Assam for much of the time the planter and his family still lived a secluded life making the weekly “club nights” extremely popular events with all the families in the area turning up to eat, drink and play sports. Over the years the sports changed (polo, very popular at the beginning of the 20th century was eventually succeeded by tennis, squash and golf) but for the most part the planters remained a gregarious, hard-drinking bunch that certainly knew how to party.

Modern technology has wiped out the sense of



isolation that was the core of a planter's lifestyle. He is much more a businessman and does not have time for the clubs and traditions of the past.

As a result the clubs are suffering and many have closed down. A few, however, like the Tezpur Station Club, still make a strong effort to hold onto their past. This club keeps its history alive by annually awarding the Chummery Cup, a large silver trophy shaped like an elegant teapot given to the Tezpur Chummery by visitors from Mangledye and Guwahati back in 1881. Originally presented to winners of an annual polo competition, it is now kept at the Tezpur Station Club and awarded to the champions of a fiercely fought tennis tournament held every year between the teams of the North Bank Tea Clubs.

A Teatime Report



Tea culture in North Africa

TEA TIME

Modern Africa has a vibrant and thriving tea culture with many different varieties from different countries. Through current research we know that a thriving Sino-African trade route introduced tea to Africa long before the west had ever heard of it, but it was cut off after China closed its borders in 1433. In 1880, when colonial powers started tea cultivation on a larger scale, Africa slowly re-developed its affinity to tea. Mint tea from various countries, ginger infused black tea from Kenya and many others are now hidden treasures waiting to be found for any tea-lover. In the following extract from *All About Tea* by William Ukers we find a fascinating glimpse into the developing African tea culture.

Tea in Northern Africa

Nobody knows even approximately when the tea trade of Northern Africa started, but the native population of the countries on the south shore of the Mediterranean are heavy tea drinkers, consuming approximately thirty-four million pounds of tea annually against a scant million and a half absorbed by the inhabitants of countries and portions of countries along the northern shore. This is accounted for, on the one hand, by the Moslem ban on alcoholic drinks and, on the other, by the Latin preference for wine.

The annual tea imports of Northern Africa are distributed roughly as follows: Algeria, two million pounds; Tunis, three million; Morocco, fifteen million; and Egypt, fourteen million. The bulk of the imports are of green tea.

ALGERIA.—The Arab population buys tea in considerable quantities from grocers, herbalists,



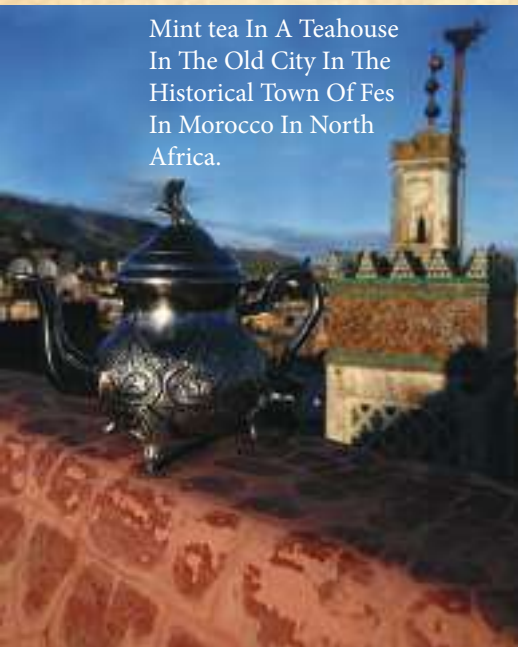
Northern Africa Maghrebi Mint Tea With Green Tea



Tunisian Tea with pine nuts

and pharmacists; but not to the extent that it buys chocolate and coffee. There are no firms or individuals dealing exclusively in tea. China green teas, are well in the lead, and come to Algeria mostly through British merchants; such quantities as they do not handle are sold by French merchants. Small quantities come from Ceylon, British India, Java, and French Indo-China. The packet teas of some of the well-known British and French packers are popular; among these are: Lyons', Lipton's, and Ridgway's, from British sources, and Elephant and Compagnie Coloniale, from the French.

