

CONTEMPORARY

# TEA TIME

Vol. XXV No. 3 • July - September 2016 • Rs. 80 • US\$ 7

TEA JOURNAL WITH THE LARGEST READERSHIP | 27th YEAR OF PUBLICATION



## CUP OF INNOVATIONS

South Indian Tea Industry is finding novel ways to flourish





Errol O' Brien

# TEA QUIZZY

## QUESTIONS

- 1) What is this PDA (Public Display of Anger) called? A gesture by a fast bowler which involves having both hands on hips at the same time. It is usually done to register their displeasure at a dropped catch, edged boundary or an act of misfielding. Naturally the term is allied to tea.
- 2) The Darjeeling Tea Chamber was set up by a Bengali entrepreneur Sati Prasanna Biswas in the mid 1920s. He sent fliers to British Officers from a directory of English top officials stating that he could dispatch Flavoury Darjeeling teas through the post. The idea caught on during the British Raj. However which famous Indian at that time looked out for the first flush Darjeeling? A treasured letter of appreciation is held by his son Santanam Biswas?
- 3) Which term is used in tea tasting to describe desirable quality and also points out recognition of origin?
- 4) Tea was a vital part of the British soldiers' ration during the trench warfare of World War 1. What was used to purify the water carried in petrol cans to the front lines?
- 5) Which garden in Assam under the Grob Tea Company shares its name with a lake bordering Nagaland? This lake is an ecotourism centre where birds like the Amur Falcon traversing through Nagaland from South Africa to Mongolia can be seen together - millions of birds in just 30 seconds?
- 6) Name the specialty shop in Darjeeling selling a variety of 150 Darjeeling teas and brands under the nomenclature of Green Enigma, Emerald Green and Green Pearls?
- 7) What is the binding factor, the common thread that attaches the recently poll bound states of West Bengal, Assam, Tamil Nadu and Kerala?
- 8) P312 is a clonal variety used in Darjeeling. From which tea estate has it been propagated?
- 9) On May 7, 2015, with Parliament passing the 100th Constitution Amendment Bill formalising the Land Boundary Agreement between India and Bangladesh, the best part of which tea estate went over to the other side?
- 10) What is significant about the tea firm Tregothnan?

## Answers

- 1) A Teapot stance
- 2) Rabindranath Tagore
- 3) Character
- 4) Chloride of Lime
- 5) Doyang Tea Estate
- 6) Nathmulls
- 7) Tea plantation workers' vote
- 8) Phoobsering
- 9) Madanpur owned by The All India Tea and Trading Company
- 10) This firm owns a tea garden in England (strange but true)



# CONTENTS

## Cover Story Cup of Innovations 28



South Indian Tea Industry is Finding Novel Ways to Flourish

08 **Industry**  
Nurturing the Small Growers

11 **Industry**  
27th Tea Conclave  
FAITTA

14 **Industry**  
Wholesaling Tea in  
Great Britain

16 **Nostalgia**  
The Tea Horse Trail  
By Errol O' Brien

18 **Industry**  
The Yule Tea Lounge  
By Mrityika Bose



18 **Research**  
The World's Going  
Organic



22 **Industry**  
Contemporary Brokers  
Tea Tasting Session

35 **Obituary**  
Dr. N K Jain  
By Prafull Goradia

36 **Industry**  
Pan India Tea Auction  
Sales

38 **International**  
Vietnam Varietia

40 **Happenings**

44 **Industry**  
Go Herbal Go Green  
By Sanjay Kumar Gupta

45 **Happenings**

46 **News Nuggets**

48 **International**  
Tiding From Bangladesh  
By Monjur Hossain

50 **International**  
The Other Planter's Wife  
By Kalyan Sircar

51 **Book Review**  
Thus Far And No Further

52 **Industry**  
Rainforest Alliance  
Certified Tea

54 **Last Page :**  
Of Wine, Tea and  
Beautiful Things  
By Amit Kumar Bose

## REGULAR COLUMNS

Inside Front Cover  
Quiz by Errol O' Brien

04 **Readers Write**

05 **From The Publisher**

**Publisher :** A Nandkeolyar

**Advisers :** Nayana Goradia and Lal Raisinghani

**Executive Editor :** A Nandkeolyar

**Editorial Assistance :** INKPOT, 58 Jatin Das Road, Kolkata-700 029, Ph. 9831169021, 03340637177; e-mail : inkpot\_2@yahoo.com, inkpot2@gmail.com

**Correspondent (South India) :** P S Sundar

**Correspondent (United Kingdom) :** Kalyan Sircar

**Mailing Address :** Editorial & Marketing Office, 1 Old Court House Corner, Post Box , No. 14, Kolkata-700 001, Ph: (+91-033) 2230 7241/7242/4665, Fax: (+91-033) 2230 5753/2210 4671, E-mail: kolkata@contemporary.co.in

**Branches :** • **Guwahati** - A Ben Ahmed, 2A Centre Point (opp. Bora Service Station), G.S. Road, Ulubari, Guwahati-781 007, Ph: (0361) 251 1052/252 4253, Fax: (0361) 254 1119, E-mail: ctlgaut@sancharnet.in • **Siliguri** - Arjun Mitra, STAC Building Mallaguri, Pradhan Nagar, Siliguri-734 403, Phone: (0353) 251 3095/251 3521, Fax: (0353) 251 7752, E-mail: ctlsil@sancharnet.in

Published for Contemporary Brokers Pvt. Ltd. by A Nandkeolyar, 1, Old Court House Corner, Kolkata 700 001

Designed by Caps Micrographics, 8/2, K. S. Roy Road, Kolkata-700 001, Ph. 2230 1827 • Printed at Caps Micrographics, 8/2, K. S. Roy Road, Kolkata-700 001, Ph. 2230 1827





# Readers Write

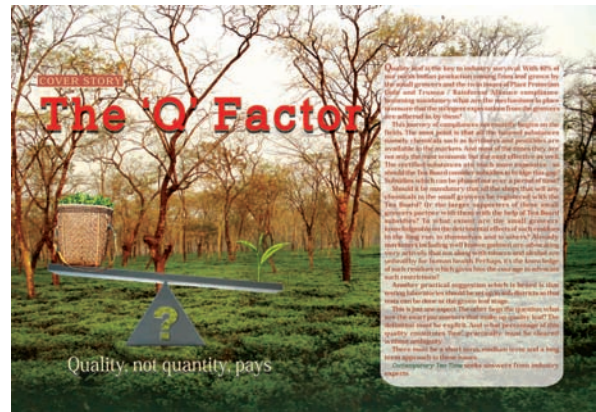


Dear Sir,

Errol O'Brien's *My Take on Tea* published in the Nostalgia section of *Contemporary Tea Time* January - June 2016 issue was delightful to read. The adventure, humour and nostalgia transported us back to the good old tea days. And left us craving for more!

Yours sincerely

**Nandini Raja**  
Kharagpur



Dear Sir,

The cover story of *Contemporary Tea Time* January - June 2016 issue - *The 'Q' Factor* was very informative. The viewpoints of industry experts have thrown up many useful suggestions. Will the industry make use of these to ensure quality over quantity in future?

Yours sincerely

**Rajesh Seth**  
Kolkata

Dear Sir,

The story of *The Real Airlifter* published in *Contemporary Tea Time* January - June 2016 issue, makes not just the tea industry but all Indians proud. Actions during such periods of crisis set apart the heroes from ordinary mortals. My salute to Ashoke Kumar Sengupta.

Yours sincerely

**Belinda Joseph**  
Shillong



Dear Sir,

We are missing the tea recipes that used to be published in *Contemporary Tea Time* in previous issues. They were easy to make and delightful in taste. Please resume the column in your magazine.

Yours sincerely

**Purvi Joshi**  
Mumbai







**P**an India Auctions, the brainchild of the Tea Board, commenced recently. The vast majority have welcomed this mode of sale and apart from a few operational hurdles, it has proved to be instantly beneficial for the producers. The issues still in need of a solution, can be divided into three distinct categories, namely statutory compliances, operational clarity and a few legacy practices. One by one these are being empathetically understood, and the trade looks forward to the clarity, which is expected soon. In this issue, we also trace back the history of the south Indian tea industry. The seeds of policy planted, by way of policy and expressed by UPASI – the United Planters Association of Southern India – in 1968, have proved prophetic. The tea industry employs people by the thousands and in north India, also provides substantial social welfare to its workers. It is therefore time some forward thinking policies are announced by this Government which can lead the industry forward.



Once upon a time, tea was the largest foreign exchange earner for India.

Dr Narendra Kumar Jain, eminent Tea Scientist, whom we spoke to only recently (*Contemporary Tea Time* October - December 2015), passed away on July 22, 2016, after an illness patiently borne.

Dr. Jain spoke on the need for the application of principles of Agricultural Economics in the tea industry, specialised non conventional product developments from tea extracts and workers' health management measures including providing women workers iron tablets as supplements.

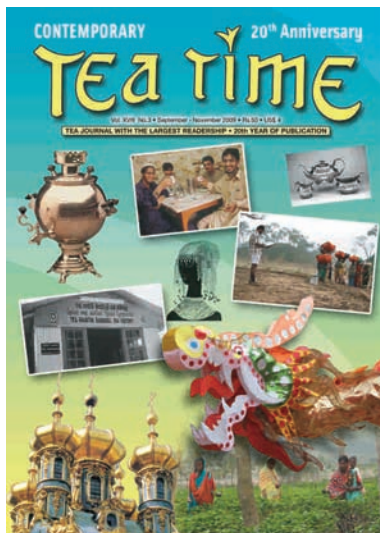
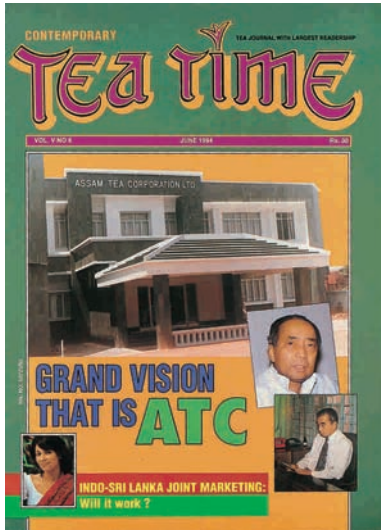
He leaves behind the legacy of the International Society of Tea Science with membership and participation from global thinkers on tea. Dr. Jain learnt the principles of crop production at the Banaras Hindu University, India and the University of Illinois, USA. In 1984, he became the Founder Director of the CSIR complex, now Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology at Palampur, Himachal Pradesh, India.

Rest in peace Dr. Jain.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Nandkeolyar'.

A Nandkeolyar





## Advertise in Contemporary Tea Time

### The Voice of The Tea Industry

*Contemporary Tea Time*, a magazine of the tea industry published by Contemporary Brokers Pvt. Ltd. has completed 27 years of its existence. It has through the years evolved into a voice of the industry, reflecting the views, opinions, market trends and happenings of the tea scenario in India and abroad.

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

## TARIFF & SPACE OPTIONS

### COLOUR

Back Cover : Rs. 20,000 / US\$ 800

Inside Front Cover : Rs. 15,000 / US\$ 700

Inside Back Cover : Rs. 15,000 / US\$ 700

Full Page : Rs. 12,500 / US\$ 500

Half Page : Rs. 7,500 / US\$ 350

Centrespread : 25,000 / US\$ 900

### Black and White

Full Page : Rs. 10,000 / US\$ 375

Half Page : RS. 5,000 / US\$ 250

Doublespread : Rs. 15,000 / US\$ 500

### TECHNICAL DETAILS

Frequency : Quarterly | Language : English | Material Required : Positive for Colour Advertisements | Art Work/Artpull/Positives : For B/W advertisements | Lead Time : 30 days prior to the date of issue | Bleed Advertisement : Must allow extra margin of 0.3 cm on all sides for trimming. B/W advertisements are not accepted in bleed size.

For further details, contact

The Executive Editor, Contemporary Tea Time

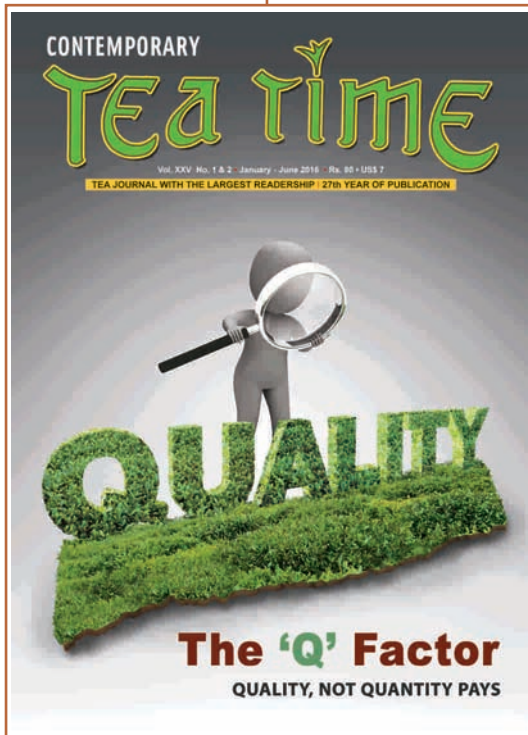
Editorial & Marketing Office : Contemporary Brokers Pvt. Ltd.  
1, Old Court House Corner, Kolkata-700 001, West Bengal, INDIA

Phone : (+91-033) 2220 0099/7241/7242

Fax : (+91-033) 2243 5753/2210 4671

E-mail : [kolkata@contemporary.co.in](mailto:kolkata@contemporary.co.in) Website : [www.ctl.co.in](http://www.ctl.co.in)





## The exclusive magazine on the tea industry

A 2-year subscription for only Rs 500/-

Contemporary Tea Time, a quarterly magazine published by Contemporary Brokers Pvt. Ltd., has through the last 27 years, evolved into a voice of the industry. With unmatched circulation it reaches the movers, shakers and decision makers, both in India and abroad.

### For subscription contact :

The Executive Editor, Contemporary Tea Time  
Editorial & Marketing Office  
Contemporary Brokers Pvt. Ltd.

1, Old Court House Corner, Kolkata 700 001, West Bengal, India

Ph : +91 33 2220 0099 / 7241 / 7242 • Fax : +91 33 2243 5753 / 2210 4671

e-mail : [kolkata@contemporary.co.in](mailto:kolkata@contemporary.co.in) • Visit our website : [www.cctl.con.in](http://www.cctl.con.in)

## I want my Contemporary Tea Time



### Subscription Rate :

#### INDIA

- 1 year Rs 300
- 2 years Rs 500

#### OVERSEAS

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

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

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

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



# nurturing the small growers



## The five success factors of smallholder inclusion in company supply chains

**R**ainforest Alliance promotes responsible commodity supply chains that result in improved livelihoods for farmers and healthy ecosystems that sustain production over the long term. Their four main strategies are: (1) Promoting the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN) standard – a set of best farm management practices that guide efficient and sustainable use of the land and responsible labour practices. (2) Building the capacity of producers to farm sustainably, improving their profitability and managing their businesses. (3) Certifying farms that demonstrate compliance with the best practices and (4) Harnessing the commitment of industry to

responsible sourcing in order to generate demand for the output of those farms and supporting companies to turn the commitment into practical strategies.

