

CONTEMPORARY

TEA TIME

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TEA JOURNAL WITH THE LARGEST READERSHIP 31st YEAR OF PUBLICATION

New Order

ITA elects first Woman Chairperson in its 141 years History

Also Inside

Nayantara Tells us about the challenges facing the tea industry and what the future holds

ITA response to questions from tea time

History

Travel

Health

Nostalgia

Marketing

Industry

Tiding from bangladesh

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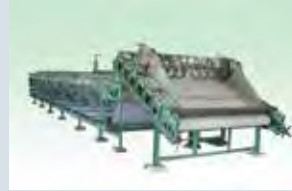
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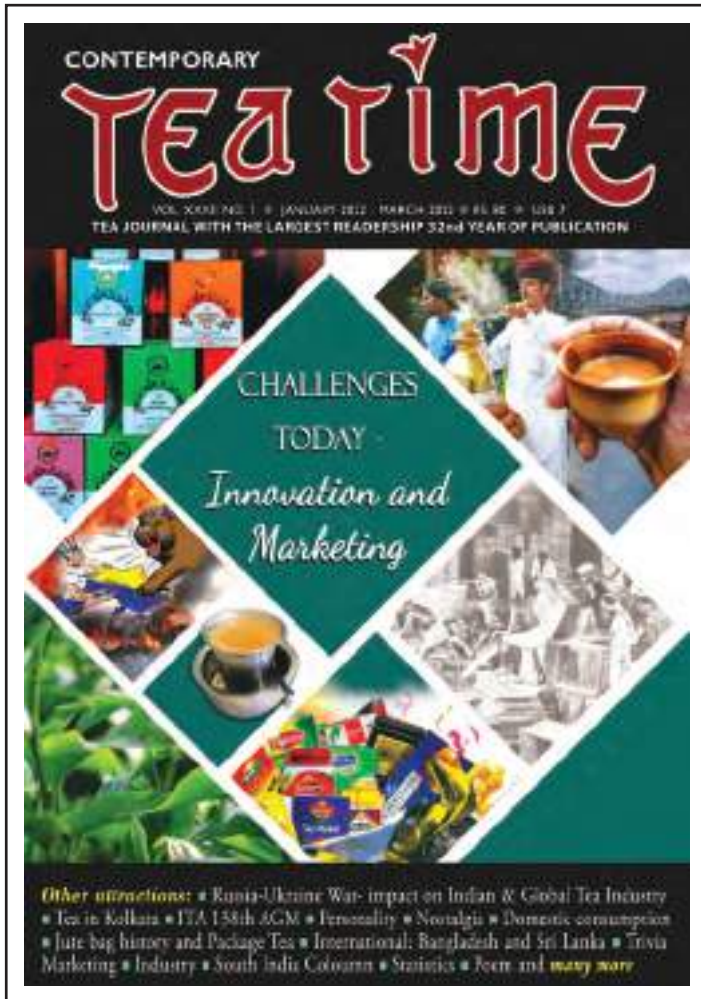
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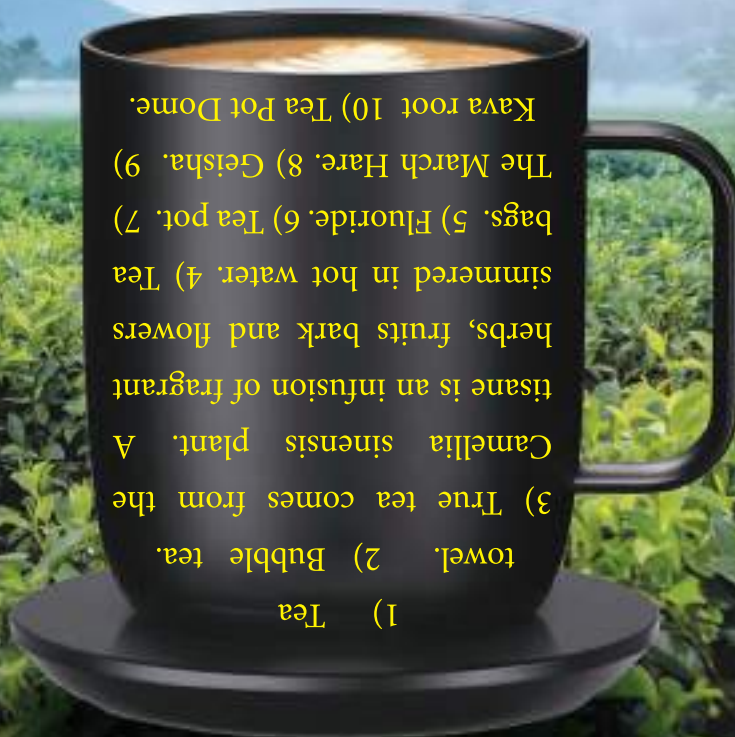
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Errol O'Brien

TEA TIME QUIZ!

- 1) What do you call cloth used to dry dishes? Here's a hint: It's combines the names of tea-linen and cloth dating back to England in the 18th century when it was used to insulate tea pots during formal ceremonies.
- 2) This tea-based drink was concocted in Taiwan in the early 1980s. It most commonly consisted of tea accompanied by chewy tapioca balls.
- 3) What are the characteristics that distinguish true teas from tisanes?
- 4) To drink tea one must first brew the dry leaves — what invention in the early 20th century revolutionised the brewing of tea?
- 5) Which chemical in tea is good for teeth and protects against plaque?
- 6) Who or what is Mrs Potts in the Disney movie 'Beauty and the Beast'?
- 7) Which character hosts a garden tea party in the Lewis Carroll book 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland'?
- 8) What is a Japanese tea ceremony hostess called?
- 9) Which root is used to brew a calming herbal tea?
- 10) Which two words entered the American political vocabulary as a synonym for government corruption?



1) Tea
 2) Bubble tea.
 3) True tea comes from the Camellia sinensis plant. A tisane is an infusion of fragrant herbs, fruits bark and flowers simmered in hot water. 4) Tea bags. 5) Fluoride. 6) Tea pot. 7) The March Hare. 8) Geisha. 9) Kava root 10) Tea Pot Dome.



Conscious costs and climate adaptation

Climate continues to play havoc globally and specifically in the tea growing areas in North India, which is suffering from the onslaught of pests and vermin apart from periods of excessive unevenly distributed rainfall and hot sunshine. In the Terai region irrigation was used during the monsoon month of August!

As far as crops are concerned, as we go to into print August has been a better month, but the season is likely to close early as the Deepawali is at the end of October with holidays galore during that month. Nineteen days are working days in all.

The market for CTC teas has been following a steady trend, with periodic corrections for quality, while that for the Orthodox variety, it has exhibited a healthy upward rise due to paucity of availability internationally.

Now within India, branding and packeting is on the increase and there is a greater demand for higher end teas. The Rs 240+ segment has shown a growth from 25% to 35%, with maximum growth in the Rs 300 plus category of 10%.

While packets are present in each market, the price barriers of entry is high, excluding in some niche quality consuming geographies but here the consumption is smaller in comparison. In the next issue we will be discussing the changing trends in the domestic tea market.

With escalating input costs, including, labor wages, the industry has little option but to increase exports and induce greater domestic consumption in terms of cups per capita consumptions. The rural hinterland is where tea must be promoted as the healthiest and most refreshing drink. The stigma of it being called the 'cheapest' beverage has downgraded its position in consumer minds.

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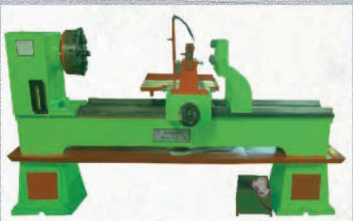
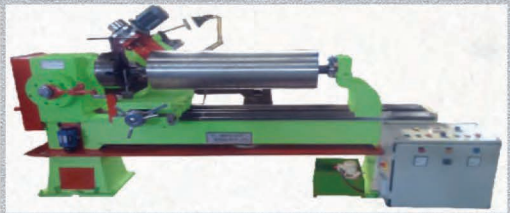
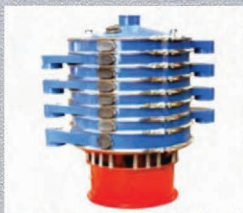
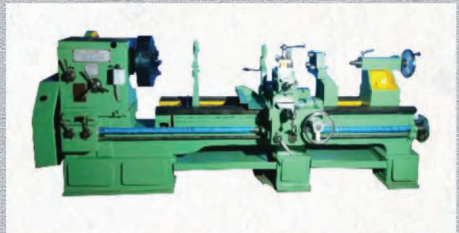
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Ms. Nayantara Palchoudhuri

Chairperson of the Indian Tea Association

Ms. Nayantara Palchoudhuri,
Mr. Arijit Raha &
Mr. Hans Jacob Frydenlund,
Ambassador of Norway with his wife

After returning from the London School of Economics, UK, as a Research Scholar, Nayantara engaged herself in the family tea business under the watchful eyes of her late father Amitava Palchoudhuri (Toby).