TUNIS.—The retail distribution of tea has developed exclusively in the hands of Tunisian



Mint tea In A Teahouse In The Old City In The Historical Town Of Fes In Morocco In North Africa.



shop-keepers, and never has been carried on by producing firms. Following the usual French policy, tea imports have been subjected to considerable customs regulation and heavy duties, followed by even greater consumption taxes; but the trade has progressed despite all obstacles. The firms that have figured principally in supplying Tunisian retailers are: Salada Tea Company of Canada, Ltd., Montreal; J. Lyons & Co., Ltd., Lipton, Ltd., R. O. Mennell & Co., Ridgways, Ltd., Tarring & Stockwell, London; and A. Caubert et Fils, brokers [bulk tea], Marseille.

MOROCCO.—Green tea is the national beverage of Morocco, and long has stood third on the list of imports. Practically all of the tea imported is China tea, and most of it is shipped from Shanghai with transshipment at Marseille. The London market once was the principal source of supply for the Moroccan trade, but began to lose its commanding position during the World War and never has regained it. Sorting and sampling now are generally done at Shanghai.

EGYPT.—A few years before the World War, tea was practically unknown among the Egyptian natives, and at that time it was imported by a few Persian merchants and some European grocers for sale to resident foreigners. During the World War, however, the native Egyptian trade began to show marked interest in tea, and local importers endeavored to extend its sale in rural districts. These efforts yielded good results, particularly after a lowed t ho same eyolos JIM Unit of its narlier contemporaries, Capo Town And Port Elisabeth; China tea enjoying a monopoly of (he trade until displaced by British- grown teas within the last thirty or forty years.

Along about 1880, Durban had the distinction of becoming the primary market for a tea industry that, was started in the province in 1850 and supplies an important part of the South African Federation's demands. The highest production was reached in 1903, with a total of 2,081,000 lbs. of manufactured teas. Advancing labor costs caused a decline in the industry. In 1928, the production was approximately 800,000 lbs., while the imports, principally from Ceylon and India, totaled 11,584,000 lbs.

Firms dealing in tea at Durban who have made

important contributions to the his-tory of the trade include: SIR J. L. HULETT 6l SONS, LTD., 209, West Street; W. R. HINDSON & Co., 12-13, Nicol's Court, Smith Street; GEO. PAYNE & SONS, LTD., Hermitage Street, branch of London; J. LYONS & Co., PTY. LTD., Hermitage Street, branch of London; W. DUNN & Co., Commercial Road; GLENTON & MITCHELL, 40, Smith Street, branch of Johannesburg; T. W. BECKETT & Co. LTD., P. O. Box 62, branch of Pretoria; S. BUTCHER A SONS, I/TD., West Street; THE COMMERCIAL AOKNCY, LTD., 48, Albert Street; and KARL GUNDELFINCJKR, I/TD., Smith Street.

TRANSVAAL.—Johannesburg, the commercial center of the Transvaal, has rail connections with the South African seaports, Durban, Port Elizabeth, and Cape Town, and also has shared in tea trade history as a hinterland distributing center for all three. Firms that have contributed to the progress of the tea trade at Johannesburg are:

T. SIMRBON k Co., Commissioner and PolJy Streets, sole agents in Southern Af-rica for Mazawattee Tea, Ltd., was founded by Mr. Thomas Simpson in 1890. There are six branches. Mr. Simpson retired in 1910. Since then the sole partner has been his eldest son, Mr. Montagu Simpson.

The firm of GLENTON k MITCHELL, wholesale tea and coffee merchants, Main and Greene Streets, was founded in Johan-nesburg, in 1896, by Messrs. F. H. Glenton and W. Mitchell. Mr. Mitchell died in 1921. The present partners are Messrs. F. H. Glenton, E. J. Porter, A E, R. Light-foot, and F. Glenton, Jr.