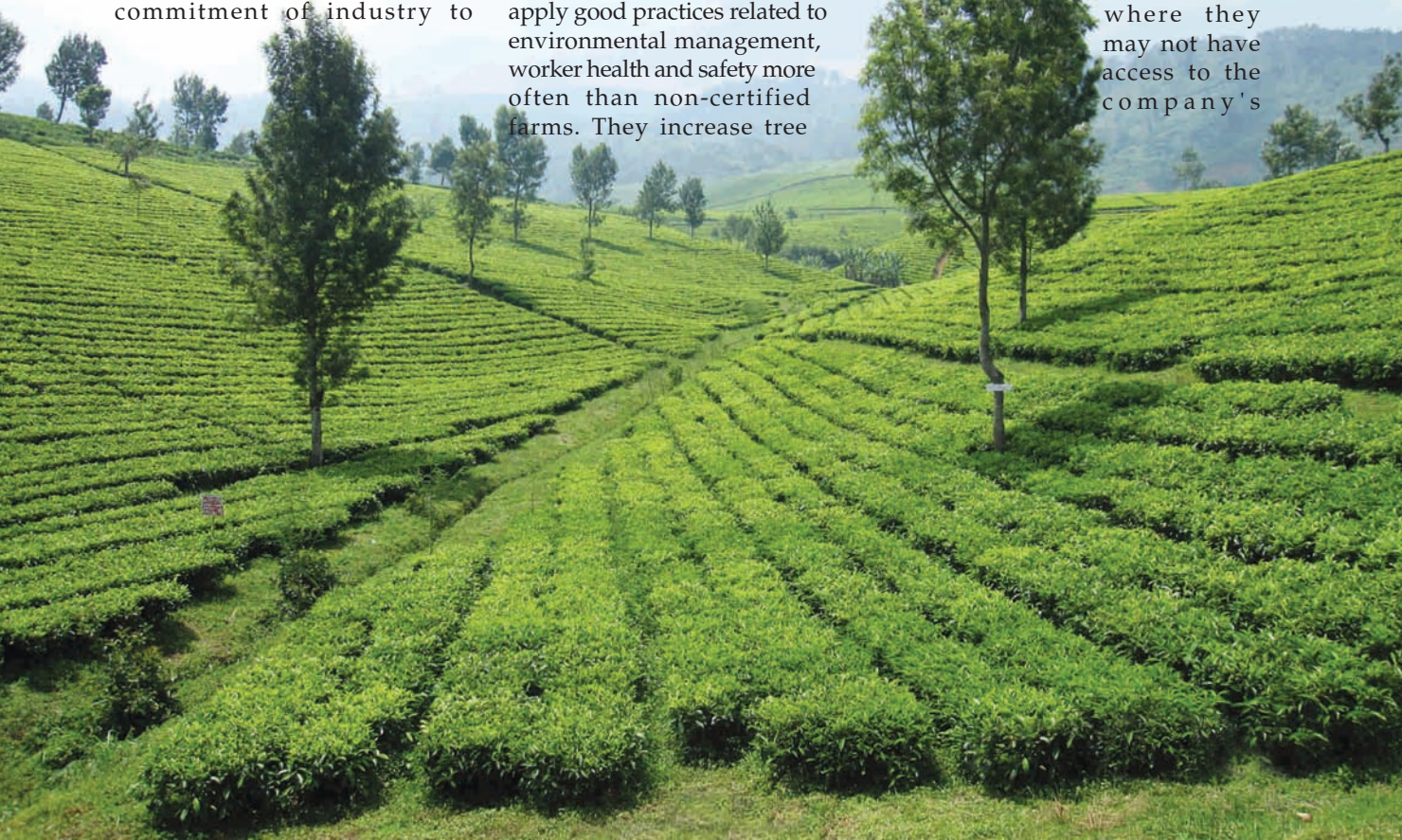
This model has achieved both scale and impact. Presently 185,000 hectare of farmland in coffee, cocoa, tea, oil palm are certified in Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines, China and Papua New Guinea.

SAN and the Rainforest Alliance jointly published in 2015 a report on impacts that have been verified on certified farms. Smallholder farmers applying the agronomic practices outlined in the SAN Standard are found to increase productivity and profitability. Certified farms apply good practices related to environmental management, worker health and safety more often than non-certified farms. They increase tree

cover and wildlife protection, relative to non-certified farms or relative to pre-certification conditions. Seven published studies have documented positive effects of Rainforest Alliance certification in protecting water quality, improving erosion control, reducing agrochemical use and treating wastewater. As producers stay in the system longer, they are able to resolve many weaknesses and improve their performances.

### Key Issues

There are really two issues at stake regarding smallholder inclusion in company supply chains: not just exclusion, where they may not have access to the company's





market, but also unfavourable terms where they may be supplying to a company but are not receiving equitable treatment.

Three main forces drive the commitment to responsible smallholder inclusion in supply chains. Public commitments made by an increasing number of companies over the last two years to sustainable and particularly deforestation-free supply chains is the first. Most of these companies buy from smallholders and need to have visibility of the farm level and supply chain practices that will enable them to be confident in delivering their commitment. The second driver is policy. A number of governments of countries where companies operate are passing legislation to support their rural populations that require companies that gain concessions to extract raw materials, such as oil palm, to include smallholders in their operations. The third driver is production efficiency. Processing facilities such as tea factories need additional quantities from what the plantations produce in order to maintain full production.

Responding to these drivers for responsible smallholder inclusion, companies face a number of challenges. Efficient aggregation of smallholder volumes to reduce costs of transport and processing is one. A second is reliable quantity and quality of supply, especially when for the smallholder, producing the commodity may not be the major economic activity on the farm. Most smallholders have lower productivity than larger plantations. Third, facilitating access of smallholders with services to upgrade their quantity and quality of output at a manageable cost is difficult. Few small-scale businesses exist to provide timely and appropriate farm management services to smallholders. This leaves them dependent on government extension services, which are few and far between, or – more likely – company programmes, which have grown enormously in recent years. While

this development has undoubtedly had positive impact, it only targets the smallholders presently in the supply chain and so excludes many others. It may also promote practices that are strongly focused on productivity but not necessarily on long term responsible environmental management.

A fourth difficulty is weak business management. Most small-scale farmers do not keep records of their costs or revenues. Local traditions of social exclusion is a further difficulty, preventing services reaching all the people who contribute to the economy of



a farm. Most smallholder farms depend on women's contributions to production and harvesting but women are usually unable to receive equal benefit from the farm. Selling is dominated by men, who control the income from the crop; women are unable to participate in training due to other responsibilities. Women are excluded from land title, thus unable to join producer associations. Finally, on the smallholder side, legality of operations may be a problem.

There are also difficulties in working with the companies. Commercial pressures require companies to be cost competitive. So they have limited capacity to engage with the smallest and more remote producers or with producers that do not meet quantity or quality standards. The profitability of commodity trading is based very much on volumes, as margins are low; many smallholders have low volumes. While

companies have built their technical capacity and staffed their sustainability teams to provide services directly to smallholders – typically, training, technical assistance, financial services and inputs – the nature and quality of the training and the materials used varies a good deal. Rainforest Alliance has a quality assurance system for trainers and a range of interactive methodologies but has found companies generally reluctant to cooperate with it.

As certification has grown as a sustainability strategy, it has driven improved practices on farms.

Nevertheless, for companies it may be a strategy to retain customers rather than continuous improvement beyond the standard to address difficulties faced by smallholders. Certification should be seen as a milestone in improved sustainability, rather than the end of the road.

Finally, smallholders may be bound to companies through contracts that are too poorly paid to enable a transition into commercial farming. Farmers may also not be up to date with prices due to lack of access to modern day connectivity like the internet. Smallholders themselves are not always reliable or trustworthy suppliers; they may default on commitments or undertake side selling. If companies then drop them from their supply chain, the smallholders lose access to the training and other services. Rainforest Alliance collaborates with companies and smallholders





to address these challenges.

The trainers include government extension workers, thereby bringing the government on board. This approach is not always easy to apply. Working with Unilever and smallholder tea farmers in Vietnam to introduce rational agrochemical use and productivity enhancing techniques proved difficult because organising the farmers into reliable units to supply to the processing factories and mobilising the factories to train the smallholders was new to both and there was not a clear economic benefit for all parties.

## Lessons Learnt

Rainforest Alliance has drawn five lessons for responsible inclusion of smallholders into company value chains.

- Integrating smallholders depends on mobilising the intermediary companies in the supply chain and providing them with knowledge and economic incentive. In this respect Rainforest Alliance's certification model has made a valuable contribution.
- It is vital to understand the context of where you are working and not to make assumptions about smallholders' interests. One has to ask people to explain their concerns and facilitate solutions accordingly.
- Financial tools are essential to encourage investors to make financial services available to smallholders. Responsible sourcing

from smallholders enables companies to evaluate risks in their smallholder supply chains and take steps to mitigate them.

- Use training materials that farmers can understand and methodology that keeps farmers engaged and entertained. Complex subjects, such as climate change, need to be made simple, relating to a farmer's own experience. Rainforest Alliance has a library of farmer friendly resources in over 50 languages on its open source training website – [www.sustainableagriculturetraining.org](http://www.sustainableagriculturetraining.org). Farmers like posters that they can take home after training. More women will attend training courses that are tailored to their interests, including subjects like nutrition in the curriculum. Financial literacy training attracts women, as they usually manage household budgets. Rainforest Alliance has found that women's participation increases when women trainers are used and when training is scheduled at times that best accommodate their domestic duties.

- Strengthen farmer organisations and use technology to improve business systems and increase the flow of information between producer groups and their members so that they can provide smallholders better access to services and markets. One of the main worries of commodity companies and brands is the lack of motivation for young people to continue farming. The children of

many smallholder families are leaving the village and moving to towns, for better opportunities. To counteract this trend, smallholder production and marketing has to be more business-like. Use of mobile technology to distribute relevant information to farmers resonates positively with young people. Management systems can also be made more efficient. Plans can be developed between farmer and technician and information to support implementing the plan can be sent by mobile phone, such as the management practices that are best suited to the farm's cropping system. Farm planning enables increased efficiency in the use of land, water, fertilisers, and agrochemicals, leading to increased farm productivity and efficiency, reduced environmental impact, and increased capacity to adapt to climate change. Training young men and women as lead farmers, who are trained and then mobilised to share their learning with other farmers near to where they live has also been an effective strategy. Young people feel motivated to have access to training and be seen as leaders in their communities.

Building supply security and resilience with smallholders requires enabling their farms to be sufficiently productive and profitable and to look after the natural environment and the people who work on the farm properly so that they continue producing the commodity over the long term. It also requires establishing supply arrangements that are commercially efficient and mutually respectful so that both sides see value in the relationship. Advances in technology and communications and the commitment to responsible sourcing offer a positive enabling environment to increase the more direct and visible participation of smallholders in supply chains. The degree of success will depend on the capacity of all parties to understand the barriers and design effective initiatives to reduce them.



# 27th Tea Conclave of FAITTA

The 27th Tea Conclave of FAITTA was held on July 30, 2016, at The Taj Bengal, Kolkata. Among the distinguished guests present on the occasion were Bidyananda Barkakoty, Vice Chairman Tea Board Of India, A K Bhargava, Chairman Indian Tea Association, Abhijit Sarmah, Mahupur Tea Estate.

Harendra Shah, Chairman of FAITTA in his speech touched upon the recently introduced pan India auction. While appreciating its objective to increase buyer's participation for a better market and price realisation, he pointed out that the role of auction brokers



Harendra Shah, Chairman, FAITTA with Bidyananda Barkakoty, Vice Chairman, Tea Board of India



Harendra Shah welcomes Puja Gnanvatsal Swami from Swami Narayan Temple Trust



Harendra Shah, outgoing Chairman FAITTA

and commission agents who work on behalf of their buyers offer logistic support for buying tea, need to be looked at. "They provide services with nominal charges ultimately saving our cost of office operations at various auction centres and further help in buying good tea due to their experience of tea tasting. We cannot neglect their role in tea trade as on an average 30% teas are channeled through them. It is not appropriate to term such purchases as cartel."

We all know the word *chaiwala* has become very famous during the election campaign thanks to our current Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In this robust economy and the government's agenda to provide ease of doing business, we have the Commerce Ministry as the regulator of the tea industry, with control over sale and distribution of the entire tea trade



(L to R) Ramesh Agarwal, Bharat Arya, Abhijit Sarmah, B Barkakoty, Harendra Shah, A K Bhargava, N Dharmaraj and Krishan Lal Kamani





Harendra Shah presenting bouquet to Bidyananda Barkakoty



Lighting the lamp : (L to R) Bidyananda Barkakoty, Ramesh Agarwal, N Dharmaraj, Bharat Arya, Harendra Shah and Krishan Lal Karnani

by the e-auction system and the Tea Act.

However, all efforts made for better realisation of prices to help the large work force is not a lasting solution to fetch better prices for tea. Work is the main asset of poor households so the wages for skilled labour will increase sharply. We have to give sustainable boost to labour earnings as we need to inspire the next generation for earnings. This is the time to welcome the new environment of competition and openness."

He said that since India has a federal system of governance why should all her states have different laws and taxation systems and said

that they should be brought under one umbrella. He added that every change of rule by a notification or change of system has to be synchronised for both the buyer and seller. Existing schemes can be dropped to arrange finances for new schemes in a manner that avoids spreading of resources too thinly and utilises the available resources most productively.

The Chairman said that tea lounges across the country can attract customers to enjoy enjoyable tea experiences. He felt that the goal should be to make consumers aware that there is something more in his daily cup of tea.



**Bharat Arya**, the new Chairman of FAITTA did his Post Graduation in Applied Geology from I I T Kharagpur in 1976.

He joined J V Gokal & Group in 1978 and became proficient in tea tasting and buying. He travelled to various countries, mainly Russia, Kazakhstan to promote exports of tea and helped establish his company's brand in those countries. He also travelled to UK, USA and Canada and formed strategic partnerships with private labels for value added exports. He travelled to Kenya and Sri Lanka to establish tea sourcing offices.

In the tea industry he has been :

- ▣ Chairman of Calcutta Tea Traders Association from 2004-2006
- ▣ Chairman of Indian Merchant Tea Exporters Forum from 2006-2008
- ▣ Chairman of Tea Packeters Association of India from 2009 to 2016
- ▣ Member of Tea Council formed in 2012 to regulate and oversee exports and imports in India and overseas.
- ▣ Member of Task Force Constituted by Chairman Tea Board to advice and oversee the functioning of the tea industry and to evolve Sustainability Code for Indian Tea.
- ▣ Chairman, Indian Tea Exporters Association, since 2015.
- ▣ Now Chairman, Federation of All India Tea Traders Association, since August 2016.





# VOILA



## Most Advanced Automated Withering System



### Engineering Tomorrow's Tea

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

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

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

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

**COMPLETE SOLUTION**

**TO MECHANISED TEA**

**PROCESSING**

## VIKRAM INDIA LIMITED

### HEAD OFFICE

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

**Telephone:** +91 33 22307629

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

**Email:** [kolkata@vikram.in](mailto:kolkata@vikram.in), [sales@vikram.in](mailto:sales@vikram.in)

### FACTORY ADDRESS

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

**P.S.:** Sankrail

Howrah - 711302, India

**Phone:** 9830811833

### OFFICES IN INDIA

Tinsukia, Siliguri, Coonoor

### LIASON OFFICES ABROAD

Dhaka, Colombo, Nairobi

[www.vikramindia.in](http://www.vikramindia.in)



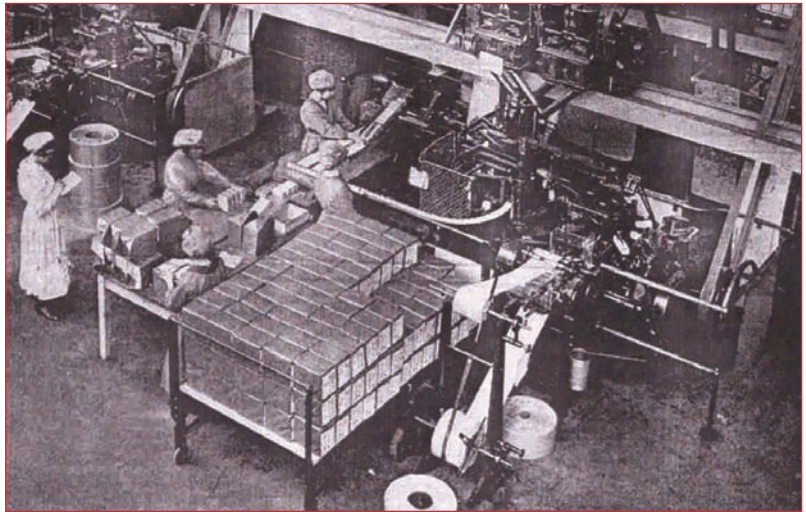
# Wholesaling tea in Great Britain

**A** most important link in the chain of tea distribution is the wholesaler, who, in England, purchases his tea through a buying broker and sells it, either in the original packages or else blended and packeted, to country wholesalers, wholesale-retailers and retailers. In America, the wholesaling of tea is in the hands of tea importers, jobbers, and wholesale dealers.