A 4th generation tea planter, having a lot of firsts to her credit, Nayantara took over as the Chairperson of the Indian Tea Association which was established in 1881. With wide experience in leading Chamber of Commerce and other Industry bodies, and being on the Board of several prestigious companies across sectors, representing a foreign mission (Norway) in eastern India, heading an International NGO, Nayantara is excited about her new assignment as she has grown up in the World of tea. A part from engaging in with the State Government and Ministry of Commerce, lobby for

issues which are important for all stake holders in the trade, Nayantara is very keen to strengthen the sustainability cell at the association which is mainly focused on social and health issues related to women and environment issues, and promote responsible business practices. Promoting Indian teas in the domestic markets, promoting the consumption of teas amongst the youth, especially as a health drink, tapping into new International markets for the wide variety of Indian Teas is high on her list of priorities. Research in the application of technology and artificial intelligence, offers immense promise for the Industry, as she believes that sustainable future depends on modern applications. To implement innovative ideas and to develop a road map for the future, she has taken steps to interest and engage the GEN-NEXT to take the Industry forward.

TEA TIME

Q1) What are challenges that the Indian Tea Industry faces today and what are the possible solutions to these?

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

- Production costs have increased exorbitantly while tea prices continue to remain unremunerative. This is largely attributed to the oversupply situation in the market arising from the surge in tea production over the last few years.
- Exports as a percentage of the total production has declined over the years.

This reinforces the need for boosting exports and domestic consumption in the short and medium



ITA Response to questions from Tea Time

term to maintain the demand-supply equilibrium. The cost disadvantage faced by Indian exporters vis-à-vis other competitors like Kenya and Sri Lanka tends to affect its competitiveness. The industry is however optimistic of reviving exports in the current fiscal.

- The emergence of the Small Tea Growers (STGs) and standalone Bought Leaf Factories (BLFs) have created a dual economic structure with wide variance in the cost of production between the STG/BLF Sector and the RTG Sector primarily on account of labour employment costs - which for the RTG sector is very high on account of statutory obligations under the Plantations Labour Act, 1951
- The tea plantation sector is facing the double bind of a growing estate population that they are responsible for, while at the same time experiencing labour shortages due to the working age population choosing to work outside the estate or migrate to urban areas. The Tea Industry faces labour absenteeism at a rate close to 30% due to migration of workers especially the young adults to other sectors for higher aspirations. This becomes even more critical during the peak season as it adversely impacts productivity. The Industry in North India covering Assam and West Bengal is seasonal in nature with effective operations being for nine months in a year. Though the revenue earned is for nine months, the wages of permanent labour is paid for the whole year covering the lean period when only a few hours of work during the day is possible. The productivity issues need to be addressed for the industry to remain viable in the long run.
- Stagnant land productivity and declining



yields is another challenge being faced by growers. The average bush age for a large number of estates is more than 50 years. Replanting can be sustained only where tea estates generate reasonable profit. In view of plateaued prices, this has become a challenge. The production of the organized sector has in fact declined in the last 5 years for which low land and labour productivity are the key reasons. The discontinuation of subsidy for big growers for undertaking replantation and rejuvenation activities under the Tea Board Plan Period for 2021-26 will further impede the producer's capacity to undertake such developmental activities.

- Climate change is already happening: temperatures are rising, drought and wildfires are more frequent, rainfall patterns have shifted. Although climate change affects each region differently, it influences tea yields across the board by altering precipitation levels, increasing temperatures, shifting the timing of seasons and encouraging insect pests.



production. Restoration of the orthodox incentive scheme merits consideration by the Government.

- Branding of Indian Tea – Indian Tea has three distinct Geographical Indications (GIs) namely Darjeeling, Assam Orthodox, Nilgiri Orthodox. Each tea growing region is represented by a Logo registered with the Tea Board. 'India Tea' too has a logo that must be used and promoted across mediums.
- Boosting Domestic Consumption - Per Capita tea consumption in India at 850 gms per year is low when compared to some other tea consuming countries. There is

a need to re-set up a dedicated fund for undertaking vigorous generic promotion campaigns in the domestic market to boost consumption. Post Covid, there has been a surge in online sale of tea. This being a very effective medium of sale, some of the tea companies are presently using online platforms for the sale of their produce.

d. Climate Change Adaptation -

Strategies like rain water harvesting, efficient use of inputs, adoption of proper agro-techniques for management of drought like situation including crop diversification, crop improvement (stress tolerant varieties), integrated farming methods, development of high quality organic manure for maximizing carbon sequestration potential of tea ecosystem and its impact on production and tea quality, alternate methods of grass rehabilitation to eliminate the waiting period and improving soil health etc, can be worked out and popularized among the tea planters

- Climate Smart Agriculture - Climate-smart agriculture is an approach which helps to

Q2) How can the industry help themselves?

Looking towards ensuring its long term sustainability. Some of the required key interventions are:

- Boosting Exports– Boost-ing Tea Exports is the key to addressing the oversupply situation. India's current product mix where 85% of the production comprises CTC teas needs correction with shift to Orthodox teas which enjoy a wider global market share too. Adequate financial support from the Government is a necessity to boost orthodox

TEA TIME

guide the transformation and reorientation of agricultural systems to effectively support development and ensure food security in a changing climate. It aims to tackle three main objectives: a sustainable increase in agricultural productivity and incomes, adaptation and the building of resilience to climate change and the seeking of opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon sequestration.

- f. Carbon Credit - With a growing carbon credit market, the tea industry has a high potential to trade in carbon credit and create an alternative, reliable source of revenue.. When compared to other businesses, the tea industry has an advantage in terms of carbon status. Our carbon sequestration outweighs our emissions by a large margin.
- g. Mechanization - The imperatives of mechanization arise out of shortage of worker availability. Mechanization may become a necessity to ensure continuity of operations of the tea estates which alone can provide socio-economic security. Mechanization, however, has its own disadvantages in terms of a trade-off between yield and quality. In the short / medium term fine manual plucking cannot be readily replaced but improved cross learnings on mechanization across tea producing countries and reactions from the market will guide the mechanization move. In tea plantations in India, mechanization is certainly being primarily driven to address constraints of worker availability. We need to understand the bush physiology in its ability to take repeated rounds of mechanized plucking without adverse effects to its productivity and life especially in North India.
- h. Tea Tourism and Allied Economic Activities -It has tremendous scope for expansion in tea garden areas. Showcasing diverse cultures and heritage of the industry attracts audiences from all over the world. Tea Tourism has tremendous potential to enhance footfall of tourists in the different tea growing regions.

Q3) What is your vision for the Indian Tea Industry and what strategies are your team

working on to take the industry forward?

The unique nature of the Indian Tea Industry's operations encompassing responsibility for a large resident population with growing aspirations, maintaining flora & fauna and biodiversity, dependence on climatic vagaries and coping with the pressures of a competitive economic environment cohesively define the sustainability paradigm of the industry. In creating the roadmap, it is therefore necessary to harmonise these critical factors for the way ahead. The ITA has a vision to strengthen the sustainability footprints of the industry which would ensure a healthy and motivated workforce, adherence to environmental and food safety standards and ensuring remunerative returns for tea producers.

We have a Vision to boost exports further and make our teas more competitive globally. The industry is targeting an export volume of 350 million kg with corresponding increase in export price realization by 2025 It is a known fact that cost of exports is very high in India – high transportation cost, high terminal handling charges, high ocean freight etc. make Indian tea uncompetitive in the international market. To boost exports by entering new markets, the incentivization needs to be adequate to enable exporters to remain competitive. The present RODTEP rates for Tea needs an enhancement to cover the taxes incurred on production of export bound teas.

The ITA has been acknowledged as an active participant in CSR activities in tea growing regions in Assam and Bengal since long. The ITA continues its CSR work through partnerships with international NGOs such as UNICEF, ILO etc. Presently, the ITA Sustainability Cell works closely with UNICEF on tea community empowerment issues through various programs on Mother and Child Health, Child Rights, Nutrition for women, Menstrual hygiene, Improved Sanitation and pure drinking water. The ITA fully endorses the Sustainable Development Goals of the Nation and is already working towards fulfillment of the goals. The ITA has a vision to have a happy, motivated and



productive workforce which would be one of the prime Pillars for the sustainability of the Industry. The ITA is hopeful that a happy and motivated workforce would go a long way in addressing the migration problem in the future.

The ITA's TRINITEA program in partnership with Solidaridad has further strengthened the small holder initiative in West Bengal and Assam. Our objective has been the integration and assimilation of the Small Holders segment with the main stream of Tea Trade & Commerce and to ensure that the sustainability of the value chain from the small grower to the producer is being comprehensively mapped keeping in mind the importance of not only the quality of the end produce but also a continued wider acceptance of Indian Tea in the global and domestic markets. Trinitea, besides ensuring knowledge sharing and sustainable growth of both the Small and Big Growers, also aims at developing the small tea growers to be a safe and quality source of supply to the purchasing factories and ensuring that ethical compliances which are so important in present day context are progressively followed.