Traditional metal Moroccan mint tea pots



Prafull Billore, *the MBA Chaiwala*

of MBAs and Tea

The neighbourhood tea-stall is getting a new makeover these days where young entrepreneurs are using quirky names to attract the goldfish attention-span of the modern consumer.

The MBA Chaiwala was a concept that sparked a certain interest in the Indian demographic, due to it employing a striking oxymoron. The over-qualification in such a menial job is what people found amusing, yet refreshing. True to the essence of an MBA, this was an entrepreneurial opportunity which was in harmony with the pursuit of passion, and linking these two events was tea. India has a thriving tea culture, and chai stalls are a common sight across the country. These stalls attract people from all walks of life. The market for chai is magnanimous, and an MBA graduate may recognize the potential to tap into this market by offering a unique experience, innovative branding, or specialised tea blends.



Similar to this MBBS chaiwala was also introduced with the same concept but a little twist, concentrating more on the health benefit side. Along the same plane lies Bicycle Barista, a remote coffee shop, where a passionate cyclist operates the business with a modified bike. We also find Chai GPT, where a unique trendy name becomes an irresistible draw for consumers. Whether they keep them is a test for their business savvy and fare. Prafull Billore of MBA Chaiwala fame, has become a bit of an idol for young entrepreneurs.

We, as consumers are also forced to look at this from the other side of the spectrum, where we view the staff as possessing a certain passion rather than economic compulsion. This is a strategic move as this brings in customers purely based on their fascination around the repudiation of societal norms and dogmas. In the symphony of life, our actions play the notes of inspiration, harmony, and positive change with a certain desire of unorthodoxy.





Navin Bhatt
Raj Tee Company

Small Talk with Navin Bhatt of Raj Tee Company

Teatime had a chance to sit down with Mr. Bhatt – a veteran of the tea industry for more than fifty years.

Q: Please tell us about how you got started in this business.

A: I started working part-time in a tea company when I was in school. You could say I really had to work my way up the ladder. As I grew up, I learned about the ins and outs of the industry. Raj Tee was started in 1978 and we've been providing our clients with quality tea since then.

Q: What is it like to see the changes in the industry during this time?

A: Well, some things are, of course, very different. I have been operating since days of the fort-nightly

manual auction to the present online Bharat Auction. We are the first buyer to have broken price barrier of Rs 300 in CTC tea in North India auction. But some things have remained the same – the industry still must depend on quality.

Q: Are the demands for tea more varied nowadays?

A: We have been purchasing all types & categories of tea for our clients located all over the country. Our clients include some of the major packeteers of the country like Tulsi Tea, Girnar etc. Good tea has always been in-demand.

Q: What is the secret of your success?

A: (laughing) There is not really any one secret way to success. Hard work and of course I'd like to thank my family, friends & well-wishers for their continuous support throughout my tenure in the industry.

HAPPENINGS



A Tea that Brings the Heat

Chili teas have been a thing in the plethora of flavoured teas to come out of the fertile imaginations of tea blenders in recent years. Aromica Fiery Tea from Tender Buds Teas and Crafts takes it to a whole new level with their Bhut Jolokia Tea.

As we well know, Bhut Jolokia (Ghost pepper) famed for being one of the hottest pepper in the world, is farmed extensively all over Assam, along with tea. “We decided to bring both things together and pose a challenge to tea lovers to try it out,” said Ranjit Baruah, director of the company.

Baruah's company has been well-known in the specialty tea circle for innovative flavoured teas such as Blue Tea (blended with dried blue pea flowers) and Valentine's Tea (blended with white peony and dark chocolate among other things), so they are no strangers to taking the untrodden roads to explore new flavours. The Fiery Tea is a

blend of handcrafted

Dekhi black

tea, ghost

pepper,

lemon and

ginger. “We

did trials for

over a month

before coming

up with the right

blend. Those people who

like to consume green chillies

or pepper would want to try our fiery tea,” said Baruah.