In England, wholesale distributors include blenders, packet-tea houses, multiple shop retailers, cooperative societies, wholesale dealers and exporters. In many cases the same firm is engaged simultaneously in several different branches of the tea trade.

The tea blenders of Great Britain comprise a number of blending and packeting firms

**William H Ukers** presents an interesting picture

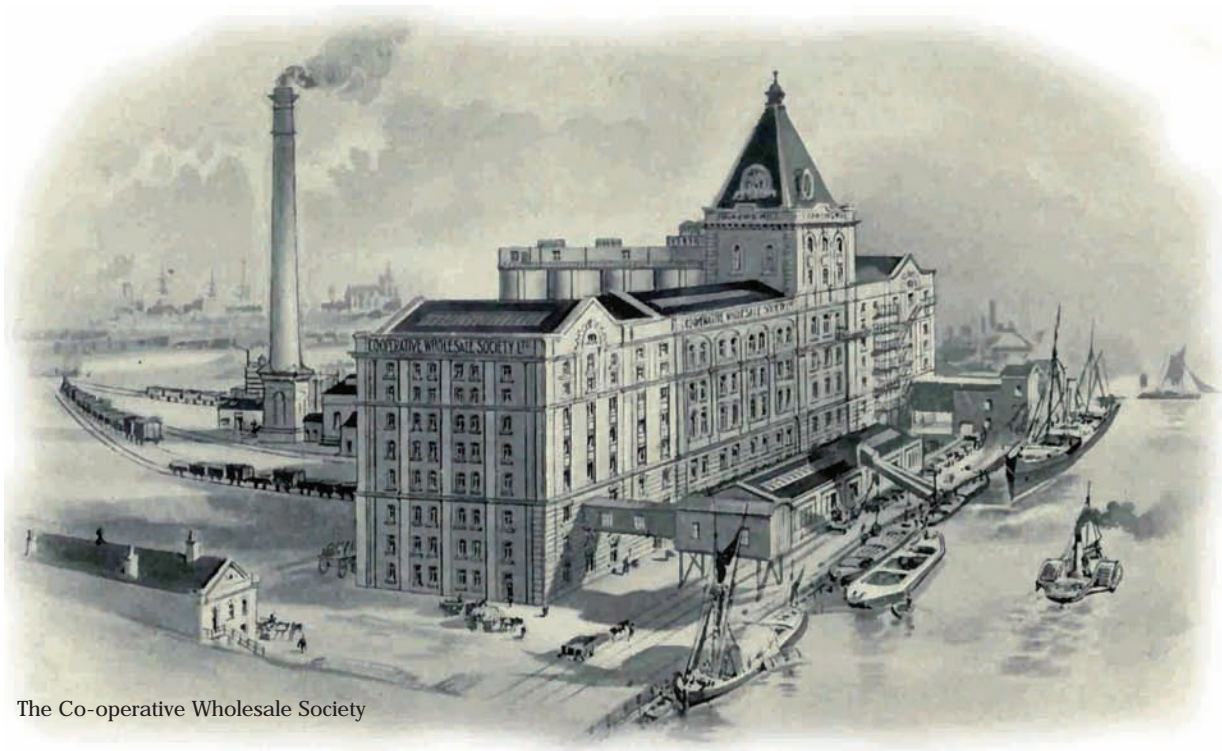


One of the automatic packeting machines with overhead electric weighers



Packeting room, showing twelve automatic units fed from mezzanine hoppers





The Co-operative Wholesale Society

having wide distribution to wholesalers and retailers at home and abroad. They specialise not only in packing their own proprietary brands, but also in preparing and packing the private brands of other concerns, both wholesale and retail. Some blenders are multiple shop firms who do not supply other firms, but sell only to their own retail trade. One big blender and packer is a joint cooperative wholesale society that is the largest buyer of tea on the British market, and others are independent wholesalers and retailers, who purchase teas in original chests and then do their own blending and packing. The larger distributors have their own buyers who attend the auctions, but do not bid unless their buying broker is out of the room or engaged. In any event, the sale is put through in the buying brokers' name and one-half percent commission is paid to him.

Some of the big blending and packeting firms go so far as to own and operate their own extensive tea plantations situated variously in India, Ceylon and East Africa.

There is a Tea Buyers' Association in London having for its object the safeguarding of the

## The Co-operative Wholesale Society is the largest buyer of tea on the British market

interests of the wholesale buyers and to deal with matters of moment in the buying market. The membership numbers about one hundred and ten.

It is estimated that in London alone there are some fifty blenders or packeters having a nationwide distribution. In addition, there possibly are 100 others throughout the country distributing on greater or lesser scale to provincial districts. Estimates as to the number of wholesale grocers handling tea place 300 to 500 primary dealers in the jobbing centres, and 4000 to 5000 secondary wholesalers in

small towns and villages. The number of multiple shop organisations handling tea is approximately 500 and they operate say 15,000 shops. In addition, there are the cooperative societies which do their own blending and sell a large amount of tea in their 5000 stores scattered throughout the country. The Co-operative Wholesale Society is the parent body. It grows most of its own foodstuffs, manufactures everything in the food line that is possible to manufacture in England, and runs its own factories, confectionery works, ships, trains, and warehouses. Its headquarters are on Balloon Street, in Manchester, and its ramifications, in the form of district cooperative societies – handling the retail grocery side of the business extend in many directions. To gain a better idea of the magnitude of the undertaking, it might be mentioned that it is the largest buyer of tea on the British market, having a turnover of 90,000,000 pounds a year; and that it virtually owns towns and villages where it happens to have factories.

*Excerpted from ALL ABOUT TEA  
by William H Ukers*



# The Tea Horse Trail



**Errol O' Brien** traces the mysterious route that has evolved from transporting aphrodisiacs in the yesteryears to electronic and consumer goods today, between China and Tibet

The Great Silk Road was a route that linked Cathay with the West and Middle East – a trade route that China used to export their exquisite fabrics and gossamer finery, delicate porcelain, gunpowder and paper to the Western countries.

The West in turn sent back carpets, rugs and woollen goods. More so it was a long cultural winding avenue between the East and West and the best known trade route in history.

Little however is known of Chamaguado, which was the Chinese name for The Tea Horse Trail. It was a thoroughfare of

commerce between the Chinese and Tibetans and became the southern Silk Route. Unlike its more famous counterpart, the historic value of the route is only now being fully appreciated by international historians and adventurous tourists on motorbikes and Landrovers.

The ancient Chinese bred horses but they realised that the horses of their enemies, the descendants of the Genghis Khan era, in the north and west were superior. They had to have faster, larger and more courageous horses during combat. The Tibetan breed of Nagchen horses measured 13.5 hands about 4.5 feet high. They were bred to stay at high altitudes; they were inexhaustible and sure-footed. Just what the Chinese needed!

Tea was introduced to Tibet when a Tang dynasty princess married the Tibetan king, Sangsten Gampo in AD 641. From Royalty the pleasure moved down to the nomads and Tibetan households. Yak butter mixed with tea provided warmth in freezing temperatures. It became indispensable to their way of life especially as it helped in digestion of a meat filled diet.

The Chinese needed horses. The Tibetans desired tea. So

began the barter trade.

The tea supplied to Tibet was of the crudest and lowest form. The tea plants' larger leaves, twigs and stems were pressed into moulds to form what is known as Brick Tea. This bitter tasting tea is still drunk and is in vogue in Tibet.

The official trade rate was one horse for 130 pounds of tea. The tea was sewn into yak skin cases and loaded on to the backs of the porters. The porters could carry between 150/200 pounds on an average. The strongest up to 300 pounds. The loader used metal spiked crutches and iron crampons over the hazardous trek. He carried corn bread and dipped it in bean curd for a snack.

The well worn passageway began from the tea areas of Yunnan and the Sichuan province of China. It required inner raw capabilities and guts to trek the Tea Horse Trail to Lhasa and unerring nerve to proceed on and back. The porters braved the harshest trails of Asia, through the verdant fields of Cathay and climbed the snow capped hills of Tibet, crossed the freezing and longest river of Asia, the Yangtze Kiang. They ascended narrow passes 17,000 ft high and braved snowstorms and typhoons in a distance of 2350 km. The Tibetan monasteries acted as tea





warehouses and distribution centres.

World War II blocked the route and the distribution of land by Chairman Mao to the porters stopped the trade as also the Chinese did not require horses anymore. Roadways and rail have taken over.

The Tibetan monasteries today still serve out tea to their monks. The highest quality of Pu'erh tea is made by boiling the leaves in water for half a day till the liquid turns a dark brown colour. Skimming takes place. The tea is poured into a butter churner with fresh yak's butter and salt and then shaken with a whisk. This tea is known as *Po Cha* in Tibet and stirred in colanders. Today, keeping abreast with modern times, blenders are used. The result is a purplish liquid like thick oil then poured into clay tea pots.

The Tea Horse Trail beckons over paths bored with the sticks of bygone porters.

In the Kazaringa National Park in Assam, the carcasses of the endangered one-horned rhinos have often been found minus their horns. They fetch fantastic sums for poachers as the powdered form is used as an aphrodisiac in China.

A particular Western traveller found that trade features had changed between Tibet and China. TV sets, toiletries and shoes moved into this once mountain kingdom. The Tibetans now export exotic medicinal products found only on their grasslands above 10,000 ft.

Dried parasitic infected caterpillars called Yartoa Gompo are the need of the day. The parasite kills the caterpillar and then feasts on its body. The Chinese are willing to pay up to the equivalent of US ten dollars per caterpillar. They are exhibited in large sealed glass jars in their medicinal shops at a price of near US 75 dollars a gram. These magical caterpillars called Chong Ao are touted as remedies for fatigue and inflammation and the agony of ageing.

The Tea Horse Trail or what is left of it witnesses a new found commerce between the two areas!

The official trade rate was one horse for 130 pounds of tea. The tea was sewn into yak skin cases and loaded on to the backs of the porters





# THE YULE TEA LOUNGE

A perfect tea garden experience for **MRITTIKA BOSE** in the heart of Kolkata

A cloudy sky, a cool breeze and an afternoon full of possibilities certainly called for a long drive. But how would that work out on a working day in the middle of the week? Since we didn't wish to turn dull with all work and no play, we decided to combine work and play and set off for Eco Park in Rajarhat.

The mid-week crowd was thin at the Eco Park and we easily found our way to the Yule Tea Lounge. The red roofed structure on stilts made a pretty picture enhanced by the model Ghum station with a 'toy train' – not on rails though – next to it. But what totally floored us was the real tea garden adjacent to the lounge. We couldn't believe our

eyes at first till Debajit Nag, Manager (Marketing and Coordination) and Azad *bhai*, of



Andrew Yule authority took up the challenge. But it was easier said than done. The trials to grow tea there failed in the early phases. The problems were many. The scorching heat in Kolkata in summer – with no tree cover in the space provided – burnt all the young tea plants. The pH level of the soil there was a stupendous 7 compared to 4.5 in Dooars. There was no natural drainage system on the plot.

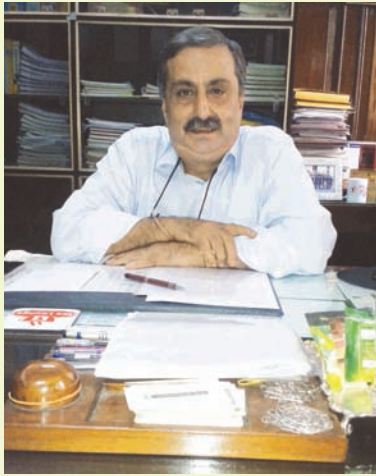
Andrew Yule, very kindly took us around the tea garden explaining how this miracle came to be!

When the West Bengal Government decided to create a tea garden on the virtually barren land to attract tourists in 2014, the

So, soil was transported from Banarhat tea garden and filled up in three feet deep pits dug in the plot and tea saplings were planted in them. The pH of the soil was carefully monitored and made as conducive to tea as possible. Plenty of shade trees were planted to



"This is a challenge we shall continue to meet"



**Sunil Munshi**  
Director (Personnel)/Chairman  
and Managing Director  
Andrew Yule and Co. Ltd.

**When** Mr. Debashis Sen, the Chairman of HIDCO, first made the proposal of creating a tea garden at Eco Park in Rajarhat to us, we took it up as a challenge. Now that it has become a reality, we intend to continue the good work despite the hostile weather conditions in Kolkata. We are committed to

maintain it and improvise further for the people of Kolkata to get a feel of the tea garden in the heart of the city.

We have initiated attractive packages for both residents of Kolkata and tourists. For those who come to Kolkata for meetings, seminars or are passengers in transit, the package includes a two to three hour visit to the Yule Tea Lounge with a tour around the tea garden, a tea tasting session, tea and tasty snacks. The location being near the airport makes it ideal for those who do not have time for a visit to the tea gardens in the North East. For those living in Rajarhat township, we are promoting through email, leaflets and other modes of communication, packages including breakfast, tea tasting sessions, train rides starting and culminating at the model Ghum Station adjoining the Tea Lounge, on the weekend and holidays. We are also planning tailor-made packages for corporate meetings and other official programmes during the hot summer months when the number of visitors to the Eco Park remains low. We also have plans to replicate the 'Tea Lounge in tea garden' concept in the tea growing states in the North East.

provide cover to the plants and prevent scorching during summer. However, during heavy monsoons the shade trees have to be trimmed to some extent. A drainage system has been created where water is introduced artificially to feed the plants and also drained out.

In the first year the mortality rate of the plants was 30%, which came down to 20% in the next year. Now the plants are showing healthy growth and only five percent mortality is expected this year.

All this involves meticulous planning and hard work as labour, climate, soil – nothing in Kolkata is under control. Azad *bhai* has been specially designated to supervise the tea garden and he has shifted base from Dooars and is doing an excellent job. Credit goes to Andrew Yule for making the project a grand success. As we stood in the midst of the tea garden looking at the lounge in the distance, it seemed as if we had been transported to tea country – the path leading towards a tea bungalow on stilts!

The lounge itself is beautifully structured with tables set in the adjoining lawn, the spacious verandah (just like in old tea bungalows) and the large air-conditioned restaurant. The whole range of Yule tea, beautiful tea memorabilia and a large TV screen showing corporate films on the company is ideal for holding tea related programmes – both corporate and entertainment.

The tea served here comes with a timer so that it is brewed perfectly according to the customer's choice. And the food on offer is delectable – the perfect foil for an ideal cuppa. Just like the crunchy-outside-soft inside fish fingers that accompanied our Darjeeling Mint and Khawang Passion Fruit Teas.

As we sat sipping our tea in the warm glow of the setting sun, I could well imagine how serious tea company AGMs or workshops held in the city can turn into thoroughly enjoyable experiences in this perfect setting.

Photos: Uttama Bose and author



# The world's going ORGANIC

**Mu-lien**  
updates us  
about organic  
tea in different  
countries



## Development of multiple organic tea products

Tea is a hobby line product. To meet consumer requirements, many kinds of organic tea products are well created by organic tea growers and commercial companies. Organic tea products in Taiwan are very versatile. This is due to varietal, seasonal, producer, location, elevation and manufacturing differences and market necessity. Most organic tea growers are small producers. In order to obtain more income, they have to create additional value of organic tea. Nearly all organic tea

growers sell their tea directly to consumers, especially to their original buyers. Therefore, to offer more selections for the consumers, they manufacture many kinds of tea, even covering roasted organic Oolong. Usually, farmers use spring, the first summer, autumn and winter crops to manufacture Oolong tea. Oolong tea is Taiwan's bulk organic tea, with aroma and flavour varying

with different growers. Organic fresh tea leaves are good material for making



**Buddhist  
organisations in  
Taiwan  
contribute greatly  
to the  
development of  
organic tea**



Organic tea shop in Taiwan



crispy green tea, which is called tea French Fry in Taiwan. To make this kind of tea food, tea leaves sticking to frying wheat-flour mixed with eggs are used.