Increasing Tea Consumption holds the key to ensuring a sustainable future for the tea industry. Global tea consumption and production are projected to keep rising over the next decade, driven by robust demand in developing and emerging countries. A FAO Report suggests that tea consumption has also benefited from increased awareness about the beverage's anti-inflammatory, antioxidant and weight loss effects. Such health and wellbeing benefits are seen as the key drivers of future consumption growth. Global demand for tea is also benefiting from a new clientele. Young urban consumers in large producing countries like China and India have emerged as the fastest growing segment, eager to pay a premium for specialty teas. The following interventions would be useful :

- Greater efforts should be directed for expanding demand while production should be increased in a sustainable manner. Innovation and product diversification are crucial for ensuring the long term sustainability of the tea sector.

- Diversification into other segments of the market such as organic and specialty teas should be encouraged and the health benefits of tea needs to be used more extensively in promoting consumption in both producing and importing countries.
- Health benefits of tea are a major driver of consumption. Research efforts towards empirically supported evidence for health implications of tea consumption need to be strengthened further.
- Markets are building on product innovations and diversification into new segments of consumers. Today, the bulk of the tea consumed in the USA is iced tea with a share of 75% of the total consumption.
- Greater cohesion required between producing and consuming countries to harmonize trade (MRLs) and also reduce costs of compliance.

Generic promotion is an important element of these efforts. The basic thrust of generic tea promotion is to expand the overall market demand and foster tea loyalties, while countering competition from other beverages. The ITA has in the past initiated generic promotion campaigns in the domestic market in B2B, B2C and B2Y formats eliciting encouraging responses all over. The ITA is also proactive in social media in promoting Tea as a health beverage.

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The Indian Tea Association (ITA) completed 125 years of existence this year and marked its 125th AGM at the Crystal Room of Taj Bengal, on July 26, 2008, signing off with the release of a commemorative volume on the Association's chequered history and finally hosting a grand dinner party in the true spirit of the golden days of the industry. Tarun Gogoi, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam, Basudeb Banerjee, Chairman, Tea Board of India, shared the dais with Aditya Khaitan, Chairman, ITA. The Crystal Room was packed to capacity during the AGM's public proceedings and luminaries of the industry shared both happiness and concern over the current ups and downs of tea. As toasts were raised and good cheer spread, nostalgia overtook industrial and trade relations to lend a harmonious finishing touch to the event.

Contemporary Tea Time delves into the history of ITA and reports the AGM celebrations

SLICE OF HISTORY : ITA's helping hand in the refugee evacuation from Burma in 1942





SNIPPETS FROM THE 125TH AGM OF ITA AT TAJ BENGAL, KOLKATA
 (Clockwise from top left) Tarun Gogoi, Chief Minister of Assam inaugurating the AGM. Also present are Aditya Khastri, Chairman, ITA and C S Sarki, Chairman, TRA; Tarun Gogoi flanked by Basudeb Sonnerjee, Chairman, Tea Board of India and Aditya Khastri; view of the tea fraternity present at the ITA AGM; Tarun Gogoi releasing the commemorative volume published on the occasion



The Indian Tea Association (ITA) came into existence almost casually, when a number of tea producers in India voluntarily got together to promote the export of Indian tea to Australia. One of the most important issues that prompted the formation of a single association of Indian tea producers was to introduce a semblance of order and uniformity in recruitment of labour, their wages and amenities.

As one commemorates 125 years of ITA, one feels the necessity to take a long look back, delve into the organisation's halcyon days with an almost antiquarian interest and bring to the fore some beautiful anecdotal gems and artefacts culled from the organisation's gallery of historically significant moments and events.

During the centenary celebrations of the Indian Tea Association in 1981, the venerable Sir Percival Griffiths spoke at length as guest speaker at the International Seminar on Tea, about the birth pangs of the Indian tea industry.

"I don't think one realises today the tremendous difficulties faced by the pioneers in the tea industry. When I was first connected with the Indian Tea

Association, we used to grumble very much indeed because the roads, especially in the Doones, were so bad. But when these chaps started, there weren't any roads. If they wanted to get to a possible plantation they had to begin by chopping the roads...The Assam Company...began the business of commercial cultivation of tea. It was an astonishing adventure when you think of it."

Sir Percival Griffiths' reminiscences on the Indian tea industry's pioneering efforts clearly illustrate why a "casual voluntary" organisation like the ITA "with no codes of conduct other than good behaviour, no sanctions other than self discipline", subsequently became the principal advisory and supervisory body in the Indian tea industry.

It took a little more than forty years for pioneering tea planters in India to have an apex body of sorts. However, it was aimed not only to harbour growing entrepreneurial interests and lend support and vision to a nascent but promising industry but also to harness all possible resources in favour of this trade and curb illegal and unwanted trends and elements that accompany profitable trade possibilities.



From the very beginning, ITA has been the premier coordinating body of the Indian tea industry. The initiative for forming an association was taken by A Wilson, of Jardine Skinner and Company and D Cruickshank of Begg, Dunlop and Company. After replies to a circulation on the subject were received, a meeting of the interested groups was held on May 18, 1881, with A B Inglis of Begg, Dunlop and Company, in the Chair. The Indian Tea Association was formally constituted at this meeting and a committee appointed to draw up the objectives and a constitution. One of the members coincidentally had the name Playfair (of Shaw, Finlayson and Company).

ITA has played a multi-dimensional role when it has formulated policies and initiated action to help the development and growth of the Indian tea industry. Now with its headquarters in Kolkata, branches in Guwahati and Cachar in Assam, and in Dooars and Terai in West Bengal, ITA is fully geared to provide service to all its members at all levels. The organisation is the biggest combination of tea producers in the world but it remains a voluntary body.

Geoffrey W Tyson in his book *Forgotten Frontier* says, the Indian Tea Association is an old, established Association of producers familiarly and in many quarters in Assam affectionately known as the ITA. The tea garden members of this Association during Tyson's times, produced 90 percent of Assam's tea, which was equivalent to nearly 60 percent of India's total crop. On these tea estates more than 100 square miles were under tea. An industry of this size developed a strong and alert Association to deal, amongst other things, with the allied problems of recruiting a diversified labour force and promoting its health and contentment.

this prosperity must be credited mainly to the access to the tea industry. After all this, we have hardly a decent road in the district fit for cart or carriage traffic and as regards trans-district communication, there may be said to be none at all, certainly none that admits of wheeled vehicled traffic. A native boat can get up the river, and it is only a few days ago that I met two gentlemen from Calcutta who had travelled up from Fenchooogunge by native boat. They said the journey up was the most uncomfortable and disgusting they had experienced in any part of the world.

The problem of delay in transit and delivery of tea by the inland steamer companies, time and again



Kompoor T.E. Bungalow around the 1880s

brought up by the Calcutta Agents of the gardens in Assam, Cachar and Sylhet to the agents of the steamer companies were regularly brought up at the AGMs of the ITA.

Great complaints reached the General Committee about the unsatisfactory manner in which the interests of the tea industry were being served by the fleets of the River Steamer Companies. Planters in all parts of the tea districts were being inconvenienced by the detention of their produce at the loading stations. Teas would have to wait for weeks because no steamer had called during that time. This point was raised repeatedly at the AGMs and the possibility of taking legal steps was also discussed. Subsequently the steamer services improved.

Such problems and disputes frequently came up at the General Committee meetings and resulted in several remedies, like: ■ Saving of journey time between Fenchooogunge and Calcutta ■ Increased comfort to the European and native travellers that included proper meals for the latter and emigrants from Goalundo ■ A healthier, quicker and popular journey for the emigrants ■ Immediate supervision of the despatch vessels by the Embarkation Agent and Medical Inspector of emigrants at Goalundo and

ITA's ROLE IN INFRASTRUCTURE BUILDING

Communication Service

Steamer

Ferrying coolies and despatching tea to and from the tea growing regions of north eastern India was by no means an easy process. Roads and rail services were few and far between. Waterways were commonly used but the hazards were numerous.

At a meeting of the planters of Cachar held in Silchar in 1888, Aitchison – Chairman of Doloo Tea Estate in Cachar – put the various problems and issues in proper perspective, as follows: "After the tea industry of this district has gone on struggling and expanding for 30 years we are still isolated from the outside world. During that period the revenue of the district has risen from a paltry half lakh to over eight lakh of rupees, and I think no one will dispute that

HISTORY

provision of adequate accommodation for the latter at Goalundo ■ More expeditious transport of cargo with the advantage of less handling.

Roads

The correspondence between G.M. Barton, Assistant Secretary, ITA and the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, Public Works Department, with the former enquiring whether any steps had been taken to bridge the road between Karimgunge and Silchar for the improvement of communication between Calcutta and Cachar and his request to the latter to remove the obstructions in the Kusura river that were preventing the movement of steamers from going above Fenchoo-gunge, is ample proof of ITA's proactive role in the matter.