As can be imagined the taste is a bit polarising – some consider it a thoroughly warming winter experience while others have denied a second sip. The tea is said to have anti-carcinogenic, anti-diabetic and analgesic properties.





Dr. Fazlur Rahman

Distinguished Tea Scientist and Agronomist

1936 – 5th April 2023



Dr. Fazlur Rahman, a distinguished Tea scientist, and agronomist, passed away on April 5, 2023, in Bangalore at the age of 87 after a brief illness. Dr. Rahman was laid to rest in Bangalore in the presence of his family and loved ones.

Born in 1936 in Azamgarh, Dr. Rahman received his early education at a local school where his father served as the head of the school in Patna. He then completed his agricultural Degree from the Bihar Agricultural College, Sabour, and finally his Ph.D. from the Indian Agricultural Research Institute in New Delhi.

Dr. Rahman briefly worked with the Bihar Agriculture Department and served as a professor at the Vishwa Bharti University in Shantiniketan. He later joined the Tea Research Association as an Advisory Officer in 1963. He served in various locations and finally took over as an Agronomist at the Tocklai Experimental Station in Jorhat, Assam, from 1972-83. He worked for TSAI “Carrit Moran” for three years as an agricultural expert advisor. Thereafter, he joined McLeod Russel as Manager R&D and when McLeod Russel merged with the Williamson Magor group he took on the position of Advisor R&D for the group, from 1986 to 1992. Upon retiring from the Williamson Magor group, he embarked on a consulting career for many gardens and served as a board member for different companies,

including the Tea Research Association’s Board of Management.

Throughout his career, Dr. Rahman was recognized as a passionate scientist, contributing vital information to the field of agriculture through the numerous papers he published from 1970 until as late as 2022. His outstanding work earned him a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Tea Research Association.

Dr. Rahman travelled extensively and was affiliated with various religious institutions.

He was married to Akhtar Rahman and is survived by his sons Abid and Javed and grandchildren.

The family would like to express their gratitude to the people, groups, and institutions who supported and collaborated with Dr. Rahman throughout his life, including The Tea Research Association Jorhat, the Department of Tea Management at North Bengal University, R&D Tata Tea, R&D Goodricke, and R&D Williamson Magor in Balipara and Margherita.

After retiring, Dr. Rahman settled in Siliguri, West Bengal, and continued to advise tea plantations until 2021.

Dr. Fazlur Rahman will be deeply missed by his family, friends, and colleagues. His dedication and passion for agricultural research have left a lasting impact on the field and will continue to inspire future generations.





Shri Pankajbhai Ramdas Desai

Vice Chairman, Wagh Bakri Tea Group.

An Extraordinary Life

2nd June 1942 – 5th May 2023



On the evening of 5th May 2023, Shree Pankajbhai Desai passed away peacefully due to natural causes. Shree Pankajbhai Desai was 80 years old.

Born in Ahmedabad to late Shree Ramdasbhai Desai and late Srimati Jayalakshmiben Desai in June 1942, he was a true patriarch of the Desai family who was instrumental in creating a family legacy and taking it forward.

A commerce graduate by qualification, Shree Pankajbhai Desai was the Vice Chairman of the Wagh Bakri Tea Group.