The second summer crop is mostly used by farmers to make organic black tea. In recent years, black tea made by using small leafy varieties is quite enjoyed by local consumers, especially Oolong-type black tea with deep degree of fermentation. In addition, famed organic black tea made from Assam-type variety, TTES No. 18, is located in Puli, Yuchi and Minchien tea areas.

In Japan, the direct selling scene of organic tea growers is similar to that of Taiwan. In addition to organic green tea, some of them produce organic Oolong, black tea and brown rice tea also. Organic Benihuki Oolong or black tea is found in the market. One Japanese company promotes organic tea congee (gruel), a blend of roasted organic green tea with kelp and organic rice, respectively. Microbial fermented tea named Yamabukinadeshiko (Japanese Beauty) containing theadenol A and theadenol B is made from organic green tea.

GABA tea is a health-protected tea which contains high contents of gamma butyric amino acid



(GABA) and has been proved to be able to lower down blood pressure. In Taiwan, there are several organic GABA tea producers, located in Minchien and Pilin respectively. The organic

GABA has become an export product, especially consumed by people in the EU and USA.

Organic tea is a very good material for making multiple tea products as it contains no pesticide residue. It can protect consumer's health. The multiple tea products developed in Taiwan include pounded tea (Leicha), tea wine, tea noodle, tea tablet and constellation tea etc.

Three Buddhist organisations in Taiwan, Fofashan (Buddha Arma Mountain), Tzuxin and Tzuchi, contribute greatly to the development of organic tea. All the groups have their organic business



affairs, promoting and selling organic tea products ranging from organic white tea to black tea, tea bags included. International organic tea trading is also promoted by the groups. The Buddha Arma Mountain held organic tea contests three times through co-sponsorship with the Association of Taiwan Tea.

In Taiwan, organic RTD tea (Oolong) was launched in the market by two local companies. One company failed to develop their market. In the USA, examples associated with organic beverages such as Honest Tea, have plenty of selections with pure organic tea or with tea beverage flavoured with specific fruit juices such as mango, nectar and peach. Organic tea flavoured with fruit juice is better accepted by the US consumers. In Japan, there is organic RTD tea also, such as Suntory black Oolong and Uji organic tea.

In China, there are a variety of



organic tea products ranging from white tea to black tea. A special organic tea product is the organic craft tea where tea is shaped by hand into bundles or rosettes of flowers by artisans. When the tea is steeped in hot water, it slowly blossoms into a bouquet of breathtaking shapes and exquisite flavour. Deep processing of organic tea is China's strength.

In Sri Lanka, the organic black tea or green tea labeled with Fair-Trade and/or Rainforest logos is gradually being accepted by consumers. Such activities support the original producers and protect the environment. Organic tea from Sri Lanka is noted for its attractive package and for export.

Organic tea cultivation can recycle the agricultural waste for resources of organic fertiliser, protect the environment and human health and maintain ecological balance. For this it has to rely on producers, consumers, extension persons and researchers collaboration. For pest control and nutrient management, integrated management practices, particularly focusing on the development of lightweight, low labour and convenient management methods and low-cost materials are required. Diverse organic tea products appeal to consumers and benefit growers and manufacturers.

Courtesy : International Journal of Tea Science







Navin Mishra of Ghatia TE (*left*) and N Mandal of Huldibari TE



Arun Sharma of Chinchula TE and Jagdish Nathawat of Nepuchapur TE



Jagdish Nathawat of Nepuchapur TE and Tamal Ganguly of Banarhat TE



# CONTEMPORARY BROKERS TEA TASTING SESSION



(L to R) P D Sharma Cooch Behar TE, D Guha Oodlabari TE, Vipin Gupta Mechpara TE, S S Malik Totapara TE, M K Varma Engo TE, L S Khetawat Nepuchapur TE, Abhay Singh Bhogotopore TE, Leonard Smith New Dooars TE, Arjun Mitra Contemporary, Amit Banerjee Anandapur, Harsh Kumar Contemporary, I Chauhan Baradighi TE and Sam Vargese TRA Nagrakata

Contemporary Brokers conducted a Tea Tasting Session at the only fully air conditioned Central Dooars Club at Binnaguri on July 19, 2016. This session was attended by over 80 planters from different estates.

Talking to the senior planters, this correspondent learnt that the Dooars tea industry is faced with grim challenges. M K Varma from Engo felt that while several new measures such as ration distribution has been made the responsibility of the estate managers, the operational procedures were still not clear, resulting in a huge waste of managerial time. On the issue of nature's wrath and uneven climate conditions and depleting carbon levels in the soil, these have to be tackled by estates at their individual levels, said Vipin Gupta of Mechpara. Yields have to be increased said Abhay Singh of Bhagatpore, who has taken the crop from eight lakh kg to 15 lakh kg in the past six years. That is the only way that an estate can 'afford' to make quality, he said. Sisodia from Dalgoan, an estate which has been in the limelight for its quality manufacture, said, attention to details was necessary to ensure that quality tea is made constantly

from whatever best raw material available.

Non availability of labour is the single largest concern and now many have had to resort to mechanical plucking in certain earmarked sections of their gardens. The importance of the new and developing definition of quality has been largely understood across the board and all those who are striving to make quality teas, which was evident from the assortment of samples tasted and the keen interest exhibited by all those who were present.

The session was attended by planters from the Amalgamated Plantations, Goodricke Group, Rydak Syndicate, Berila Group and a host of other estates.

This type of interaction brought the planters closer to the markets and such service by the Brokers was invaluable, said the planters.

The recent record breaking CTC was displayed and everyone agreed that it was certainly very fine tea.

This session was followed by refreshments and lunch.





# Mr. Ramesh Agarwal throws light



## Q. How did you come to the tea business?

**A.** As a young man of only 18 years, I had gone for a holiday with my friends to Darjeeling in 1980. The tea gardens charmed me to such an extent that I felt a great urge to get into tea business. At Siliguri I got a chance to be at the manual auction centre and my interest grew further. Within a month I entered the tea world with wholesale tea trading. I began by buying mainly Doors

and Assam tea at the auctions and bringing them over to my home town Kanpur and selling the teas in our already existing retail counter.

I was a beginner and had to work really hard – almost 16 hours daily – travelling around for 15 - 20 days every month in buses and trains to develop customers in small towns and villages of UP. Honesty in all business dealings and offering good value for money to our customers paid off. My rates were very competitive. After two to three years I could establish the goodwill of my company and soon it was among the top five tea trading companies in UP.

## Q. What were the turning points in your business?

**A.** In 1992 I was on a usual retail market visit to Ayodhya. There I saw a lady come to buy tea in the same shop that I was visiting. She told the shopkeeper to give packet tea and not loose tea. She categorically said that loose tea had adulterants. In the evening, I witnessed a similar incident at another shop. This had struck me and I realised that consumers had become conscious of what they were buying and wanted safe products. It was a Saturday. On Sunday, back in Kanpur, after discussions with my family, I took the decision to begin packaging of tea.

At that time Brooke Bond and Lipton were leading brands. My resources were less for brand building activity. But



Mohani tea cup



# on the history of



I was determined. I went to a designer to design our packets and launched Mohani Tea in 1992. The initial response was lukewarm. Finding distributors was tough. I travelled from village to village, to small towns for distributors. In Farooqabad, distributors literally ran away when this new packet tea arrived!

However, within two years people realised that Mohani Tea was offering good tea at affordable prices. They were getting good CTC tea in packets at marginally higher price than loose tea. Also, consumers slowly became health conscious and began preferring branded tea. That helped us in a big way. Today by the grace of God we have over 2000 distributors and 4000000 retailers all over the north Indian belt.

## Our Operations:

The guiding principle at Mohani, in all its activities, is to make the tea-drinking experience truly refreshing, safe, hygienic and most importantly, delivering value for money to consumers.

### Tea Sourcing:

We have a team of experienced tea tasters and buyers located in our tea buying centres at Kolkata and Siliguri that are centrally controlled from our corporate office at Noida by professionals. We have established robust software driven mechanism to ensure quality check at



Mohani tea brands

every stage and capturing its records right from samples offer stage to blended tea in the packets ensuring delivery of a safe and hygienic end product to our consumer. In 2015 we have launched our Tea Buying Portal to further enhance our tea buying capabilities through use of modern and fast developing e-platform for buying directly from progressive producing houses.



Tea Tasting

plan with the objective of having a consolidated and modern warehousing, tea blending and packaging factory with separate areas for staff and worker accommodation was designed.

□ Accordingly in the first phase in 2015, the company completed and operationalised the construction of a state-of-the-art tea warehouse with a capacity to hold six million kg of raw tea in the most hygienic manner which meets global standard of food safety. This warehouse has all possible automation with complete software driven record keeping procedures. Mention may be made that it is capable of loading and unloading 25 lorries per day within the span of normal daily working hours and that too using a total of five to six manpower in all.

□ A modern tea tasting facility has been set up in this warehouse. Lot wise samples are drawn from the incoming lorries and compared with the samples based on which tea purchases were made. This has not only



Production tea bag



Tea tasting



Rania factory

strengthened our internal quality checks but has also helped us detect possible variation between the qualities, based on which purchase is made and the actual supplies by vendors.

□ In the second phase, currently (2016) the construction work of an equally large capacity blending and packing factory is already on the way to fast completion.

#### **Bought Leaf Factory at the Doors – Backward Integration Project**

□ The company has completed the land procurement of a 10 acre plot in the midst of abundance of small tea farmers in the Jalpaiguri district of north Bengal for a Bought Leaf Factory of 10 CTC lines. The idea is to secure the supply of a part of the company's quality Doors tea, which could be customised for consumption in its own brands. The necessary Tea Board formalities are nearing completion shortly.

#### **Foray in the Tea Lounge segment**

□ The first Mohani Tea Lounge with all relevant refreshment facilities for Kanpur-Agra or Agra -Delhi bound travellers is fast on its way to completion on the Delhi - Agra Expressway.



Rania factory





**Factory:**

Our two factories are located at Kanpur, one out of the two is dedicated to our private label packets and tea bag manufacture, the other one is engaged in production of our own Mohani Tea packets in various forms and sizes. Both our factories are ISO 2200 & HACCP certified.

**Quality Checks:**

We have a dedicated food chemist and micro-biologist with his team deployed in our tea testing laboratory, with sophisticated instruments at Kanpur. This department is entrusted with the job of analysis and quality checks for both tea and packaging material.

**Mohani Tea Market Space**

Mohani Tea has a diverse portfolio of teas such as CTC, Darjeeling, Orthodox, Green tea, Flavoured teas, Herbal teas and further wishes to enhance on functional and OOH tea beverages. It caters to general trade, modern trade, private labelling, government institutions, government canteens, e-commerce portals (online sales), etc.

We operate with our Mohani Tea Brand in the Indian states of UP, Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, MP, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Delhi, and Rajasthan and Maharashtra.

Keeping in mind our good relations developed over the years, we have dedicated a small part of our business to packing for our private label customers such as Wal-Mart, Spencer's, Big Bazaar etc. Mention may be made that in 2012 we were awarded Supplier of the Year Award by

Wal-Mart. Besides this we also supply to the Armed Forces through the CSDs, Indian Railways and other government institutions.

**Overseas Activities:**

In 2015 Mohani Tea had a dedicated resource in Burkina Faso and started its export of tea bag to the various western African countries – both its own brands and few private labels in flavoured tea bags. Later the same year it has established business in bulk tea exports to Pakistan and countries in the CIS.

**CSR activities:**

The company has formed the Mohani Charitable Trust that provides education subsidy and free computers to brilliant students and orphan children in Kanpur.

**Time bound Developmental Plan on track:**

The entrepreneurial hunger and vision of this company guided by Mr. Ramesh Agarwal has taken strategic decision of investments in all areas with a long term continuous growth plan in mind.



**Rania factory**

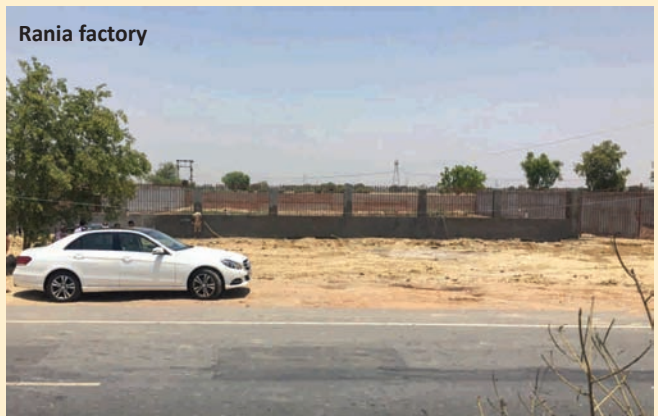
Towards the above objective, the company has planned and taken the following actions in a time bound manner:

**The Rania Warehousing and Blending Packaging Unit**

□ In 2014 the company had acquired a large plot of 25 acres in Rania on the Delhi - Kanpur Expressway. A master



**Rania factory**



**Rania factory**



## COVER STORY

The South Indian tea industry has often been considered to play second fiddle to its north Indian counterpart, both in terms of quality of the teas prices achieved and support from the government,

The United Planters' Association of Southern India (UPASI) has continued to uphold the cause of the south Indian tea industry. It is heartening to note that in recent years with innovative thinking and greater support from the Tea Board, it has been able to meet tough challenges to a large extent.

**Contemporary Tea Time** interviews experts to analyse the situation



# Cup of Innovations

South Indian Tea Industry  
is Finding Novel Ways to Flourish



# A Look at the Past



By 1898, tea was well established in the Western Ghats of south India and the Nilgiris, but it was some time before south Indian teas began to be auctioned in London. Though coffee was the main stay of south Indian plantations, when tea began flourishing in Assam. Tea did not come to

south India until well after the blight *Hemelia Vastatrix* invaded the coffee estates of the southern reaches of the Western Ghats, killing coffee plantation after plantation.

Slower to get off the mark than their Ceylonese counterparts, who had switched to tea and expanded their plantations as early as 1867,

south Indian planters did not grow their first commercial crop till 1875.

The first records available for teas grown on Indian estates are from 1895.

In October 1952, India took the major decision of withdrawing from the International Tea Market Expansion Board (ITMEB), which had earlier been jointly promoted by India, Ceylon, Pakistan, Indonesia and East Africa. ITMEB had been carrying on promotional activities in the UK, Europe, North America, West Asia, Nigeria, Australia and New Zealand, through bureaus in London, New York, Toronto, Amsterdam, Zurich, Cairo, Ibadan and Sydney with sub offices elsewhere.

India's withdrawal from the ITMEB led to the prospect of the total collapse of the Board's campaigns. The possibility of loss of confidence and goodwill was injurious to the Indian export effort. Pakistan, Indonesia and East Africa followed suit, but Ceylon shrewdly continued to finance ITMEB and







gained goodwill, the increased exports compensating for the cost incurred.

The long term effects of these government decisions are still felt by the south India tea trade, which suffers in comparison with northeast Indian tea, which has an intrinsic superiority in liquoring characteristics and Sri Lankan teas,

from the sixties.

An analysis by the United Planters' Association of Southern India (UPASI) in 1968 made several observations in response to repeated government criticism of the tea industry in 1968.

**Some of which are listed below:**

- The increasing bilateral trading

- One of the major failures of the government was the decision to withdraw from the membership of the ITMEB in 1952.
- The imposition of export duty and excise duty was counter-productive. It placed a barrier against Indian exports.
- It was a fallacy to believe that various duties and taxes could be passed on to the overseas buyer.
- Government policy, which looks upon tea more as an important source of revenue and means of employment rather than an export industry of great potential, was a contradiction to the policy enunciated at the time of the amendment of the Tea Act in 1953.
- Neither the Tea Board with its civil servants, nor the government, had necessary specialised commercial experience and long-term view to provide proper direction to tea promotion activities.
- The government administrative system was better suited for centrally controlled economies, not for free markets.

The criticism leveled against the government and the problems highlighted by UPASI in 1968 continued to feature through years thereafter in the tea trade well into the 1990's.

*(Excerpted from  
The Saga of Indian Tea)*



which enjoys better promotional support from its government. In India, the Tea Board became instrumental in bringing the tea industry under the control of the Indian government and the biggest loser was south Indian tea.