ITA had been receiving accounts from the Dooars tea gardens about the terrible condition of roads from Julpigurie and Sillaguri with "carts taking three weeks to travel a distance of 30 miles and return to the garden." In the General Committee report at the AGM of the ITA in 1889, there is mention of a resolution of the Government of Bengal, dated January 29, 1889, regarding plans and estimates of the cost of constructing a tramway for improving the means of communication between the Dooars Tea Districts and Julpigorie. The year before, the Cachar Committee had sent down a letter to Sir Edward William Watkin, Bart., M.P. about a contemplated railway from Chittagong to Silchar.

The question of roads and communication in the Dooars was given special attention by the ITA.

Railways

During the last two decades of the century, issues relating to railways were taken up by the ITA as well. Messrs. Octavius Steel and Co, forwarded a report on the waterways proposed to be left in the embankments of the Assam-Bengal Railway. The report was to the effect that these waterways were altogether inadequate and the General Committee was asked to move in the matter in the general interests of gardens likely to be affected. The committee forwarded this report to the Government of Bengal, as it was felt that the responsibility for fixing waterways on the railway line rested with the government. ITA also played a role in submitting a report to the government to protect interests in tea in the Surma Valley from the floods likely to be prolonged and intensified by the Budderpore bridge and other bridges and embankments. It was decided that ITA should look into the matter of construction of embankments on the line and make a full enquiry into the subsequent loss and damage through the flooding tea lands.

The Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway was mainly conceived in the 1890s to facilitate and cater the tea gardens in that region.

The issue of roads and safety of plantations have come up before the ITA several times.

Among the many communications from Cachar, which had passed through the ITA meetings regarding the state of alarm, there was a telegram saying that Luckipur planters had subscribed a reward worth Rs 700 for the detection of the Balladhun murderers.

LABOUR WELFARE

Family health, family planning, disease eradication

ITA played a big role in promoting family health, the eradication of malaria, tuberculosis, cholera and malnutrition among children and propagation of family planning programmes.

There was a system of indentured labour in Assam in those days and lots of care was given to their welfare. Labour was a valuable and costly asset and therefore required special and tactful handling. Rice and other food grains were supplied below the market rate. The system of medical attention and hospitalisation was quite efficient. Every garden had one or two fully staffed hospitals, Indian doctors, compounders and nurses. An European doctor employed by the company had overall responsibility for medical care.

The effect of malaria was often the largest problem a manager had to deal with. It meant constant recruiting and, despite many new labourers, during many weeks there was insufficient labour for the day's tasks. Malaria caused great loss of working days.

In 1895, the ITA financed research on kalazar (blackwater fever), malaria and hookworm at the School of Tropical Medicine, Calcutta. The research yielded results when Dr U N Brahmachari formulated a vaccine to counter kalazar and the disease was completely eradicated.

The Indian Tea Association took an active role in controlling cholera outbreaks during coolie transportation from Calcutta to the Assam gardens in



ITA's efforts towards labour welfare saw hospitals and clinics coming up in tea estates





Indian pavilion at the Chicago Exhibition 1893

the late 19th century.

The ITA BCG campaign against tuberculosis was also a major programme in the field of labour welfare. In 1954, as part of an ITA programme, training had been given to selected Assistant Medical Officers in Mantoux testing, BCG vaccination and the compilation of BCG statistics. This part of the programme by ITA was completed next year in the Terai, Dooars and Cachar and in most of these tea areas a third visit had also been completed.

In 1952, the ITA chairman E A Hutchison felt that the medical arrangements of the Association were a decade ahead of anywhere else. Even during the tea industry crisis of 1952, ITA had done every thing possible to maintain living standards because it realised that a healthy and contented labour force is one of the greatest assets an industry can possess.

When malaria was first successfully eradicated in the post war years, ITA took up a challenge in the new field of family planning. This work was begun way back in 1950, when even the Government of India did not have a family planning department.

The supply of rice at a concessional price by the Indian Tea Association safeguarded estate children against shortage of their main item of diet.

RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY

Tea research took its first steps in the nurseries of the scientific department of the Indian Tea Association. The seeds of tea research were sown in the Indian tea industry as early as the 1800s. Extensive correspondence on the subject of analysis of tea soils and manures is found in the 1889 Annual Report of the ITA.

The 1890 Annual Report of the ITA says, "The need of investigation and scientific explanation of the various chemical changes undergone by tea in the process of manufacture has long been apparent to those connected with the industry. In recent years, the question of manuring the tea plant has become prominent, and as gardens grow older, and as the necessary constituents for the well-being of the plant

become exhausted, this question has become more and more important. The ITA endeavoured to combine this enquiry with the problem connected with manufacture. The question which would be of great benefit to the tea industry. "With the present knowledge, it might more correctly be said ignorance of the subject, it is impossible to say whether any given manure contains constituents essential to the growth of tea, and whether the constituents it does contain are present or absent from the soil" was the view of the ITA.

That year, Montague K. Bamber, an agricultural chemist, was nominated to "investigate the cultivation and manufacture of tea from a scientific point of view", by a joint committee

formed in collaboration between the ITA and the Agricultural Society of India. Extensive experiments were also carried out with insecticides and manures to find out the most suitable types for different types of soil and plants.

ITA published a book titled *Chemistry and Agriculture of Tea, including Growth and Manufacture* written by M K Bamber, based on his investigations and experiments during the two years he acted as its Practical Chemist.

The ITA took a proactive role in research for the mitigation and prevention of insect ravages in India and stressed to the government for the organisation of a stronger staff of entomological officers.

The ABITA had the privilege of providing the cradle to tea research through close collaboration with Tocklai. R & D in the tea industry was laid on a solid foundation in 1900 by the Indian Tea Association, which led to the establishment of the Tocklai Tea Research Station, near Jorhat in Assam, in 1911 with Dr Horace Mann as its head, placing research and development in the tea industry on a sound footing.

LEVY OF CESS ON TEA EXPORTS

In 1896 the ITA took a momentous measure by recommending that a cess be levied on tea exports and the proceeds be utilised for the promotion of sale of Indian tea. This measure brought into being the Tea Cess Committee which, through successive stages of the Indian Tea Market Expansion Board and the Central Tea Board finally resulted in the formation of the present Tea Board of India.

PROMOTION OF TEA IN INDIA AND ABROAD

The ITA was originally formed with the view of initiating promotion of Indian tea in Australia. Tea promotion therefore, remained as one of its top priorities, till present times. As part of its promotional activities, exhibitions were held in foreign countries. Participation in exhibitions at Brussels, Glasgow, Chicago and other cities was warmly welcomed by the people there. *Khitmagars* dressed in *topies* and





The ITA party which reached the refugees left at Tilung Hko. These men received the British Empire Medal

kumarbunds served tea in the ethnically decorated Indian pavilions that drew large crowds.

THE WAR YEARS

First World War

The industry faced a crisis in the 1930s as once again the world supply of tea exceeded the demand. The Indian Tea Association put in an effort to meet the crisis by successfully persuading over 90 percent of the member companies to support a scheme agreeing to limit production and by legislative control of exports. In 1933, through the ITA's initiative, the International Tea Agreement was concluded and the International Tea Market Expansion Board was formed in 1935. The International Tea Agreement continued to be in force till 1955 and helped to bring a degree of order in the international tea market through limits on exports by the contracting tea producing countries and the International Tea Market Expansion Board helped to increase the demand for tea through systematic overseas publicity. Eventually the Indian tea industry stood in a strong position on the eve of the Second World War.

Second World War

An important aspect of the transition from war to peace was the ending of the bulk purchase scheme that had freed the Indian tea industry from the problems of marketing and guaranteed moderate profits. Since, however, London auctions did not recommence quickly, the Government of India proposed that Calcutta should auction the entire north Indian tea crop. The Indian Tea Association was, at this point of time, able to persuade the government that this was an impractical plan. Accordingly, the government allowed the tea producers to enter into direct contracts with the UK Ministry of Food for exports of tea.

Apart from helping out the Indian tea industry in taking major decisions and corrective measures in the fields of marketing and profit making during the war and post-war times, the Indian Tea Association contributed towards wartime social welfare, throwing in voluntary support in the evacuation of Indian refugees from Burma during the Japanese bombing. Without help from the ITA volunteer teams for road building projects, ITA relief camps and medical

support, the evacuees would not have been able to counter the difficult and unknown, mountainous terrain or partly overcome the problems of food, clothing and shelter.

Post Independence

The tea industry came very near to a collapse in 1951 because there was a threat of famine on several of the finest tea growing areas of India. Even during the crisis period the relationship between the management, workers and the ITA remained excellent.

In the field of exports, ITA's pioneering role and efforts led in 1933 to ITA's initiative for the orderly development of the international tea trade. This in turn led to the drawing up of the International Tea Agreement and the formation of the International Tea Market Expansion Board, finally resulting in the formation of the present Tea Board of India.

After India's independence in 1947, the socialistic concept of mixed economy came into existence. A gradual Indianisation of foreign investments started taking place in the country. This new kind of economy led to a number of legislations and controls affecting all aspects of the tea industry.

One of the most important steps taken by the ITA in 1951 regarding its own administration was the division of its Assam Branch into three zones – each with its honorary Zonal Chairman and a stipendiary Labour officer-cum-Secretary. This was done to enable the Association to provide better service to the planting community.