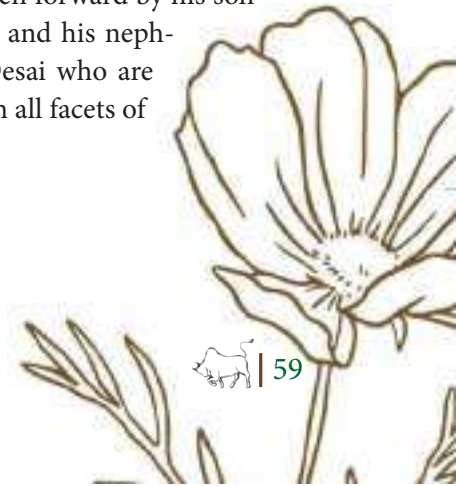
His contribution was crucial in taking the business from retails outlets to the poly-pack business in 1985 along with his brother, Shree Piyushbhai Desai. Later, his younger brother Shree Rashesbhai Desai also joined the family business. He was a passionate tea connoisseur who adapted to

the changing times and grew the business from retails outlets to a company with a turnover of 1872 crore rupee .

Being a very analytical person, he would go into the details of things and during his regime at Wagh Bakri, he headed the finance and Strategy portfolios of the company.

A gifted tea taster by profession, Shree Pankajbhai Desai also had the knack of developing blends on the tasting counter. Some of the blends developed by him are doing very well in the market currently.

His legacy is being taken forward by his son Shree Parasbhai Desai and his nephew Shree Paragbhai Desai who are currently involved with all facets of the business.





G. K. Jauhar

Ex-Chairman of J. Thomas & Co.

14th March 1934 – 12th June 2023



Govind Jauhar who was known among his intimate friends as Gikie came across me in J. Thomas & Co in December 1958. He was educated at the legendary Doon School. In contrast, I had had only four years of coaching at the private (then) little school of Mrs. Phyllis Hartley at 15/1 Lansdowne Road (now Sarat Bose Sarani). We were truly a contrast and yet got on well while we worked together at J. Thomas for twelve years. He was three years my senior and probably four years older. Regardless, he welcomed me warmly and familiarized me with what I should do at work.

We became socially closer as a result of my being a co-passenger in 1961 of his father-in-law Mr. Singh, a gem of a man, on board the Italian steamer Victoria, Genoa to Bombay. I was returning from my first and only furlough to Europe, a five month leave enjoyed by British colleagues but also given to Indians by the Company's generosity in those early days of Independence.

Govind was a God-fearing person and also worshipped at a temple regularly. He had faith to the extent that if medicine could not cure, prayer would certainly bring back health. I saw him prove right, my experience in all my 86 years. His lady wife Promilla supported him and charmed his friends with humour.

Govind was also frank. In our early years at J. Thomas, he once confided in me about the Company's policy of higher promotions. Generally, the best candidate was promoted to the top but 'the best' included loyalty and length of service. For example, he told me you are more intelligent than me but since I (he) was also good and would have served longer, you (me) would not supersede him.