Increased production and government policy failures led to tea producers getting unsatisfactory prices beginning

arrangement with countries like the Soviet Union would displace existing trade and would not be an additional avenue of sales. These countries presented an element of instability as they bought according to state policy. In the long run this did deliver disastrous consequences when the Soviet Union broke.







**P S Sundar**

**S**outh Indian tea is today worth about Rs 2,600 crore (value of the annual crop) and the assets held by the industry are worth not less than five times this. In addition, there is a parallel possession of assets held by indirect and auxiliary units dependent on tea trade. Collectively, the south Indian industry, trade and auxiliary units, hold investments on fixed assets and crop for not less than Rs 25,000 crore.

While this explains the significance of this sector's contribution to the country's fiscal health, the way it has responded to the emerging challenges of the new millennium including the post-WTO era is worth studying not only because it is a treasure of experience to overcome challenges but also because it instils the necessary confidence among the new generation tea industrialists and traders to win over the forthcoming challenges in future.

There have been many innovations on production, marketing, industrial relations, key limiting managerial factors relating to inputs, weather adversity,

political upsets, Tea Board constitution, subsidy management and socio-economic fronts.

Today, nearly 85,000 estates and small growers are registered in south India to grow and manufacture tea but small growers contend that there are one lakh of them, some of whom are yet to be registered with the Tea Board. The Tea Board is involved in registering the small growers through digital process to help them get benefits as part of the country's 'Digital India' scheme.

Although the number of growers has increased manifold due to the increase in population in small growers' families, there has, indeed, been a reduction in the area under planting. This has been felt more in the last decade – in 2005, south India had 1,19,823 hectare under tea, which has now come down to 1,06,850 hectare. Uneconomic returns forced the youth in plantation villages to seek jobs in cities resulting in many houses remaining locked in hamlets. Even the overall population in the Nilgiris – the largest tea growing district in south

India – has fallen as per Government census. In this backdrop, several hectares of tea had been abandoned and many hectares have been sold off to real estate investors. The Tea Board has expressed concern over this and has urged local civic bodies not to allow conversion of tea land into real estates.

An interesting way by which the south Indian tea industry coped with this challenge was by raising productivity – harvesting a higher yield from existing unit of area under tea. With gradual improvement over the years, today, south India has around 2,005 kg/hectare as yield. This is higher than Sri Lanka and is close to Kenya.

Production-wise, south India has come a long way compared to a century ago but the new millennium has not been free from concerns. In 1990, south India produced 173.2 mkg, which rose to 206.2 mkg in 2000. In 2009, production rose to 244.1 mkg but dropped year after year until it fell to 239.4 mkg in 2012. Last year, south India produced 227.6 mkg.

# Innovations To Meet CHALLENGES



South Indian tea production in the current year is still down. "Tea Board has announced production data till May and south India lost 11.27 mkg to produce 14.83 mkg. Our compilation shows that in the five months of 2016, south Indian production dropped by as much as 22.11 mkg to total 76.62 mkg. Here, Tamil Nadu lost 15.83 mkg to dip to 52.34 mkg and Kerala 5.60 mkg to drop to 22.34 mkg", said Rajesh Gupta, compiler of annual Global Tea Digest, (GTD), from the house of Global Tea Brokers in Coonoor. The GTD, now five years old, has already become a storehouse of vital data on tea industry, trade, glossary and history and tea tasting terminology besides tea grades.



Rajesh Gupta



Ramesh Bhojarajan

"Prolonged dry weather affected plantation field activities. Ghastly wind caused evaporation on soil. This reduced the moisture content and in turn retarded the harvest. The arrival of green leaf for processing in our factories was so low that we could operate the factories only for four days a week and that too in a single shift till June. At current reckoning, we fear that south Indian tea production this year could be only around 205 mkg", Ramesh Bhojarajan, President, The Nilgiri Bought Leaf Tea Manufacturers' Association, said. His Hittakkal tea group has been a consistent winner of 'Golden Leaf India Awards' in all the editions so far.

A major development in the current millennium is the innovation in tea production. The multiple-brewing tea variants are a case in point. "After extensive research, we launched Avataa White Tea, Avataa Twirl Green Tea, Avataa Long Ding Green Tea and Avataa Virgin Green Tea. These are multiple-brewing teas which are in great demand even within India. They are manufactured with craft-skill from the tender single leaf and bud from exclusive pockets in Billimalai Estate which have practically re-defined tea drinking practice in chosen homes in India, let alone abroad. We have now launched wellness range Garden-fresh enveloped tea bags", said G Udayakumar, Director, Avataa Bluegate Beverages.



G Udayakumar (inset) and Avataa tea packs

This has also developed innovation in tea marketing. For instance, Avataa Tea has aligned with Nutriyes Healthcare Pvt Ltd whereby Nutriyes wafers and Avataa teas will be marketed in unison. "We are making available to discerning consumers through Nutriyes Natural Green Tea,

chukku flavoured green and Lemon Honey Green Tea. This creates a natural biological link between wafers and tea, paving the platform to drink multiple brewing Avataa tea with a bite of nutritious Nutriyes wafers, both coming in different flavours", detailed Udayakumar.

Avataa teas had participated in the London Olympics in 2012. Its packaging changes periodically sustaining interest in consumers. Besides winning national and international awards for quality, Avataa has won prices crossing Rs 10,000 per kg on select occasions. In tea auctioning also, south





"Over the years, even bought-leaf tea factories have gone in for branded tea packets. While we have been able to retain top prices in auctions regularly, we are sending our Darmona Tea packets regularly even by courier to consumers across the country. We will soon go for e-trading", said Dinesh Raju, Managing Partner of Darmona Tea Industry in Aravenu, a small hamlet in the Nilgiris.



Dinesh Raju

India had remained in the forefront. 'Digital India' concept has caught up. The world's first e-auction for tea, Teaserve, was launched in Coonoor on Oct 1, 2003. It was without internet support. On December 21, 2008, the world's first internet-based e-auction was launched at Coonoor Tea Trade Association (CTTA). And in 2010, Teaserve also became internet based auction. The pan-India e-auctioning was introduced for two occasions of The Nilgiris Winter Speciality Tea Auctions conducted by Nilgiris Planters' Association of India through CTTA auctions.

Since mid-June this year, CTTA is conducting all its auctions through pan-India e-auctions. While Coonoor and Coimbatore auctions are doing better, Kochi has raised many problems.

"But, brokers are worried about

"It is 155 years since tea auctions were introduced in India. We welcome pan-India e-auctions in principle but we need a smooth platform to conduct business. We do not foresee the need to change current settlement banking system. Buyers have real cause for concern relating to division of lots and proxy bidding. They also want a lower tax on inter-state trading", CTTA Chairman L C Singhanian said.



L C Singhanian

the new tax invoice and contract format which is too large as it will cost heavily to produce them for each sale. They have sought easy and economic format as done so far. Collectively, the industry is happy that pan-India auctions will help to broaden the buyer base improving the prospects for prices to rise", Rajesh Gupta, Managing Director, Global Tea Brokers, said.

"Tea Board has come out with some temporary solutions to ease the trading problems but we do not foresee better price recovery until GST comes into force", Ramesh Bhojarajan noted.

A major concern has been the different approach adopted by the Modi Government to Tea Board. A full-fledged re-constitution was not done immediately expiry of the term of the previous Board. Only some filling of vacant positions has been made. Since November last, D Hegde, Director of The United Nilgiri Tea Estates Co Ltd., (UNITEA), which runs Chamraj and Korakundah estates and factories in the Nilgiris, has been appointed Tea Board member from south India. He is a former President of UPASI.

"My agenda is to take necessary steps to boost the consumption of

south Indian tea in both domestic and global markets. Production is rising and so too the competition for tea from other beverages. So, promotion is necessary to boost tea consumption", he said.

"Labour shortage has been a



D Hegde

massive problem in the new millennium. Estates are hiring migrant labour from north and north eastern states. They are also increasingly using mechanisation and automation to meet labour shortage. Social costs are a never-ending problem on plantations. We are also concerned on the adversity caused by massive changes in weather – global warming, El Nino and La Nina weather factors. These are areas where Government and scientists should work together for better future of tea industry, south India included", Hegde summed up.

Photos : P S Sundar

# Dr. N K Jain

A life dedicated to agricultural science especially TEA

**Prafull Goradia** pays tribute

I first came to know Dr. Narender Jain in 1973. The occasion was a seminar he had organised at the Tocklai Experimental Station in Jorhat, soon after he took over as its Director. The subject proposed for me to speak was the sale of tea in a more rational manner so that the commodity realised its best possible prices.

The thrust of my reply was back to the tea scientists like Dr. Jain. The beverage is consumed in almost the same quantity every day. But it was then produced by the northeast Indian gardens in big quantities over July, August, and September; about two-thirds of the annual crop. The rest of the quantity was plucked and made through March/June as well as October and November. And none over January and February.

This enormous fluctuation led to too much tea coming on the market from August through to March or even April, about eight months. This meant that about 60 percent of the annual crop had to wait upto eight months to be sold.

That adversely affected quality as well as depressed prices because more came on the market for several months than could be consumed readily. The buyers had to hold stocks which cost them money due to which they discounted prices.

Dividing the year into 52, or say 50 weeks, my appeal to Dr. Jain, the new Director with a fresh and open mind (he had never been in tea earlier) was "find a way to grow tea at two per cent a week". It would all be consumed quickly enough fresh and needing very little finance blockage. Hence higher price averages.

At the end of the seminar morning, at lunch in his nearby house, he told me that I had opened his eyes early in his tea career. He said so openly and certainly in the presence of his lady wife who gave the impression that she was sincere and upright and would not approve of any exaggeration to flatter anyone. That impression I have retained about her until now. There were seven others in the room who were overhearing.

A salutary effect was that Dr. Jain, the new pivot of tea research did not join the bandwagon of anglicized *chaiwalas* who were at the time condemning what was called 'perennial plucking' or attempts to stretch the plucking of bushes from eight months to possible ten and eventually eleven months. Only the coldest weeks with the least sunlight were to be exempted from plucking. Bishwambar Prasad Kedia, the builder President of Jayshree Tea and Industries, had introduced in his Assam gardens, with the help of his southern experience where bushes were plucked all twelve months.

Dr. Jain remained Director at Tocklai for thirteen years and had the time and zest to introduce a number of new ideas on tea growing, and of course always kept the doors and windows of 'tea mind' open so that the breeze of every new idea could blow in.

Narender was quite a missionary. Once while on his way to the Dum Dum airport, his car slammed into another vehicle. He was sitting on the front seat and hurt his legs rather badly. Regardless he insisted on proceeding. When he landed at Jorhat airport, his ankles were so swollen and painful that he had to be driven straight to hospital. Both the ankles were discovered to have suffered multiple fractures!

Dr. Jain and I had many an interaction over the years. As early as 1976, I had begun to move away from tea into other areas but whenever we met I learnt a good deal from his new experiences. His interest in tea persisted, I imagine, to the last day of his good and successful life.



Dr. N K Jain





# PAN INDIA Tea Auction Sales

An evolution of the e-auction platform

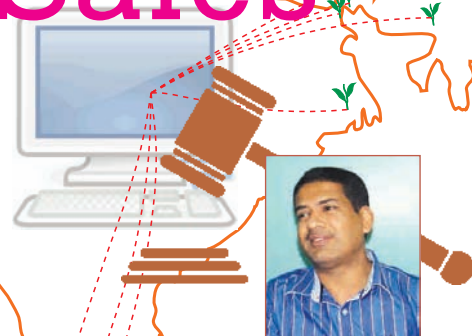
A pan-India electronic auction system of tea for wider participation of buyers and sellers and to ensure fair price discovery took off in June 2016. The system, designed and developed by the Tea Board in consultation with all the stakeholders, will enable buyers registered with a single auction centre to participate in the auction process of other centres as well and is expected to make the auction easier and more accessible to TOMCO registered buyers across the country.

Electronic auctions are being conducted in the seven auction centres in India – Kolkata,

Coonor scored the most on the inaugural day of pan-India auction by selling 92.46% of the stock offered in the centre, while Kolkata (all tea varieties except Darjeeling) became second with 73.15% sales followed by Guwahati (63.02%).

Tea Board of India Chairman Santosh Sarangi said, "The upgradation of post-auction settlement process in the pan-India e-auction software will make the system foolproof."

A spokesperson speaking on behalf of the tea auctioneers, said: "We must put an effort to inspire the new system and make it better



Santosh Sarangi  
Chairman, Tea Board of India

assess demand swiftly and communicate it to the producers, which will help them in the decision making process of achieving the highest potential of price discovery. Furthermore, analysis of buying data will enable the auctioneers to evaluate buying patterns and availability, which will enable buyers to maximise and optimise their purchases. The auctioneer's role of analysis and assistance will be invaluable to the trade, said Kamal Tewari a large tea buying house.

Goodricke MD & CEO A N Singh feels "As the new e-auction system is working well and bringing in new quality buyers every day, there should be better price discovery than last year."

According to the Tea Board of India, it's too early to comment on better price realisation. "Pan-India auctions, which encourage auctioning in other centres, has created further demand as there are people from other states participating in the auction without having to register at each state's auction centre," said A K Das, Deputy Chairman, Tea Board.

As the new system kicks in, the dynamics of price discovery is yet to be fully experienced though greater competition is expected.

But as always, quality will remain the prime mover.



Guwahati, Siliguri, Jalpaiguri, Kochi, Coonor and Coimbatore. Darjeeling tea has come to the electronic platform for the first time.

Earlier, multiple buyers could designate one person as a proxy bidder. One proxy bidder could represent multiple buyers. In the new system, each buyer will have to participate on his/her own or through his/her associate ID.

than the old one."

Since the introduction of the pan-India e-auction, Tea Inc is projecting better price realisation. "The basic reason for better price realisation is better quality crop this year. Peak quality tea sales are happening now. Coupled with this, the pan-India e-auction has paved the way for cross-centre wider participation of buyers, he said. Auctioneers will now be able to



## Advanced humidification improves tea fermentation

The Condair JetSpray humidifier will greatly reduce moisture loss during fermentation by consistently maintaining 95-98%RH in your tea fermentation room without wetting.

### This will:

- Improve infusion, liquor and bloom
- Increase the market value of your tea
- Improve your profitability

**Get a FREE expert consultation to improve your humidity and productivity.**

Call: (0)33 2461 7503

Visit: [www.condair.co.in](http://www.condair.co.in)

Email: [in.sales@condair.com](mailto:in.sales@condair.com)



**FREE 10-point  
guide to improving  
tea fermentation  
with humidity control**

Register to receive yours at  
[www.condair.co.in/teaguide](http://www.condair.co.in/teaguide)





## Vietnam – among the cradles of the world's tea plants



### HISTORY

When the French invaded Vietnam, they paid special attention to tea plants, with much research and many investigations, into the quality of Vietnam tea. They built cultivation research institutes in Phu Ho (Phu Tho), Bao Loc (Lam Dong), Pleiku (Gia Lai) and established a nursery containing 27 tea varieties and a tea production factory on Phu Ho farm. By August 1945, there were 13,585 ha of tea plants around the country, producing 6,000 tonne of dried tea, black tea, green tea and scented tea.

Then, it was impossible for tea plants to develop until 1955, when the North was entirely liberated. At that time green tea was the main product for domestic demand and export to China.

The year 1956 marked the appearance of two tea factories in Phu Tho, each with a capacity of 25-35 tonne of fresh buds per day and one electrical factory equipped with the most modern technology of the time. Tea factories were developed with the help of Russian technology.

From 1955 to 1975, due to the effects of war, the tea production did not undergo much improvement. However, in the North, the tea industry still

expanded to 65,000 ha yielding 35,000 tonne of dried tea, of which 18,000 tonne were exported.

By 2007 the planted area of the whole country had reached 131,000 ha and the dried tea output 167,000 tonne of which 130,000 tonne was exported and the domestic consumption was 30,000 tonne. Vietnam tea has found its way to more than 80 nations.