At the beginning of 1953, over a 100 gardens had closed, a hundred thousand labourers were out of



Conference of ITA relief workers of Nampong

work and when many others were working only three or four days a week, the ITA approached the tea employees with the request to accept lower wages. The first wage cut was made effective in Darjeeling, followed by Cachar and Dooars. In 1953, the tea industry could restore the wages everywhere to the level at which they existed in 1952, except in Cachar.

Right from its inception the ITA has played a major role in maintaining an excellent tripartite relationship



among the government, the tea industry and itself, where disagreements have been ironed out by fruitful discussions without recriminations or bitterness. There was however, no comprehensive legislation regulating the condition of labour in the tea industry upto 1951. A comprehensive labour legislation that provided for real welfare measures to the tea workers was actually enacted in 1951. The ABITA and its member tea gardens were largely responsible for the benefits of the welfare measures incorporated in the Act to reach the plantation workers through the framework of the voluntary welfare measures provided by them. The incorporation of such welfare measures was a boon to the millions of plantation workers and their dependents.

The working conditions of the tea industry have greatly improved over the years. The subsidised food scheme and medical facilities have largely contributed to the well-being of the workers. The ITA could justifiably be proud of the fact that the statutory welfare measures that were being introduced through the several Acts followed the pattern of what was already being provided by a large number of its members. Under the Association's guidance, its members quickly took steps to conform to the newly enacted labour laws. Down the years a large number of its member estates have continued to provide a higher number of doctors, nurses and hospital beds than what is stipulated in the Plantations Labour Act.

The enlightened industrial and human relations policies formulated by the ITA and ardently followed by its member tea companies have ensured a relative industrial peace in the tea industry.

Housing

In 1950 the Government of West Bengal asked ITA whether the tea industry wished to take advantage

of the Central Government's ITA Housing Scheme under which the capital cost of the houses, built according to certain approved plans, would be borne by the Central and State Governments in a one-third / two-third ratio. The ITA showed keen interest in the scheme. The minimum specifications for the housing of tea garden labour on plains garden and Darjeeling hill estates, drawn up by the ITA and approved by the Central and the State Governments

Contemporary History

Today ITA enjoys a premier position in the tea industry. It accounts for about two-thirds of the planted area but produces over 75% of the total crop in north-east India.

The Indian tea industry remains a vital component of the Indian economy. It directly employs over one million workers, women constituting 50% of the workforce. Besides, it also looks after more than three million dependents who are resident in the tea estates. Furthermore the industry generates income and livelihood, directly and indirectly, for more than 10 million people, connected in some way with tea. The tea industry's continued viability is of paramount importance in order to sustain this huge workforce and the large rural population it supports.

ITA Chairman Aditya Khaitan cited a few figures in his AGM speech to illustrate some important milestones : ● Area under tea increased from 125 thousand hectares to 523 thousand hectares ● Tea production has increased from 32 mkg to 980 mkg. ● Internal consumption has increased from 1 mkg to 810 mkg ● Exports from 31 mkg to 200 mkg.

One of the notable achievements of the Indian Tea Association has been in respect to industrial relations. The relative industrial peace that the tea industry has enjoyed throughout its long journey has in large

DISTRICT COMMITTEES OF ITA



All India Rugby Tournament winners, 1925. The Assoc. team



Centenary AGM of the Dooars Branch (ITA (DBITA), 1978



Koombier Tea Estate in Cachar, 1965. The "hch" was owned by the estate

- Assam Branch Indian Tea Association (ABITA)**
Formed on October 29, 1889
- Surma Valley Branch of Indian Tea Association (SVBITA)**
Dealing with the affairs of Sylhet and Cachar.
Formed in 1901
- Darjeeling and Dooars Sub-Committee**
Formed in 1892



measures flowed out of an enlightened industrial and human relations approach advocated by the ITA. He also dealt with the present tea scenario, touching upon production, exports, consumption and competitiveness.



The India International Tea Convention 2007 in Guwahati

The Chairman said, "Indian tea production during 2007 declined due to erratic weather conditions in both north and south India. All India tea production was 945 mkg in 2007 – lower by 11 mkg from the 2006 level. Our common mission towards correcting the product-mix and increasing availability of Orthodox tea saw encouraging results during 2007."

In order to make a strong foothold in some of our key markets like Pakistan and Egypt (two CTC markets) and Iran and Iraq (two Orthodox markets), ITA has requested the Central Government to extend assistance in the following areas : ● Inclusion of Tea in the Vishes Krishi and Gram Udyog Yojana Scheme ● Market Specific Assistance Scheme : to defray high inland transport cost and high ocean freight cost ● Scheme for Development of Export Infrastructure: Setting up of a proper infrastructure covering warehousing, packaging, blending, etc."

The key issues, in the ITA's view, relating to exports are : ● Cost competitiveness ● Compliance aspects particularly relating to pesticides and related Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) ● Conducive and efficient infrastructure impinging on Ports, Roads and attendant freight implications

The tea industry is very much alive to the aspect of cost competitiveness and the SPTF initiative has, therefore, been driven to address the structural aspects of ageing tea bushes as also to improve the quality profile of Indian tea. Compliance of divergent MRL norms cast by several importing segments and the high cost of such compliance by way of testing export consignments are aspects that the ITA and Tea Board are jointly seized with.

The prospect of Assam Orthodox teas joining the ranks of GI protection with Darjeeling bear significant potential for the demand for Assam Orthodox in the global market and the ITA is working closely with the Tea Board towards progressing the agenda.

In response to ITA's persistent representations for the need to conduct and map domestic tea consumption, a study has been commissioned jointly by the Tea Board and the CCPA to ORG-India in 2007. The Chairman did a current market review. He said, "The outlook for Indian teas in 2008 appears bright. The prices during 2008 would be largely governed by the progress of crop and export demand. Since the beginning of 2008 tea prices have improved."

The ITA has collated average auction prices from major international auction centres, which shows that in Kenya and Sri Lanka price increase during January

to May 2008 was around 61 Cents and 76 SL Rs, respectively, while the same in India was only around Rs. 8.43 per kg.

"Domestic tea prices are yet to fully recover after continuous decline since 1999. Quite a few

tea estates are still under threat of closure. The Inter Ministerial Committee (IMC) recommended sharing of Social and Infrastructural cost between industry and Central and State Government. ITA is extremely encouraged to note the developments in Assam where the State Government has made decisive moves to cover the National Rural Health Mission Scheme for the tea garden population.

"The Government of India has given its approval to the plan scheme on rehabilitation package for closed tea gardens. ITA records its thanks to both the governments for their gesture.

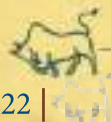
"An area of achievement of government-industry partnership to accelerate the long-term development of the tea industry has been the launch of the Special Purpose Tea Fund Scheme for financing tea companies to undertake re-plantation/rejuvenation activities. ITA hopes that tea companies/estates would be benefited by availing this scheme.

"In Assam, tea in the Barak Valley region has historically suffered from several handicaps in comparison to Brahmaputra Valley. Notable among these are lower yield and lower price realisations. These factors cast a severe pressure on the tea industry in the region and the industry is not able to plough back sufficient funds for development. The Association has urged the State Government to reduce Green Leaf Cess for the Cachar tea industry, which should be sympathetically considered

"The Indian Tea Industry organised the "India International Tea Convention 2007" (IITC 2007) at Guwahati over 22nd – 24th November 2007. The Guwahati Convention offered an opportunity of global interaction among tea producers, exporters, blenders, distributors and all those involved in the tea industry. The IITC 2007 showcased India as a one-stop shop for a wide range of quality variety with distinct regional characteristics, ranging from robust Assams to flavoury Darjeeling and high grown Nilgiris, as well as other regional varieties that offer excellent value for blends. A large number of participants from overseas and the domestic arena attended the Convention.

The 125th AGM of ITA was the perfect occasion to salute the visionaries who saw merit in coming together to forge collective action and carry on the good work in the Indian tea industry.

Photos : ITA and INKPOT





NEW DELHI: Tata Consumer's India business grew 13% and the FMCG giant recorded market share gains in the core categories of Tea and Salt, its chairman N Chandrasekaran said on Monday at the company's Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Responding to queries by shareholders, he said Tata Consumer Products would focus on leveraging its product portfolio, expanding distribution and product innovation and entering new categories, while supporting both organic and inorganic growth opportunities in future.

"We also believe in inorganic expansion and yes inorganic expansion is one of the key strategies for the company. The cash in the company will be used definitely for the right inorganic growth opportunities," he said.

He also talked about the company strategy saying TCP is focused on expanding the distribution, product portfolio and bringing in new categories and a lot of focus in the domestic

market. Chandrasekaran went on to say in his speech, "During the year, we made substantial progress on all the six strategic priorities that we had identified for the Company. Significant progress has been made on expanding our distribution, accelerating the pace of innovation, redesigning our supply network, and driving digital transformation across the value chain."

He added that the company's growth businesses - NourishCo, Tata Sampann, Tata Soulfull, and Tata Q - collectively grew 52% during the year. "We are investing in these businesses to fuel them further."