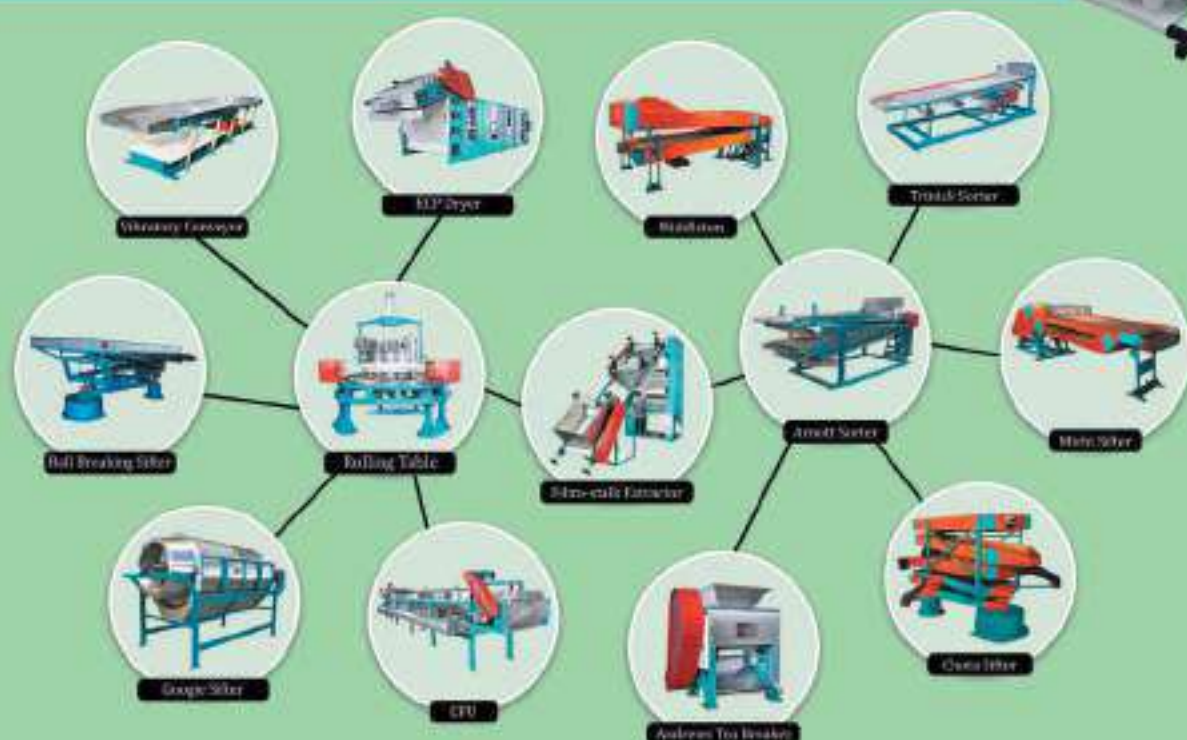
Unfortunately, when I left J. Thomas in 1970, we lost touch and with the loss, I have also lost a potentially dear friend.

Prafull Goradia

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

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.

Perhead Average Consumption of Tea						
Triennial Average (Kg)						
	2014 - 16	2015 - 17	2016 - 18	2017 - 19	2018 - 20	2019 - 21
Algeria	0.37	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.33	0.31
Egypt	1.05	0.99	0.96	1.00	1.00	1.00
Kenya	0.69	0.71	0.75	0.81	0.82	0.80
Libya	2.47	2.67	2.93	3.03	2.64	2.05
Morocco	1.86	1.95	2.06	2.19	2.16	2.09
South Africa	0.38	0.38	0.35	0.33	0.31	0.31
Sudan	0.77	0.70	0.63	0.56	0.55	0.57
Tanzania	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.08	0.06
Tunisia	0.58	0.63	0.62	0.67	0.61	0.60
Total Africa	8.27	8.48	8.75	9.04	8.50	7.79
Afghanistan	2.19	1.72	1.37	1.01	0.90	0.82
Bahrain	1.24	1.17	1.15	1.15	1.16	1.18
Bangladesh	0.48	0.50	0.51	0.50	0.51	0.52
China	1.32	1.40	1.48	1.56	1.66	1.78
Hong Kong	1.46	1.51	1.52	1.59	1.65	1.83
India	0.74	0.76	0.79	0.82	0.81	0.81
Indonesia	0.34	0.35	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.35
Iran	0.90	0.92	0.95	1.00	0.94	0.87
Iraq	1.03	1.01	1.12	1.15	1.11	1.10
Japan	0.84	0.83	0.82	0.82	0.79	0.77
Malaysia	0.83	0.80	0.85	0.87	0.90	0.91
Pakistan	0.81	0.80	0.85	0.89	1.01	1.08
Qatar	1.56	1.35	1.48	1.56	1.52	1.51
Saudi Arabia	0.77	0.83	0.88	0.91	0.96	0.94
Sri Lanka	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35
Syria	0.78	0.63	0.65	0.60	0.64	0.61
Taiwan	1.46	1.37	1.29	1.31	1.30	1.32
Turkey	3.20	3.13	3.09	3.16	3.20	3.23
Total Asia	21.30	20.43	20.51	20.61	20.77	20.98
Belgium & Lux.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.23
Czech Rep.	0.27	0.25	0.24	0.23	0.22	0.24
France	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.22	0.22	0.22
Germany	0.39	0.38	0.36	0.34	0.30	0.29
Ireland Republic	1.64	1.68	1.80	2.00	2.10	1.99
Italy	0.11	0.12	0.12	0.11	0.10	0.10
Netherlands	0.47	0.50	0.55	0.57	0.57	0.52
Poland	0.93	0.95	0.96	0.98	1.02	1.04
Sweden	0.32	0.31	0.31	0.29	0.28	0.26
Switzerland	0.20	0.21	0.20	0.24	0.25	0.26
United Kingdom (a)	1.68	1.67	1.59	1.59	1.61	1.52
Total Europe	6.44	6.50	6.56	6.79	6.89	6.67
Canada	0.48	0.47	0.47	0.44	0.42	0.42
USA	0.40	0.40	0.39	0.37	0.35	0.34
Total North America	0.88	0.87	0.86	0.81	0.77	0.76
Australia	0.45	0.49	0.47	0.51	0.49	0.50
New Zealand	0.96	0.94	0.93	0.96	0.92	0.92
Total Oceania	1.41	1.43	1.40	1.47	1.41	1.42
Chile	1.17	1.13	1.12	1.08	1.12	1.07
Total South America	1.17	1.13	1.12	1.08	1.12	1.07
CIS	0.89	0.88	0.86	0.85	0.83	0.82
Grand Total	40.36	39.72	40.06	40.65	40.29	39.51