### TEA AREAS

- Northwest Region includes three main provinces – Son La, Lai Chau, Dien Bien. The area is 500 metre high above sea level. The total area is over 17,200 ha. The climate and soil are suitable for aromatic varieties like Oolong tea, Shan.
- Vietbac tea region includes the provinces of Ha Giang, Yen Bai, Tuyen Quang, Lao Cai, Bac Can, Cao Bang. Total area is

# VIETNAM

# Varietea



## MAJOR TEA REGIONS OF VIETNAM

41,000 ha. There are different varieties of tea and well known tea places such as Lung Pin (Ha Giang), Suoi Giang (Yen Bai).

- ▣ Northeast tea region includes Quang Ninh, Lang Son and Bac Giang. Total area is over 2,000 ha.
- ▣ Northern midlands region: including the provinces of Thai Nguyen, Phu Tho, Hoa Binh, Ha Tay, Hanoi, Vinh Phuc. Transition from mountain to plains, lowland with area of more than 35,000 ha. There are also some famous tea gardens like Dai Tu (Thai Nguyen).
- ▣ North-central region of tea, including Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, Ha Tinh with a total area of over 11,000 ha. The climate is hot, well-suited soil for tea growth. The main tea production is concentrated in Nghe An province.
- ▣ Highlands tea region, including the provinces of Lam Dong, Gia Lai, Kon Tum has an area of over 26,000 ha from 850m to 1500m above sea level, but major plantations are in Lam Dong Province. This is the largest tea growing province in Vietnam. The climate and soil



are suitable for high-quality aromatic tea like Oolong.

### TEA DRINKING TRADITIONS

Tea drinking in Vietnam is considered as a hobby of the older, more learned members in society. Vietnamese people generally favour lighter teas with fragrance of flowers.

Vietnamese teas are produced in many areas that have been known for tea-house "retreats". Like those located amidst the tea forests of the Lamdong.

Green tea is most popular

amongst Vietnamese people. In 2011 it accounted for over 63% of overall retail volume sales. Vietnamese green teas have a lower content of caffeine compared to Chinese green teas but higher caffeine levels than Japanese green teas. Recent free-enterprise initiatives are introducing these green teas to outside countries through new export activities.

The Vietnam Tea Association (VITA) was founded on July 19, 1998 and their goal is to protect and inform growers, consumers and business owners.







## 'Chai' Chimes at Silicon Valley

In a Silicon Valley culture known for brilliant ideas boiling up in coffee shops, Gaurav Chawla is pouring his heart into *chai*. On a break from his job as an engineering manager at San Francisco-based cloud-computing star Salesforce, Chawla began lamenting how tough it was to find a cup of *chai* as good as he makes it at home. That frustration and echoed complaints by others from India, prompted him to take a rice cooker apart and reconfigure it to make *chai*," Chawla said. "It made good *chai* and I realised this could be automated."

Chawla went to work developing a *chai* machine as simple to use as a coffee maker. He told of giving his

second prototype a test run at Google offices, where it was used daily until it broke. Another prototype got a workout in offices of Dolby.

Feedback from those and other tests led to a first-generation *chai* machine to be funded by pre-orders at a freshly launched [www.brew-chime.com](http://www.brew-chime.com) website.

Chime machines as they have been named brew one cup of *chai* at a time, using tea and spices pre-mixed in cups sold by the startup.

*Chai* has been growing in popularity in San Francisco and nearby Silicon Valley with coffee shops large and small adding it to menus. Helping drive the trend are ranks of people drawn from India by jobs at technology firms.

*Courtesy: Times of India*



Silicon Valley employees enjoying *chai* from Chime machines

Freshness In Every Cup




Teabox

raises

funds for

expansion

**B**engaluru-based Teabox, an online retailer of premium tea, has raised an undisclosed sum from Singapore based angel investor Cameron Jones, who is also a customer of the e-commerce firm. It has also raised venture debt from DBS Bank. The funds will help in expanding its presence. Teabox, which started operations in 2012, has raised over \$7 million so far. With the current round of funding, it plans to reach out to customers in about 100 countries. It also plans to increase its visibility in the North American market, according to a statement from the company. The capital will give the company additional resources to expand quickly into new markets, said Kaushal Dugar, Founder and CEO, Teabox.



## Adaptation to combat climate change

The report of the Working Group on Tea on Climate Change of the United Nations (UN) Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), referring to the advanced modelling studies conducted by the Tea Research Association's (TRA) Tocklai Experimental Station using general circulation models was released at the 22nd session of the Intergovernmental Group on Tea of the FAO held at Naivasha, Kenya between May 25 and 27. India chairs the FAO Working Group on Climate Change on Tea and it is supported by Sri Lanka, China and Kenya.

The report also states that the current adaptation measures need to be fine tuned to include adaptation measures on a macro as well as micro scale – downscaling to tea garden level. The results should be translated by clustering gardens and small holders in a region and adaptation measures taken by all stake holders together.

The Indian delegation was led by Santosh Kumar Sarangi, Chairman of Tea Board of India and included 16 representatives of the major stakeholders of the Indian tea industry.

*Courtesy : Assam Tribune Guwahati*

## Insurance Scheme for Small Growers

The Tea Board of India has introduced an accident insurance scheme for workers in small tea gardens at an annual premium of Rs.14. Of this, tea farmers will have to pay only Rs. 3.50 annually.



Enrolment of workers has now begun for this scheme, which will provide compensation to small tea farmers between 18 and 70 years for a rupees two lakh cover, a Tea Board of India official said.

Sources said that the initiative would be funded under the 12<sup>th</sup> Plan Scheme. Recognising the growing importance of this sector, the Centre had made a maiden allocation of Rs.200 crore for it in a plan of Rs.1,425 crore.

"This is a welcome scheme for tea workers in the unorganised sector," said Bijoy Gopal Chakraborty, President, Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers Association.

*Courtesy : Business Line*

**TRADE ENQUIRES SOLICITED**



### Super AusKelp

**Certified Organic Australian Bull Kelp FOR TEA PLANTATION**



**CUSTOMERS' SPEAK**



**RUCHIRA PARSHAD, M. D.,** Shakomato Tea Co. Ltd.  
Super Auskelp is an organic Boron based Cytokinins derived from sea weed stems of Australian Kelp, which is very much compatible with all Agro Chemicals and Micro nutrients. It improves the plant vigor, growth and yield. In SHAKOMATO, we found its application very encouraging.



**SANJAY BANSAL, Chairman,** Ambootia Tea Group  
We have used 'Super Auskelp', an organic certified natural sea weed extract made from Australian Bull kelp, in few of our group tea estates in 2015. The tea bushes, upon application of Super Auskelp, showed luxurious growth and better pest resistance. Regular use of Super Auskelp may impart enhancement in production as well as in quality.

**Super Auskelp is the magical seaweed fertiliser. Scientifically documented observed effects include:**

1. **INCREASED** Nutrients uptake by converting unavailable insoluble forms of nutrients into useable soluble form.
2. Increased **SHELF** life, Improves **QUALITY** of fruits and vegetables, flowering plants, orchards, vineyards, tobacco, cereal crops
3. provide drought and frost resistance
4. Helps develop plant **RESISTANCE** to sucking **INSECTS** and **FUNGAL** attack also work as **HERBICIDE**.
5. Helps grow stronger root systems resulting in more **ABUNDANT PRODUCE** and **RICHER FOLIAGE**
6. **Approved by Tea Research Association (TRA) and Certified Organic by NASAA.**

**TRA, Tocklai Reports Says**

**Result :**  
Among the treatment tried, Super Auskelp@500ml in 200L of water and sprayed for three rounds produced 18.3 percent more yield compared to control (only water) Tea samples manufactured after spray were found free from any taint.

**For further details, please contact**  
**AusKelp Organics**  
**Sunland Projects (P) Ltd.**  
124A, Motilal Nehru Road, Kolkata-700029, Ph: +91 33 2455 9780  
Fax: +91 33 2455 9781, Email: ausbullkelp@gmail.com  
Mobile: +91 98302 64232, +91 96740 12200, +91 98300 63524, +91 97486 03889

\*FREE SAMPLES AVAILABLE FOR FIELD TRIAL







# Darjeeling tea auction goes digital

Eight years ago, the auction of all teas except Darjeeling was moved online. But the priciest of Indian teas continued to stick to tradition because it was way too expensive to be bought and sold alongside humbler leaves.

The industry still thinks that e-auction couldn't handle the huge price variations of Darjeeling in a short time-frame. "Darjeeling tea

has so many varieties with so many nuances, specialties, flush difference that it will be difficult to determine the prices in a

second," feels Bharat Arya. Chairman of J. V. Gokal.

Darjeeling tea has traditionally been sold in Kolkata, owing to the nearby port and the concentration of exporters' offices.

Azam Monem, wholtime Director at McLeod Russel, hopes that some physical auction will continue to



Bharat Arya



Azam Monem

happen, if only for the "very, very costly and exclusive variety" of designer tea. "It is like auctioning rare paintings or a work of art. Remember, London tea market isn't done with physical auction yet," he says.

# H

## HALMARI

# CTC tea hits A SIXER

Halmari, the undisputed CTC topper from the plush plains of upper Assam tea, broke the upper limit at the pan-India e-auction and created a stir among the tea aficionados globally. Now, the industry is abuzz with the possibility of raising the e-auction



upper circuit limit for CTC tea from Rs 600 to Rs 800 by the Tea Board.

A batch of second flush Halmari Broken Orange Pekoe (BOP) CTC tea fetched a so-far-unassailable world record price of Rs 600 a kg. This particular batch of 130kg

premium CTC tea has witnessed a fierce e-bidding race from as many as eight buyers. In sale No. 27 held in Kolkata on July 9, 2016, Guwahati-based Golden Tea House bought 255.8 kg of second flush Halmari BOP for Rs 556 a kg.

# WITHERING WIZARD

CONTINUOUS WITHERING MACHINE

The world's **first** & most advanced Automated continuous **Withering System**



## ADVANTAGES OF WIZARD

DESCRIPTION	CONVENTIONAL TROUGHS	THE WIZARD
Quality of withering	Sometimes uneven withering	Always constant withering
Space	Standard area	1/3 of standard area
Building construction	Heavy and expensive	Light and much less expensive
Power	Standard units	40% of standard units
Labour	Standard requirement	15% of standard requirement
Spreading	Manual	Automatic
Shuffling	Manual	Automatic
Spillage	Large	None
Leaf damage/wastage	Yes	Nil
Supervision and control	Multi station and difficult	Single point and easy
Quality of tea	Inconsistent	Absolutely consistent
Maintenance	Constant and expensive	Periodic and less expensive
Feed & Discharge	Manual	Conveyorized



More than **30 Machines** in Operation in

**ASSAM, DOOARS, KENYA,  
UGANDA, CHINA & MALAWI**

**many more under installation**



**T & I Global Ltd.**

World Leaders in Tea Processing Machinery

India • Africa • Sri Lanka • Vietnam

[www.tiglobal.com](http://www.tiglobal.com)

Corporate Office : 11, Jassal House, 4-A, Auckland Square, Kolkata - 700017, India  
Ph. : 91 33 22833613 / 3614 email : salesindia@tiglobal.com Fax : 91 33 22833612

South India Office : 18, SIDCO Industrial Estate, Kurichi, Coimbatore - 641 021, India  
Ph. : 91 422 2674814 / 15 Call : +91 94433 67480 email : tk@tiglobal.com

Siliguri Office : Call : +91 353 2545429 email : tig\_slg@tiglobal.com

Assam Office : Call : +91 94010 04316 email : assam@tiglobal.com





## SANJAY KUMAR GUPTA brews the perfect punch of green tea and herbs

The growth in the consumption of green tea has been a major trend in India over the last two to three years, due to green tea's substantial health benefits. Interestingly, the trend is now quickly being taken over by a new trend of herbal green teas! This new trend is primarily driven by the tea industry, the end customer, as well as the traditional Ayurvedic companies. The major enabler behind this push is the internet that has enabled the consolidation of an otherwise fragmented knowledge about herbs.

In herbal green teas, as the name suggests, certain herbs are added to green tea that enhance the health benefits of the tea.

The wellness effects achieved depend on the specific herbs added to the green tea.

There are several kinds of herbs with different health effects. Garcenia, cinnamon and ginger are effective herbs for fat reduction; mint and trifala aid digestion; chamomile or chamomile-lemongrass are added for relaxation; tulsi and cinnamon for immunisation and gymnema sylvestre to counter diabetes. These are just a few of the herbs that can be consumed with green tea.

The herbal knowledge base which was until recently considered to be privy to a few, is now open for all to experiment with. Many young entrepreneurs have recently forayed into the tea industry and found it convenient to innovate and expand into herbal blends. In addition to the health benefits, the blending of herbs comes handy as a mechanism to suppress the bitter taste of green tea.

Ayurvedic companies find it convenient to push their herbal dosages combined with green teas as people don't have to make any special effort to

consume herbs as this merges well with the existing tea drinking habits of people. It works well for the consumers also as they can choose the appropriate herbal tea for their wellness consideration as well as taste.

There are some issues in mixing green tea and herbs. Green tea should be brewed at 80°C for two minutes, while herbal teas are supposed to be brewed at 99°C for five minutes. The problem is that green tea becomes bitter if it is brewed like herbal tea, i.e., at higher temperatures or for a longer duration. So the blend has to be brewed the way pure green tea is brewed. But, this way the herbs remain underutilised.

One solution is to crush herbs into smaller pieces that would release their extracts faster. In this case, the green tea used would also have to be in dust or fanning form, to ensure homogeneity of the blend. Otherwise, the smaller herbal particles would sink to the bottom of the mixture. The problem with this approach is that green tea in dust or fanning form is inferior to whole leaf tea in terms of taste, aroma and health benefits.

A superior method of brewing herbal green tea is to use whole leaf green tea and herbs of matching size, while reducing the concentration of green tea to less than 50% of the mixture. This way the taste of the blend will be dominated by the taste of the herb. Such a blend should be brewed at a temperature and for a duration between that for green tea and herbal tea, i.e., at 85-90°C for around three to four minutes, for the perfect cup of herbal green tea!

*The author is the owner of Budwhite Teas Pvt Ltd, India, which specialises in premium teas*



# IITC to add value to UPASI Annual Conference

(September 22-24, 2016)

The Annual Conference of the United Planters' Association of Southern India (UPASI), an annual feature every September, will include a mega event this year – the seventh edition of India International Tea Convention (IITC).

Unlike UPASI conferences held usually in the spacious UPASI campus in Coonoor in the Nilgiris district, the IITC will be held in the more spacious Sterling Holidays in Fernhill in the district's headquarter Ooty from Sept 22 to 24, 2016.

The IITC will be the major happening during this year's UPASI Annual meet. The UPASI is conducting the IITC jointly with the Tea Board under the aegis of the Consultative Committee of Plantation Associations (CCPA) in the company of Indian Tea Exporters' Association (ITEA), the South Indian Tea Exporters' Association (SITEA) and the Federation of All India Tea Traders Association (FAITTA).

"The IITC will be attended by a large number of domestic and international delegates representing various segments of the tea industry. The three-day programme will include presentations

by internationally renowned speakers and tea professionals on various topics, exhibitions and cultural events – a unique



N Dharmaraj, President, UPASI

opportunity to showcase the great Indian market", noted UPASI President N Dharmaraj.

The major issue at the IITC will be sustainability in agricultural practices, environment, employee welfare, community livelihood and workplace safety. Presentations by international experts are expected to cover 'Key market – global trends', 'Domestic Market – Indian initiatives', 'sustainability issues - emerging dimensions' and 'New

Frontiers in tea marketing'.

The IITC will host a Tea Tasting Session featuring the teas which competed in the XII edition of The Golden Leaf Indian Awards held this year in Dubai. Delegates will get a chance to taste teas from other regions as well. Besides, there will be an exhibition featuring teas from around the world. This exhibition will highlight the finer nuances of tea production science and technology.

The IITC will be an apt platform to network with industry experts, assess opportunities and experience the world of tea making. Besides, for the Indian tea industry, the IITC will help India to be recognised as the world's largest producer of black tea with an acknowledged supremacy in producing some of the finest quality of Orthodox and CTC teas. While India's status as a leading player in the world tea market is indisputable, the present challenge is to scale newer heights.