Talking about the international business, he informed that it saw modest growth on the

back of double-digit growth last year. He said the company is following a three-brand strategy in tea for international markets with Tetley, Good Earth, and Teapigs.

*A TeaTime
Bureau Report*



The History of Happy Valley and the Banerjee Family's involvement with Tea



Tupa Banerjee

Before the advent of tea estates, Darjeeling was a huge jungle. The Darjeeling area was owned by Sikkim and went to the British in the 1830s. The culture and way of life of the indigenous people of this area wasn't Indian, which had important manifestations as the tea gardens evolved. As is known, the British government sectioned plots of land in Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling for the plantation of tea and put them under different entrepreneurial companies, who employed various managing agencies to sort out the technical staff, managers and laborers required for tea production. Some of the famous agencies are still well known, like Andrew Yule and Company, Balmer Lawrie and Williamson Magor. The managing agencies were given the responsibility of learning how to operate and manage a tea garden, including the planting and marketing of the produce. This was similar to how jute companies were also run.

In the early days, jungles had to be cleared, factories established, machinery - some of them 100 ton weights - imported from Europe in ships. From the closest dockyards, the machinery had to be taken to the destination gardens upriver by barge and roads had to be built to transfer the required machines by bullock carts and convoys of

laborers. This is why the Hill Cart road was built. Railway lines were also laid for the same purpose. The pioneers were the British, particularly Scotsmen. Some were remembered generations later, like Langle Smith, who managed the Soom Tea Estate just below St. Joseph's school. All this work took from the 1830s to the 1900s.

Initially, the investors in tea were British but as the tea industry developed, Indians also became interested in investing in this venture. One of the pioneers was G.C. Banerjee, who was the first Indian to own a tea garden in Darjeeling. This is where the history of the involvement of the Banerjee family in tea begins. G.C. Banerjee emigrated from his native village called Boral in Serampore, around 1860. He entered the services of a transport company and through merit rose to be an important officer. When the railways came to Darjeeling and the transport company closed its business, Girish Chandra started a departmental store in Kurseong called G.C. Banerjee and sons, with great success. He also bought a tea garden in Siliguri. G.C. Banerjee died early and suddenly, leaving behind three adolescent sons. Although very young, the sons were able to run their father's business successfully. The running of the tea garden on the other hand proved beyond their young and untrained experience and was sold. In 1910 the three brothers bought Happy Valley Tea Estate in Darjeeling, from a Captain Keeble. The garden was not in good form,

Phalguni & Tridev Banerjee, at the helm of Happy Valley for decades



HISTORY



tea bushes dying out, the forest denuded and the machinery barely in working order. In fact, the garden was an unsound investment. The brothers, however, were not ready to bow out and devoted their energies into turning the garden around. Haripada was the eldest and probably on the older side, the youngest brother Hemchandra was a solicitor in Calcutta, so the running of the sick garden was put into the hands of Tarapada, the middle son. Tarapada Banerjee had never seen the working of a tea garden before but he put his soul into the work. By much reading and observation of the practical work involved, in a remarkable eight years' time, he was able to turn the garden around and made a name for himself as a very efficient planter. He replaced the obsolete machinery, built a new factory, reforested the denuded hillsides and by devoted care was able to make the tea bushes heal. Under him Happy Valley Tea Estate ranked as one of the best amongst the gardens producing high quality Darjeeling teas. This was the only Bengali and also the only tea concern to make a name and to be held in high repute not only in India but also abroad.

Aerial view of the Happy Valley factory and bungalow

Haripada, the eldest brother, died in 1916. In 1920 the remaining two brothers bought another European tea garden called Norbong, below Tindhariya railway station on Hill Cart road. This too was a sick garden; furthermore it had a liability of eighty thousand rupees at the time of sale. To give an idea of the sheer energy, will power and labor of Tarapada Banerjee, who was again given the management of the new garden, this liability could be wiped off in a period of two years. The tea market became steady in this period and T.P. Banerjee could bring about improvements and changes to make Norbong a success, which was an enormous tea garden. It is said that one could



The fabled bungalow living room - 'Gol kamraa'

start riding on horseback at sunrise and still not reach the periphery of the garden at sunset.

As the brothers aged, in 1928 there was an amicable division of properties and Happy Valley Tea Estate came under the sole ownership of T.P. Banerjee. Soon after, in 1929, he bought another tea garden called Windsor (also known as Lumtham) and incorporated it with the Happy Valley garden. This conglomerated garden was run successfully by T.P. Banerjee's eldest son Amiyanath Banerjee, who later made Happy Valley into a limited company.

T. P. Banerjee had bought Makaibari Tea Estate in 1936 and had incorporated it with Happy Valley. In 1946 however, to leave separate legacies, he made Makaibari Tea and Trading company separate from Happy Valley Tea Company. Prior to this, the estate was owned by Kurseong and Darjeeling Tea Company and the managing agents were Jardines Skinner and Company with their office at 4 Clive Row Kolkata. He left his younger son Pashupatinath Banerjee as the principal shareholder of Makaibari and his eldest, Amiyanath Banerjee as the principal shareholder of Happy Valley.

*Amiya Nath Banerjee
(Seated, furthest left),
Happy Valley's pioneer*



TEA TIME

Happy Valley passed on to A.N. Banerjee's three sons, Manas Kumar (M.K.) Banerjee, Phalguni Banerjee and Tridev Banerjee. A.N. Banerjee bought another garden in 1958 called Vatakvar Tea Estate and made it into a company called Sashitara Tea Company (named after his parents Tarapada and Pannasashi devi). This was run by A.N. Banerjee's middle son Phalguni Banerjee from 1960 to 1976. Times had changed post independence as had labor laws and this

quality. It's fame spread through word of mouth and the tea brand became a household name amongst tea connoisseurs all over Bengal. The famous garden failed to be productive in the end because of a myriad of reasons. One of the principal ones was that it eventually became a small garden with too many stakeholders. Another, heretofore unexpected difficulties was with the accruing of labor problems. From the 1970s onwards, a huge contributing factor was the separatist movement, which wanted the Darjeeling district and parts of North Bengal as a separate state from Bengal, called Gorkhaland. The times had changed and understandably, new generations of offspring of laborers who were educated, did not come back to do the work of their forefathers. With these difficulties, the company's liabilities kept increasing. Happy Valley was always invested in making high quality tea. With the increase in liabilities the owners had to ensure that the entire produce of the company was sold off and increasingly, they were under tight deadlines to reach this end. The auction houses would guarantee the sale of the garden's entire produce within a fixed time. Happy Valley being a small, single estate, did not have enough working capital. In order to meet costs, the owners were forced to sell the garden's produce through auction houses, which did not fetch the high prices required for the proper functioning of the garden.


Eventually, after many decades of struggle, the garden fell into debt and the well known Banerjee family had to sell their four generation old garden. With them passed an entire way of life that perpetuated so much love between the owners and their employees. Tea gardens ceased to be one great family and became nuclear units of business.



A planters' party, back in the day

garden went through hard times. A new central government rule came into enforcement at the time, taking over the management of sick tea estates, making them viable and returning them to the owners. The Tea Trading Corporation of India (TTCI) took over the Vatakvar garden's management. The TTCI itself became bankrupt later however, and under court orders the gardens under them were auctioned off. The Banerjee family was then left only with the Happy Valley Tea Estate.

Happy Valley flourished for 50 years, a famous tea garden known for its exquisite single-estate tea. Back in the day, the focus of small, single-ownership tea estates was on not marketing but manufacturing: the making of very high quality tea. Happy Valley was a garden which, because of its proximity to the town centre, attracted tourists over generations. Most of them were from Bengal. In a lot of literary books of the time Happy Valley tea was mentioned because of its



A pathway in the garden



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THE RISE OF INDIA'S NEW TEA LANDS

Rajiv Lochan



Rajiv Lochan is the founder of the **Doke Tea Estate** in Bihar, a non-traditional tea-growing region bounded by West Bengal and Nepal. India no longer requires permits to grow tea, a policy decision driven by increased domestic demand. Lochan foresaw the need to open new tea-growing regions years ago and began acquiring land along the Doke River in 1998. Since then, Lochan's marketing mastery and tireless promotion have literally put Bihar on the official map of India's tea-growing regions.

• *Caption: Rajiv Lochan, founder Lochan Tea and Doke Tea Estate*

Rajiv Lochan founder **Lochan Tea** and owner of the Doke Tea Estate in Bihar, India

The Rise of India's New Tea Growing Regions

In 1850 after the British established the Tukvar tea plantation in Darjeeling, India's tea industry expanded rapidly, felling forests and flattening hills in Assam and terracing the Himalayan foothills to meet global demand.

To fill London's warehouses, growers planted the Dooars and Terai, much of West Bengal, and the entire length of the Brahmaputra Valley in Assam. In 1940 there were 500,000 acres under tea; by 1960, there were more than 800,000 acres (329,000 hectares) under tea.