Source: International Tea Committee

Month wise District wise Auction averages

CTC Leaf & Dust

Assam : Estate

Month	2023-24	2022-23	Diff (+/-)
April	244.28	281.77	-37.49
May	222.78	213.65	9.13
April to May	228.44	231.05	-2.61

Dooars & Terai : Estate

Month	2023-24	2022-23	Diff (+/-)
April	235.66	257.17	-21.51
May	225.93	205.68	20.25
April to May	232.61	230.81	1.80

Cachar : Estate

Month	2023-24	2022-23	Diff (+/-)
April	216.51	236.46	-19.95
May	190.69	183.38	7.31
April to May	193.42	194.63	-1.21

Tripura : Estate

Month	2023-24	2022-23	Diff (+/-)
April	219.71	227.34	-7.63
May	166.51	160.47	6.05
April to May	177.73	180.27	-2.53

Assam : BLF

Month	2023-24	2022-23	Diff (+/-)
April	171.79	196.35	-24.56
May	153.98	158.22	-4.24
April to May	159.10	167.66	-8.56

Dooars & Terai : BLF

Month	2023-24	2022-23	Diff (+/-)
April	124.81	159.66	-34.85
May	124.94	131.41	-6.48
April to May	124.80	141.68	-16.88

South India

Month	2023-24	2022-23	Diff (+/-)
April	119.15	103.37	15.78
May	115.86	100.45	15.41
April to May	112.60	101.93	10.67

Orthodox

Assam

Month	2023-24	2022-23	Diff (+/-)
April	244.42	279.56	-35.14
May	209.80	264.49	-54.69
April to May	220.47	269.15	-48.68

South India

Month	2023-24	2022-23	Diff (+/-)
April	162.48	139.38	23.10
May	159.98	160.43	-0.45
April to May	161.17	150.84	10.33

Darjeeling

Darjeeling

Month	2023-24	2022-23	Diff (+/-)
April	819.19	877.62	-58.43
May	599.39	433.96	165.43
April to May	613.81	517.16	96.66



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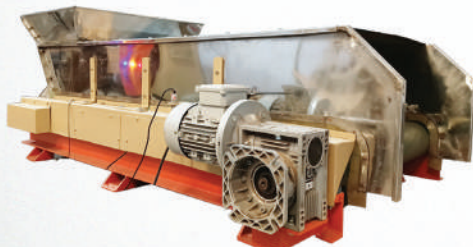


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