P S Sundar



## Assam Tea Planters Association AGM



Raj Barooah, Chairman; Kamakhya Prasad Tasa, Member of Parliament, Chief Guest; Arun Thekedat, incoming Chairman at the 79th AGM of Assam Tea Planters Association held on July 16, 2016.

HAPPENINGS





## 'Tea' in textbooks

The tea lobby in Assam is pressing for inclusion of 'Tea' as a chapter in NCERT school textbooks, citing that the beverage is not only a commodity but a culture in Assam, which has contributed to economic growth and social progress. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has said the matter will be placed before the

Textbook Development Committee.



The plea states that tea is the only beverage in India "which has its roots in India's freedom struggle." "The

first Indian tea planter, Maniram Dewan was an early patriot because he was involved in the rebellion against the British in 1857 and was subsequently hanged by the British. Tea provides direct employment to over one million. The 190-year-old industry has a glorious past which the students should know."

## Sri Lanka mulling import liberalisation to boost blending



Sri Lanka government is considering the possibility of allowing tea imports into the island country in a bid to boost exports and value creation for exporters. Importing tea into Sri Lanka has so long been prohibited to discourage blending of lower quality teas with Ceylon tea and then being sold as pure Ceylon in international markets. At the request of exporters, the government is now taking a fresh look at the issue in a bid to boost the country's exports and encourage value addition.

## Nepal – Shaken not broken

After the destructive earthquake, Nepal's tea industry is more worried about rain than rattling soil. Demand for Nepali Orthodox and green tea is on the rise in India, according to Sheshkanta Gautam, Executive Director of the National Tea and Coffee Development Board. Loose leaf teas account for 21.2% of production. Eighty percent of Nepal's Orthodox teas are exported with 40% of the total destined for India. Nepal has approved a Nepal Tea collective trademark for the Orthodox teas produced there. The



trademark is an assurance of the quality of the product. The use of the trademark guarantees that organic practices have been followed in the production process, production environment, processing and packaging.

John Taylor, Marketing Manager for HIMCOOP (a Himalayan tea cooperative) confirmed the harvest is down due to climatic conditions. "The earthquake had no effect on the tea regions," he said. Damage to infrastructure was largely in the capital and in those cities nearest the epicentre.

## Meghalaya village transforms : Brews tea in place of liquor

Mawlyngot village, located about 45 km from Shillong, which was once notorious for drunken brawls as a result of commonly brewing country liquor in many houses, has now turned into a model village by brewing tea. The women, instead of producing the rice and millet liquor known as "Pyrsi", have switched to brewing the delicate flavours of green, white and Orthodox black tea, branded as "Urlong" which means "Dreams come true" in the local language. The brainchild of former school teacher and village



headman D L Nongspung, the Mawlyngot Tea Grower's Society has 20 farmers who have transformed the village with a cooperative model to produce over 3000 kg of organic green tea leaves annually in 50 hectare of land. With initial funding from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, tea saplings were planted in 2003 and after four years plucking of leaves began. Later on, they found support from World Vision India (WVI) for setting up a tea processing unit. Recently they have even begun exporting green tea to Australia.

# Lets Process QualiTEA Inteligently

## NEX GEN AUTOMATION FOR TEA PROCESSING



**Stesalit Towers**  
Our Corporate Headquarters at Kolkata

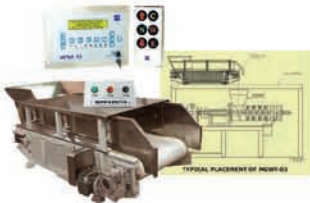
### Stesalit Introduces Uniquely Designed Microcontroller Based Equipment for Quality Enhancement of Tea

**Stesalit Systems Limited** is a SEI CMM Level 3 (Higher International Certification for Technology), ISO 9001-2008 and ISO 2700:2005 certified Group Company.

**Stesalit (Automation Division)**, a pioneer in designing and manufacturing of state of the art of process automation systems/equipment, for over two decades, has developed a large number of Microcontroller based Process Automation Systems/ Equipments for tea Industry, which are being used from Withering to Sorting processes in tea factories, resulting in quality enhancement and higher price realization of 'Made Tea' with substantial saving in energy and manpower for the tea factories.

Over 700 nos of our these equipments are running satisfactorily in various tea factories in India and abroad. Leading tea gardens are using our automation equipments for their tea processing.

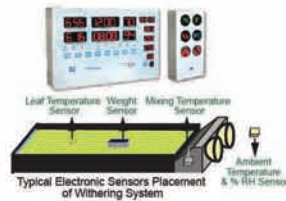
Some of our Microcontroller Based Automation Equipment for tea industry are given below.



Uniform & Controlled Feed to Rotorvane (MGWF-03)



Online Continuous Weigher (SCW)



Intelligent Tea Withering System (TWMAC)



Coal Air Ratio Controller (CARC-04)



Monorail Flow Rate Monitoring System (FRMS)



Quality Enhancement Device for Drier (VARUN)



Humidity Management System (HMS)



Residence Time Indicator RTI for CFM



Microcontroller based Digital Temperature Indicator (MTS)

- Many more Electronic products for tea process Automation are under Development
- Complex customized solutions for various industries

For your requirements please contact:

### Works & Marketing Office

19 Udayan Industrial Estate,  
3 - Pagladanga Road, Kolkata - 700015  
Ph :+91 33 2323 2011,+91 33 6533 0925  
Mobile: +91 9748238701, +91 9830617317  
Email: teadivn@stesalit.in

  
**Stesalit Systems**  
Limited  
(Automation Division)

[www.stesalittea.com](http://www.stesalittea.com)

### Corporate Offices & R&D Center

**Stesalit Towers**  
Block GP, Sector-V  
Kolkata – 700 091

**Park Plaza (N)**  
71 Park Street,  
Kolkata - 700016



# Tidings from **BANGLADESH**



Monjur Hossain

## Study on tea workers of Bangladesh

A study has been conducted recently by a research firm to gather knowledge about the tea workers of Bangladesh, the whole value chain and the industry as a whole.

The sector has about 118000 workers of ethnic minority, 51% of whom are women. Besides, about 800000 people are indirectly dependent on it. It contributes about 3.3% to the national employment and annually pays about Tk 1000 million to the national exchequer as VAT and taxes. In recent years competitiveness of the industry has been increasingly eroded, thereby affecting the livelihoods of the people living on tea directly or indirectly.

There are many government departments directly related and involved with the tea sector such as Bangladesh Tea Board, Directorate of Labour, NBR, Bangladesh Krishi Bank, local administration. The Bangladesh Tea Board is the regulatory authority of the tea industry. Presently BTRI, a wing of the BTB, is rendering technical and advisory services to tea estates and newly-emerged small growers in greater Sylhet, Chittagang and in Panchagarh.

The early tea plantation workers mostly came from the backward class and tribal areas of different regions of the sub-continent. The present work force in the tea plantation sector of Bangladesh is the fourth generation of those early immigrants. The total population in all plantations is 378118 persons of which 117728 persons are employed directly and the balance are temporary workers and their dependents. One earning member has to maintain more than two persons. But the estate to estate scenario is different. In some estates there is acute shortage of workers and they are very reluctant to leave their estates for employment in other estates.

The study reveals that the average size of the tea workers' household is 5.35 persons while the national average household size is 5.20. Among the family members the highest 30% belong to 18 - 45 years age group and lowest three percent are in the age group of 61 years and above. The sex ratio of male and female is 100:90. At the national level also, males outnumber females. It has also been found that 69.63% children are enrolled at primary level (up to class V), 21.23% are in secondary level (VI- X) and only 0.49% are in higher secondary level. More than 30.37% of the children above five years of age never attended school. The respondent households said that they will try to



continue their children's education as far as possible but most of them (68.89%) do not know about the future career of their children, 20% said that their children may be absorbed as tea garden workers in future. Only five percent seek jobs outside the tea estates.

The primary income of the tea garden household is from wage earning of the family members. In addition, they get cash incentives that include festival holiday pay, maternity benefit, annual bonus, extra leaf price, risk allowance and factory allowance. Further, they are also provided with free housing, water supply, subsidised food rations, free medical treatment, free primary education for children and on occasion, agricultural land for cultivation.

Most of the garden workers (approximately 83% of household) have a secondary source of income. The study reveals that 39% tea workers have agricultural land, 60 percent have income from cows or goats, 45% from poultry, and about 25% have income from fruits and vegetables. Incomes also vary according to the category of the garden. Not all produce is for sale, they also consume vegetables, fruits, cattle and poultry products themselves. Selling firewood is also an important source of income. Approximately 83% of households have a major secondary income.

The estate management allot different types of houses to the workers. Among the respondents, 24% have houses with brick wall with CI sheet roof, 29% mud-wall with CI sheet roof, 24% mud wall with straw roof, 20% with bamboo-wall with CI sheet roof and the remaining three percent have bamboo wall with straw roof. Living conditions in these houses

vary from estate to estate and from company to company.

Workers, health and their productivity are correlated and affect the industry's productivity and economy. The main reasons for low productivity among tea workers are most often their poor health and lack of motivation. A large number of the workers (27%) suffer from cough, 34.04% of a garden's population suffer from water borne diseases including dysentery (20.78%) and diarrhoea (13.25%). The tea garden management is responsible for providing essential medical facilities to workers. Physical strength is an essential factor for the productivity of a tea worker so a healthy labour force is necessary for the development of the industry.

About 24.70% of the workers manage to eat rice with vegetable and fish, 16.46% rice with fish, and 16.80% rice with *dal*. An insignificant number (0.61%) managed only *chapati* as dinner. But no worker was found to pass the night without any food. Some eat only *chapati* with plain water or cold tea without sugar. At breakfast, in most cases, they eat *chapati* and black tea without sugar.

A major reason for health problems prevailing in the male community of tea workers is excessive intake

and every tea estate, this union has at least one Panchayat (garden unit of the Cha Sramik Union). The Panchayat is supposed to keep in constant touch with the workers and hold general meetings regularly.

It has been observed that tea plantation workers, particularly the women workers, are not aware of the labour laws, rights and trade union's responsibilities.

Some key recommendations have been made based on the findings of the study by the Government, Bangladesh Tea Association and Cha Sramik Union, which could help any future intervention to improve the livelihoods of the tea workers and development of the value chain. These include:

- The national tea policy needs review and amendment reflecting the vertical growth of the tea sector, labour welfare, labour migration and implementation of existing laws.

- Initiatives to be taken immediately for labour welfare which should include improvement of housing with essential facilities ensuring water and sanitation both in houses and work places, arrangement of proper child education up to secondary level and ensuring required medical facilities.

- BTA and the Cha Sramik Union should be more gender sensitive since majority of the plantation workers are women. Attention is needed for the establishment of adequate creches, reproductive health services and gender issues.

- Estate level executives should be trained in modern tea cultivation/husbandry in order to ensure maximum benefits from inputs and labour.

- Estate executives should have adequate knowledge about labour laws, industrial laws, technology transfer and overall labour and plantation management.

- Awareness level of the workers about labour laws, rights and responsibilities through campaigns, training and discussion meetings to be organised periodically so that they are aware about their responsibilities and rights.

- Awareness levels of all Panchayat members about labour laws, rights, their roles and responsibilities have to be improved through training so that they can participate in constructive negotiation with the management for labour welfare systematically and rationally.

- The process of Panchayat formation should be by election to create able and effective leadership.

- Trade union members need training on labour laws, rights, their roles and responsibilities so that they can take active part in constructive negotiation with the employers' association as a bargaining agent and effectively communicate with other stakeholders.

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



of locally made liquor. Estate management and NGOs may work together in this field to motivate the workforce regarding the bad affects of alcoholism.

Working conditions affect the productivity of workers. Wage rate and incentives, fringe benefits, working hours, leave facilities, social and physical working conditions – all these affect the productivity of tea plantation workers.

The Government of Bangladesh has enacted several legislations particularly for the tea plantation sector to ensure workers' right to safe, secure and hygienic working conditions.

For several decades, the Bangladesh Cha Sramik Union has been the only trade union that has been working among the tea plantation workers. In each







Kalyan Sircar

# The other Planter's wife

Bonded by unhappiness



In my article, *Iris, A Tea Planter's Rebel Wife* (*Contemporary Tea Time*, September-November 2013), I presented a real, rebellious, intelligent and independent person, Iris MacFarlane, who, with her planter husband was in Assam in the 1940s. From a very early stage she resolved that she would come out of the bungalow and the club and explore and learn, help and serve but 'only in my own terms.' The following story is of a fictional planter's wife, Gwendolyn Hooper, who came to Ceylon in the late 1920s to begin her new life as a married woman. Her confined, confused and lonely life could not be more different.

Gwendolyn, a simple Gloucestershire girl, was nineteen when she stepped off a steamship into her new life with her husband

Laurence, who she found 'distant, secretive and brooding.' Laurence spent most of the day hours in his gardens, factory and office. Gwen found that she was given a separate bedroom, her husband slept in another part of the bungalow. Alone all day the young bride explored the house, the front  
g r a v e l

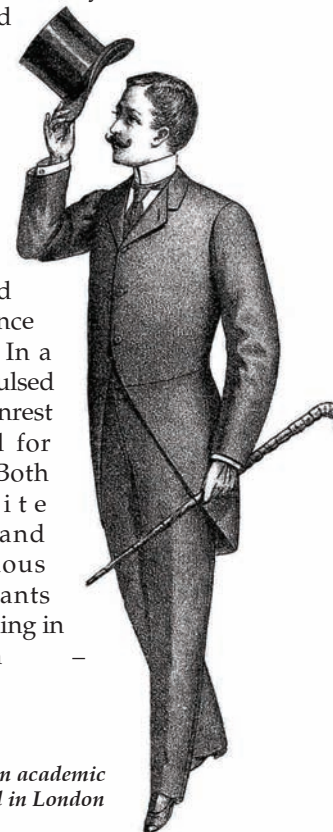
drive lined with tulip trees and interspersed with palms that led away from the house and then twisted upward into hills. Laurence would visit for a quick lunch, a fleeting goodbye kiss ('I'll see you in the evening'), and then he was off. A tearful Gwen would console herself thinking 'Laurence is busy, plantation has to come first, but is he not just a teeny bit distant?'

The coming Golf Club Annual Ball provided a break from the monotony of the house, the garden, and the hoards of Tamil speaking servants. For the occasion Gwen wore her new flapper dress in pink and silk and danced with Fran, her friend from home. By eleven the party was in full swing. Yet things were not going quite well with Laurence over enthusiastically entertaining Christina, a young American widow. A sad Gwen drank several glasses of champagne straight off. The rest of the night was extremely hazy and lost in memory. She had difficulty finding her room upstairs. Did someone (Savi Ravasinghe, a handsome Ceylonese gentleman who was in the party and whom she had met before. He had helped her find her luggage when she alighted from the ship) take her to her room, the bed, and (did he?) gently stroke her temple, her face? Gwen could not remember.

After that steamy night, normality and the monotony returned but with a difference. It had been over a week now, and every night Laurence had stayed with her. Soon Gwen was pregnant with twins and her husband was overjoyed. But in the delivery room she was faced with a terrible choice – one she must hide from Laurence at all cost. In time the twins were

born, a white boy and a dark weak girl, with dark eyes and shining skin.

Dear reader, I'm not going to spoil the story for you. You have to get a copy of *The Tea Planter's Wife* by Diana Jefferies, a Richard and Judy Book Club Choice. However, I would say that Diana Jefferies' story is a vivid and poignant portrayal of an enclaved tea garden in a colonised country. Here lived a generally well off white people with their poor workers. They were unhappy with family intrigue and disputes, suspicion and betrayal. Their workers had their problems – over-worked and low w a g e d . There was trouble in the gardens, protest and strikes, violence and murder. In a country convulsed by political unrest and demand for autonomy. Both the white employers and the indigenous and immigrants shared one thing in c o m m o n – unhappiness.