Exports rose steadily but beginning in the 1950s domestic consumption climbed even faster. In 1960 India exported 195 m.kgs of tea and consumed 115 m.kgs. Household consumption as a percent of India's gross domestic product peaked that year at 87.4% percent. Ten years later, exports remained flat at 200 m.kgs, while domestic consumption had increased to 212 m.kgs. Today Indian consumers drink 90% of the tea it produces.

Until last year, registered gardens were permitted in only a few states. In 1960 the Tea Board of India recorded 160,000 hectares under tea in

Assam. There were 82,000 hectares under tea in West Bengal (Darjeeling, Dooars, Terai, and West Dinajpur). North India, consisting of the Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab (Kangra), and Himachal Pradesh (Mandi), cultivated 255,000 hectares.

Bihar grew tea on only 725 hectares (about 1,800 acres under tea).

Dan Bolton: Rajiv, will you describe India's domestic market for new regional teas?

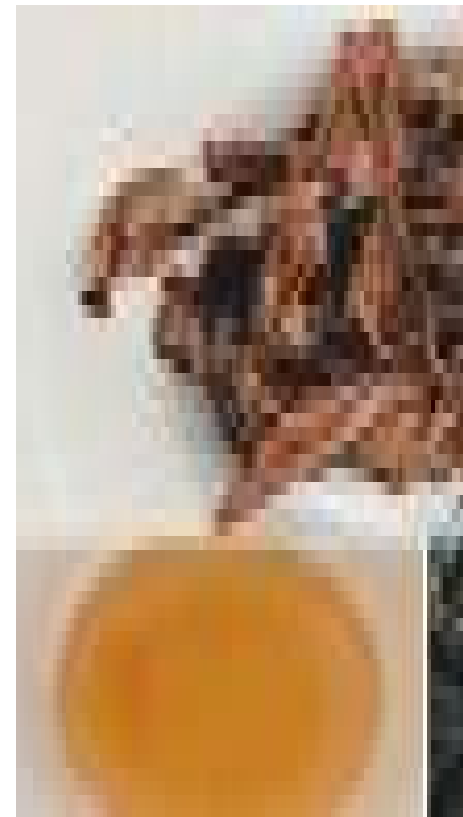
Rajiv Lochan: We start with eastern India. Bengalis are very, very appreciative of Darjeeling tea. Calcutta has a direct connection to this growing region and is known to be a tea city.

It's very unusual to find Biharis, who like orthodox Darjeeling. They are now opening up; yes, this is something good.

Doke Black Fusion is a handmade Bihar tea, a mix of Darjeeling and Assam. That's why we call it fusion. We sit right in front of Darjeeling, and the cold winds coming from Darjeeling cool the plains for a more delicate tea. Doke has an amber liquor, fragrant aroma, and sweet taste, complex. Mixed together with the strength of Assam, it is full-bodied, slightly bitter morning tea.

Dan: That suggests terroir is important to their buying decision.

Rajiv: They understand; they listen.





They're very appreciative, they come in with questions, and they take the samples. I have a sample pack of about 10 grams which I sell for 60 rupees. They sometimes buy 600 rupees worth of packets.

“We produce very little on 10 hectares but we source teas from all over the region to make different blends and then package it. So we handle about a million kilos of tea every year.”

– **Rajiv Lochan**

Dan: Where do customers get their first taste of teas grown and processed in Bihar?

Rajiv: Online. Not many stores stock all these teas, and it is very easy to order online.

Specialty teas are only available in the big cities with lounges and specialty tea shops. I would not say even many of the tea specialty shops.

Amazon has taught India how to sit at home and order very, very comfortably and has created online shopping. All the ladies are very happy sitting at home buying whatever from this thing. Many buy to experiment. Yeah, Amazon has done wonders in India, successful like Coca-Cola.

Dan: Are the websites built by local brands sophisticated? Is delivery by mail or courier?

Rajiv: Teaswan. That's our website. They do everything online; we do everything else. They handle the ordering and the total thing collection money and all.

Dan: How long does it take online customers to get their tea?

Rajiv: Maximum three days. Three days is very fair. We also use FedEx, DHL Blue Dart Express, and UPS. Siliguri, since the pandemic is very, very conveniently connected.

Dan: Tea from non-traditional growing regions like Bihar is now accessible but still not well known. Your innovative processing and tireless marketing of green tea and oolongs have earned the brand an international following, representing only a small volume of the million kilos you process locally. You can get higher prices overseas, but in a CTC (cut, tear, curl market), pricing is critical. According to the Tea Board of India, only 22% of Indian households spend more than INRs200 rupees (about \$2.50 US per month for tea). What price do you charge local consumers?

Rajiv: Our 250 gram CTC sells for INRs 70 to 90 per pack. Tata costs almost the same, but the quality is better than Tata. The reason for people buying outside Tata is the quality. There are four or five local brands available from Siliguri, so people are not switching, and we find it very easy.

There are now seven factories in Bihar. There are 20,000 hectares under tea, and the total production is 25 million kilos. We package our teas in Siliguri, and most of our market is nearby in Bihar so that we can keep the quality. The shopkeepers prefer stock that is easy to sell.

The domestic tea market in India is still not mature; this is just the beginning. The entry of more and more players from different regions will change the scenario, but India is a huge market, and if it opens up, it will really solve the industry's problems.



By **Dan Bolton**



BREWING A PACKAGE TEA REVOLUTION

Why bulk tea producers and estates are creating their own distinctive labels

A quiet revolution has been brewing through the tea gardens of North Bengal and Assam. A labeling uprising. Majuli Mist, Kashir, Teas from India – these are tea brands emerging out of the estates of Amalgamated Plantations, an associate company of Tata Consumer Products.

Or take the Aideobari Tea Estates in Assam that now sells the beautifully packaged Rujani tea through its own website. A 120-year-old tea trading company has emerged, Octavius tea, a brand created in 2016, that has been gaining in strength.

Turning a new leaf

Change is sweeping through the tea industry as a host of pure play plantation companies and tea traders are jumping headlong into the business of branding and packaging tea, for long the preserve of the big two — Tatas and HUL — and a couple of regional firms. Several of these new labels are going the D2C route to capture the imagination of tea lovers.

The Goodricke Group, a part of UK-based Camellia Plc, have been steadily scaling up the share of packet tea to its total sales over the past years.

Symphony, Castleton and Khaass are some of the brands of Goodricke that have been built up. Atul Asthana, MD & CEO, Goodricke Group said diversification into packet and value-added teas help give better margins.

But the driving force behind the transition can be linked to consumers preferring packet tea because of its perceived quality (adulteration free) and far superior storage options.

However, branding and selling packet teas is not easy, as it calls for setting up a separate unit for managing business and investments. According to Azam Monem, wholetime director of McLeod Russel, bulk tea sell fast on auctions, while branding and marketing require a critical mass and that would require producers to participate as traders. “You cannot just rely on your own produce, you need to open up and participate as a trader because if you market your own produce, you may get limited,” he said.

McLeod is currently involved in the niche packet tea segment through online channels. It would look at scaling up the category moving forward, he added.





Changing blends

The packet tea market, estimated to be around ₹20,000 crore, accounts for roughly 55 per cent of the country's total tea consumption, pegged at little over 1 billion kg. India produces around 1.3 billion kg of tea annually.

According to a study conducted by Tea Board of India, nearly 80 per cent of the households in urban India and around 75 percent of the households in rural India have shifted to packet tea. The proportion of loose tea is comparatively higher in the eastern and central States compared to the rest of the country.

“Favorable demographic factors such as increase in disposable income, aspiration levels, more participation in workforce (both male and female), and increasing health consciousness have by and large contributed to the shift from loose tea to packets. With increasing demands, there is a marked improvement in rural penetration and a significant number of wholesalers are diversifying from low margin, high volume wholesaling to high margin retail business,” the last study on tea consumption conducted by the Tea Board in 2007, said.

Given the way the domestic tea industry has been reeling under the pressure of high costs, tea plantations don't have the wherewithal to invest more in crop quality, which again leads to lower price realisation, thereby forming a vicious cycle.

Vikram Singh Gulia, MD & CEO, Amalgamated Plantations, says, “There is volatility in the bulk tea market, while retail gives better margins. However, retail also entails more cost as it calls for a separate infrastructure to be put in place. But in the long run if you are in the consumer market, it helps.”

He says an increased awareness and qualitative investment of 50 paise per cup by a consumer can help revive the industry. As he explains, “The average household consumption in a month is approximately 250 cups and the monthly household spend on tea is roughly ₹180 for half a kg of loose tea at two grams per cup, which roughly translates into 72 paise per cup. Just by paying a humble 50 paise extra

for each cup, a customer can drink a cup of tea which is satisfying, fulfilling and does not require garnishing of spices to make it palatable.”

The need for branding

Brand guru Harish Bijoor, and founder Harish Bijoor Consults, gives a compelling reason for the tea producers to start labeling their own brews. As he says, “The world is moving from mass consumption formats to niche! Indian tea is a mass offering in the world today. It is largely a commodity offering that goes as a part of a global blend. It is time to brand estate specific single origin offerings. It is time to brand the niche with a David versus Goliath brand feel. The world of high end tea consumption is ready for it. Sri Lanka has done it successfully. So can we.”