The writer is an academic based in London

INTERNATIONAL

# Thus Far and No Further

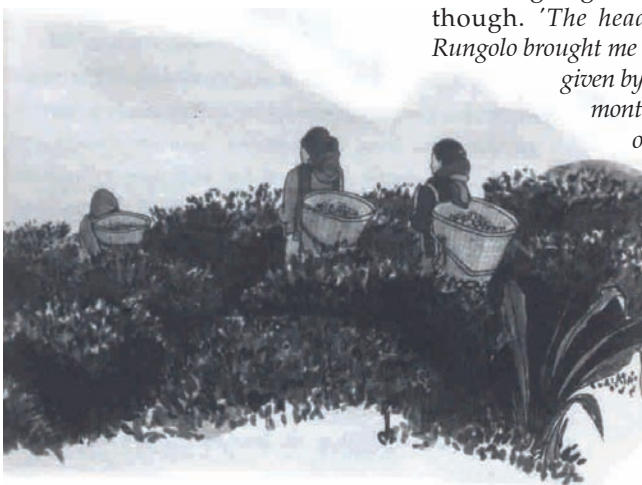
## Living a dream at Rungli-Rungliot

Author Ruskin Bond writes in the foreword of the book *'Rumer Godden's charming, evocative journal of a year spent in another little corner of India, the tea gardens on the Himalayan slopes below Darjeeling.... took me back to my own Himalayan slopes - above Dehradun - and gave me a feeling of hope and reassurance....'*

For those uninitiated to tea growing areas in India or those like us who have visited a garden or two as tourists, Rumer Godden in this book, makes the reader realise that fairytales can be real, when one is in a tea garden like Rungli-Rungliot – meaning 'thus far and no further' in the local Paharia language.

When Godden, accompanied by her two young daughters, decided to stay and work at Chinglam, the out bungalow of Rungalo Tea Estate, seven miles below Rungli-Rungliot, she was already aware of the fable about how the latter got its name. In spite of its near inaccessibility, the unbelievably beautiful surroundings and utter remoteness, *'Rungli-Rungliot is a real place on the spur of the Himalayas, facing south above the plains and the gorge of the little Runglee river that they say was left behind by accident when the Teesta water fell.'*

As the author comes to terms

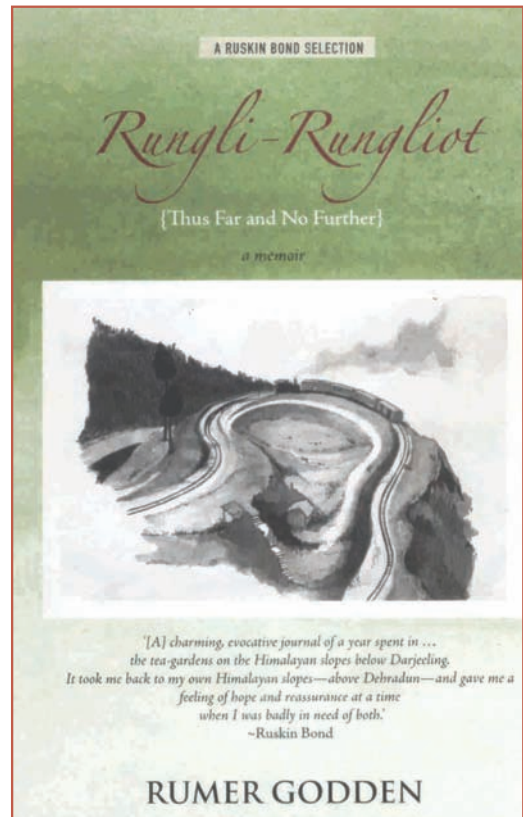


with the loneliness of the place – which she slowly comes to love – she begins to settle down to the life and the perks of a tea bungalow and paints a charming picture of her staff – the ayah, the cook, the boy who waited at the table, the garden boy, the watchman, the woodcutter, water-carrier, washerman and breadrunner. She gets to know her daughters anew as they blossom along with the exotic flowers in the author's garden, day by day.

The changing seasons with matching flora and fauna, the behaviour, customs and festivals of the tea labourers, the difficulty of communicating with the outer world, the undercurrent of melancholy and the simplicity in life itself envelops the reader progressively with every chapter.

Those with academic interest will get a firsthand account of the hierarchy in tea gardens and the way of life of a tea *memsahib* – not the club going or socialising type though. *'The head Munshi from Rungolo brought me today the free tea given by the factory every month to all the people on the garden. ....*

*There are twenty-two pounds of tea for our house divided into eleven parts. Yes, it is true; I have eleven servants and I cannot help it.'*



### Rungli - Rungliot {Thus Far and No Further} a memoir

by Rumer Godden

Interspersed with the extreme solitude, which strips the material world away and lets the spirit soar, are touching vignettes of the author's young daughters picnicking 'in the tea', the simple tea folks bringing eggs and fresh farm produce as gifts for the *memsahib*, an almost aborted Christmas ending up in the true spirit of sharing, and many more.

At the end of the book, among the list of things that Godden loved at Chinglam is 'Everything to do with tea.' As the book comes to an end, the reader has almost lived a dream too.

Review: Mrittika Bose





# Rainforest Alliance Certified TEA

Tea producing countries where the Rainforest Alliance works

Supporting farmers, protecting environment

**S**ikobihora Marie Françoise is one of hundreds of thousands of smallholder tea farmers around the world who have learned to produce a greener cup of tea using responsible farming methods promoted by the Rainforest Alliance. Smallholders like Marie Françoise provide the bulk of this ubiquitous commodity – the second-most consumed beverage in the world after water – but challenges like soil erosion and widespread reliance on dangerous pesticides make tea farming a difficult way of life. In addition, many tea-growing regions are undergoing changes in weather patterns caused by climate change, stressing tea bushes and increasing the likelihood of reduced yields and incomes.

Rainforest Alliance Certified farms use methods that protect the health of farmers, their livelihoods, their land and the surrounding waterways. Through their training and certification programmes, they are promoting farming techniques designed to protect the land for future generations.

Over 700,000 tea farmers around the world are safeguarding the health of 2.7 million acre (more

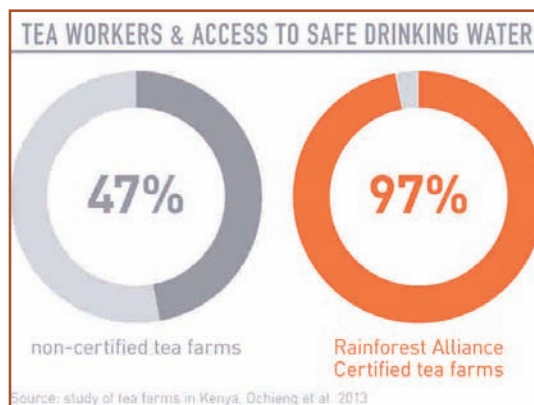


than 1.09 million hectare) of land through Rainforest Alliance training and certification.

## Supporting Farmers

The Rainforest Alliance promotes sustainable farming methods that lead to increased profits and better working

conditions. In order to earn the Rainforest Alliance Certified™ seal, tea farms must undergo annual audits against a rigorous standard with detailed environmental, economic, and social criteria that work together to promote the holistic vision of sustainability.



## Protecting Land and Waterways

When they were first established decades ago, tea farms replaced tropical forests with a monoculture crop, thereby destroying rich native biodiversity. In addition,

## A SUCCESS STORY

Simon and Esther Langat of Nyanza Province, Kenya, are a husband-and-wife smallholder team who produce for the Momul Tea Factory, which was the first smallholder tea factory to achieve Rainforest Alliance Certification in 2009. Here, Simon shares their story.



“I have a two-acre farm, which I have had for 28 years. We plant vegetables and raise cows, but tea is our main source of income; it allows us to pay school fees and to provide employment to three workers who pluck our tea. I teach at the local school but my wife is fully engaged at the farm. During the holidays, our children, who are in college, come home to help.

Rainforest Alliance Certification is good because it emphasizes environmental conservation, water harvesting, worker welfare and proper disposal of waste. We used to have longer plucking intervals but the Rainforest Alliance taught us to use a seven to eight day plucking interval and because of that my yield has doubled. We also learned how to conserve water – in fact, I bought a water tank for harvesting rain water and I built a bio-gas unit to create renewable energy for cooking. Around my farm I have also planted indigenous trees. I have bought personal protective equipment for my pluckers and they are happier. Finally, the Rainforest Alliance trainings taught me to keep records: now I always record my daily yields and that encourages me to improve.

My neighbours have learned from us and are now using some of these practices too. I hope to be a role model for environmental conservation.”



runoff from pesticides, untreated wastewater and soil erosion taxed the land on which tea is grown. On Rainforest Alliance Certified farms, dangerous and banned pesticides are phased out and alternatives (such as manual weeding) are promoted; farmers plant vegetative barriers to capture agrochemical run-off and plant grasses on steep banks to prevent erosion; wastewater is treated. The Sustainable Agriculture Network standards provide farmers with these and other concrete tools to reverse environmental degradation and restore the health of the soil.

### Improving Incomes

Although the demand for tea is enormous, low yields, high input costs and gaps in production make it a struggle for smallholder tea



farmers to earn decent incomes. The methods farmers learn through Rainforest Alliance training programmes – such as improved plucking and pruning techniques, “in-filling” (planting densely) and soil rejuvenation across the whole farm – improve yields and tea quality. By implementing these best practices, tea farmers can look to a brighter future, with better livelihoods.





# Of Wine, Tea and Beautiful Things



That enchanted Amit Kumar Bose during his visit to South Africa's Western Cape

**H**igh above the escarpment of Table Mountain, the eagle wheeled on its wings, circling higher and higher. Until it spotted its prey.

In a flash it plummeted. And went out of the sights of my zoom lens. I lowered my camera to take in the eagle's view from my perch in Devil's Cave.

Azure blue sky with little specks of powder-puff clouds above a long, flat, precipitous, cliff-like ridge of land and rock. And below, emerald-green waters glistening in the noon sun, cradled by the semi-circular sweep of Cape Town harbour.

I was in seventh heaven. More precisely, I was in South Africa's Western Cape.

July is the heart of winter in these parts. Nights of shivering chill, damp drizzles and gusty winds outside. The indoors feel all the more inviting with their warm, welcoming fireplaces and sparkling array of some of the world's most acclaimed reds and whites.

Stellenbosch is Afrikaner heartland. And, South Africa's best wine-growing region.

Days in winter can be very bright and sunny. As you cruise

along the crisscrossing network of immaculately metalled roads and highways, what greet your senses are the endless rolling greens to the fore, and gently sloping rows of mountains and hills, in various hues of blue, in the distance.

Closer to the eye, between the numerous vineyards spread across hundreds of acres, are many more untended and uncultivated acres that look even more beautiful because of their singularly unique and colourful indigenous foliage.

South African 'fynbos'. It makes up the tiniest floral kingdom in the world. Restricted to the Cape region, in the country's southernmost reaches, many fynbos species occur only on a few hectares and nowhere else in the world.

Among the more than 9000 fynbos species, is South Africa's national flower, the 'Protea'.

But most important, there is a member of the fynbos family from which South Africa's most famous drink – not a wine – is made.

A 'tea' that isn't made from a tea leaf. Rooibos tea.

Grown only in a small area in the region of the Western Cape province of South Africa, my first experience of Rooibos tea was on a windy, overcast afternoon in a cosy little cafe situated at the entrance to the vast Jonkershoek Nature Reserve.

With a footfall of only three or four pairs a day in winter, the young South African woman at the counter – who alone performed the role of chef, waitress, cashier and cleaner – was overjoyed to see us.

Within a few minutes she had organised a delicious lasagne and a steaming hot Rooibos cup for me and a 'red cappuccino', which is a fusion of coffee and Rooibos, for my daughter!

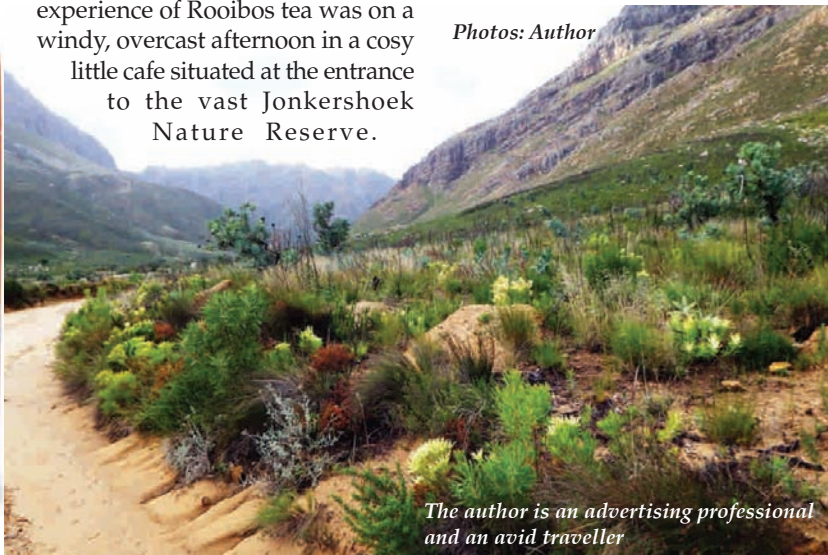
The young Coloured woman looked searchingly at our faces until we took our first sips. As we grinned in appreciation, her robust-complexioned face broke into a delighted smile.

It seemed to reflect the celebration that was to come in a few days. The birthday of Nelson Mandela, fondly called "Madiba" by his people, on July 18.

#BeMoreMadiba was the outstanding clarion call of this nationwide celebration.

For us, amidst the grandeur of South African nature, the warmth of South African hospitality and the exhilaration of a South African 'tea', this was a true "Madiba moment" – when you experience more than what you ever expected.

Photos: Author



The author is an advertising professional and an avid traveller





**HELIX**  
Auto Milling Machine



**VIKRAM**  
vision in action

Vikram's Helix Automatic Milling Machine is suitable to do milling operation of 50, 55, 60, 65, 80 and 100 helical grooves of 8" to 13" diameter rollers of 24" to 52" length. Helix milling machine is a simple machine which can be easily operated by semi-skilled labour to the accuracy of Automatic System.

Vikram's Tornado Chasing Machine is fully automated and suitable for 8" to 13" diameter and 24" to 52" long rollers. Tornado can be operated even by semi-skilled labour to the finest accuracy of chasing operation.



**TORNADO**  
Auto Chasing Machine



**BLIZZARD**  
CNC Milling Cum Grooving

- ❖ A machine to perform all the operation with high accuracy, high productivity and with minimum skill.
- ❖ Sharpening of circumferential as well as helical grooves of any specification, length and diameter of roller with quality finish and accuracy by the application of CNC controller.
- ❖ Dual mode application facility i.e. provision of both automatic and manual operation system for roller sharpening.

## VIKRAM INDIA LIMITED

### HEAD OFFICE

Tobacco House, 1, Old Court House Corner  
Kolkata - 700001, India  
**Telephone:** +91 33 22307629  
**Fax:** +91 33 22484881, **Mobile:** 98308 11145  
**Email:** kolkata@vikram.in, sales@vikram.in

### FACTORY ADDRESS

**Vill:** Jala Dhulagori, **P.O.:** Dhulagori  
**P.S.:** Sankrail,  
Howrah - 711302, India  
**Phone:** 9830811833

### OFFICES IN INDIA

Tinsukia, Siliguri, Coonoor

### LIASON OFFICES ABROAD

Dhaka, Colombo, Nairobi

[www.vikramindia.in](http://www.vikramindia.in)



# Complete Solution for Agricultural Fields



JAPAN

Original Creativity



Brush Cutter  
**VRS400**



Tea Pruner  
**JT 430(W) TB43**



Earth Auger  
**AG500**



TAIWAN

Your Best Choice



Tea Pruner  
**TPC280**



Brush Cutter  
**KT350**

Earth Auger  
**AUG500**

www.zenithforgings.com



Sole Distributor :

**ZENITH FORGINGS PVT. LTD.**

13, Brabourne Road. Kolkata 700 001. (INDIA)

☎ : (+ 91 33) 2242 8083 , 98307 61166, Fax : (+ 91 33) 2242 6556

✉ : zenith@cal.vsnl.net.in / pk@zenithforgings.com

Sales & Services : Coimbatore, Jorhat, Tinsukia, Tezpur, Siliguri

**COMPLETE SOLUTIONS FOR TEA PLANTATIONS**

Harvesting Machine (1Man / 2Men) • Tea plant Pruner • Brushcutters • Hedge Trimmers • Auger