Further saying, “MNCs have tried the branding game for decades. Today it's the time of individual estates or small groups of producers to grab the baton and run. The Tea Board of India must be the catalyst of such action. I would advise brand incubation programs to be run for estate owners. It is a must!”

A start has been made. Watch out for more tea labels to grace the shelves, each telling the distinctive story of their origin.

All reports are to be credited to Tea Time Bureau

North Bengal Tea Garden Caddies Dooars Open Golf Tournament

Organised by **The Arun Singh's
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From L to R: Rajbeer Singh Gill, Rajiv Gurung,
Harsh Kumar, Arun Singh and Joe Bajar



INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATION & TEMPLE FESTIVAL ADD CHEER TO TEA CUP!



By P S SUNDAR

Even as tea factories including the bought leaf factories hold internationally valid quality certification, many times, they are unable to get services and products from suppliers who possess matching global quality certifications. So, this summer, when the two star-studded hotels – Gateway in Coonoor and Savoy in Ooty [belonging to the IHCL SeleQtions from the Taj stables] in the Mecca of tea industry in the South – The Nilgiris – bagged the coveted ‘Platinum Certificate’ of EarthCheck, the world’s leading International Certifying Agency from Australia, the eco-conscious tea industry in the region was elated as the tea industry uses them quite extensively throughout the year. In particular, during the Annual meets of UPASI and other planters’ and traders’ Associations, planters and senior executives of tea companies stay in these hotels. Besides, these bodies use their services for hosting various events.

Additional Chief Secretary in the Department of Environment Climate Change and Forests Supriya Sahu mentioned, “This is a marvellous milestone to be achieved bearing cascading impact on different segments of The Nilgiris. certification is a recognition of the hotels’ commitment to adhere to high level environment protection measures. Observing that the Government has been consistently working to re-defining environment to accord a sustainable global value. The recognition deserves to be emulated by the entire hospitality industry.” She congratulated the Hotels’ Cluster General Manager Ritesh Choudhary on winning the coveted recognition and urged him to be the leader to help other hotels also to follow the line.

Each year Tamil Nadu Government hosts the summer Flower Show. Every year, at the summer Flower Show being held by Tamil Nadu Government at the Government Botanical Gardens in Ooty, both the hotels receive prizes for their well-maintained gardens and lawns. This year, both the hotels individually received the largest number of awards in many decades. Tamil Nadu Forest Minister K Ramachandran, who is himself a tea planter and factory owner in The Nilgiris, honoured Ritesh Choudhary and his House keeping team led by Manager R Nagaraj.



◀ *The tastefully decorated deity at the temple festival in Billimalai Tea Estate.*

As the functional head of both Indcoserve (India’s largest tea co-operative federation) as also TANTEA, the tea industry run by the Tamil Nadu Government, Supriya Sahu has been instrumental in bagging international certification for the tea sector.



▲ *Families of tea estate workers carry ‘karagam’ at the Temple festival in Billimalai Tea Estate*

Complimenting the Chief Engineers Sagaya Nathan (Gateway) and Sudharsan (Savoy) for their valuable contribution in winning this global recognition, Ritesh Choudhary said that both the hotels have been applauded for their pro-environment ambience, controlled carbon footprint and quality hygiene.

Guests from the tea industry joined the team of Ritesh Choudhary in laying impressive footprints on World Environment Day. “We planted over 500 tree saplings through Savoy in Ooty and 520 saplings through Gateway in Coonoor not only in our campus but in schools as well as the heritage Coonoor railway station. We also presented tree sapling to every guest on departure. We presented awards to those who won in our ‘Only One Earth’ painting competition. All these carried great significance in the tea land that The Nilgiris is”, Ritesh Choudhary disclosed.

Traditionally, tea estates which have temples, celebrate their annual festival with much fanfare. With migrant labour now occupying a lion’s share in the workers’ population in plantations, there is an integration of them with Tamil labour. This once again got



pronounced this summer, at Billimalai Estate, 10 kilometres from Coonoor, where hundreds of migrant labour from Jharkhand, West Bengal, Assam, Bihar and Nepal along with their families joined the Tamil labour for the five-day celebration of the 44th Anniversary of Arulmigu Devi Karumariamman Temple.

Director of the Estate G Udayakumar told me, " We dedicated the festival to invoke celestial blessings for timely rain for the welfare of The Nilgiris district". And, the rain came!

Led by the Chief Priest Bharathwaj, Lalitha Sahasranamam, Thrisathi, Varuna Jabam, Siva

Sahasranamam, Veda Parayanam, Diravia Abizhagam, Asirwadam and Ragam-thalam were conducted.

Another Priest Bharath Raj created captivating decorations for the deity – the deity Amman was decorated as the highly reputed Thiruverkadu Mariamman and Manakolam Mariamman.

Led by the Director Udayakumar and Speciality tea specialist ENR Vejayashekara, the executives of the estates served Annadhanam (feast) to the families of the workers.

Fireworks display, nathaswaram and music orchestra marked the occasion.



◀ Tea planter and factory owner K Ramachandran, Tamil Nadu Minister for Forests, presenting the cup to Ritesh Choudhary and Housekeeping Manager R Nagaraj at the world-famous Flower Show in Ooty.



◀ Billimalai Tea Estate Director G Udayakumar (in dhoti) and Speciality Tea Specialist ENR Vejayashekara (third, left) leading the executives in serving Annadanam (feast) to the families of estate workers during the temple festival.



▲ Ritesh Choudhary (extreme right) honouring Housekeeping Manager R Nagaraj (third, right) and his team at Gateway Hotel Coonoor for winning the maximum number of cups. Tea planters have cheered them on.

P S SUNDER's article has been published posthumously. Mr. Sunder suddenly left for his heavenly abode on 26th July and leaves behind his wife only. Our deepest condolences to the bereaved family. Rest in peace. Tea Time will miss him greatly.

ED

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History From UKERS



Mr. Harold Newby
1915—1922



Mr. John Harpur
1922-1930



Mr. K. W. Christie
1931-1933



Mr. W. H. Miles
Present Incumbent

The idea of inducing the Indians in India to drink tea dates back to the inception of the tea cess. During the years 1903-15, the Cess Committee spent small sums in India on experimental operations, the total amount being less than Rs. 75000. For the year 1915-16, however, Mr. Harold W. Newby was selected as commissioner for India and the sum of £4500 was allotted by the Cess Committee. This was increased to £11,000 for 1916-17. With twenty-eight representative spread out over India. Mr. Newby's idea was to get people to open tea shops in which the beverage was sold. Attention was drawn to these shops by means of cinema entertainments, native bands, singing, games, handbills posters and sandwich boards. Demonstrations were put on in factories at cattle fairs, exhibitions and religious gatherings.

As the work progressed, attention was directed toward the collieries and the Indian troops. Arrangements were made for supplying tea to third class passengers on some of the large Indian railway systems. The tea shops became self-supporting. Gramophones and vernacular records were added, among them being a speech on "The Benefits of Drinking Tea" and a "Hot - Tea Song."

The Cess Committee voted £22,000 for propaganda in India in 1917-18 and £23,333 in 1918-19. Mr. John Harpur was appointed chief assistant to Mr. Newby. Small envelopes of tea were distributed free, bearing the legend, "Empty the contents of the packet into an earthenware teapot and pour on enough water for six cups of tea. Leave on for eight minutes and pour out, add milk and sugar to taste." Picepacket shops had been opened in 1918 and proved most successful. The packets were sold for one pice [1/2 cent. U.S.] each. Since then the propaganda has concerned itself mostly with demonstrations in the bazaars, on railways, at schools, factories and other large gatherings.

In 1919-20, the amount allotted by the Cess Committee for the work in India was increased to £30,000, and with the exception of 1921-22, when it was reduced to £26,666; it remained at £30,000 until 1925-26. In 1926-27, the allotment was £33,750; in 1927-28, £37,500; and in 1928-29, £39,375. In 1929-30, it was increased to £50,625 and in 1930-31, including a special allotment for Burma, the allocation amounted to £58,125. For 1931-32, the appropriation was reduced to £54,375. In 1932-33 it was £45,000; in 1933-34, £45,000; and in 1934-35, £56,250.

In 1922, Mr. Newby took up the work in France and Mr. Harpur was



made cess commissioner for India, a work he carried on until ill health compelled his retirement in 1930. Mr. Harpur estimated the annual consumption of tea in India as over 68,000,000 pounds, an increase of more than 50,000,000 pounds since the start of the propaganda. Mr. E.W.Christie

was appointed acting commissioner for India in 1931, and in that year the work entered a new phase. While still continuing the tea shop and railway work previously undertaken, a fleet of tea Cess motor lorries was sent out with demonstration parties to inculcate the tea drinking habit in remote towns and villages where tea as previously unknown. The demonstrators offered to the villagers cups of well-made tea and lectured on the advantages and merits of the beverage. Gramophones helped to collect crowds and in the evening lantern slides depicted the tea industry in all its stages. Tea in suitable sized packets was offered at a low price. Mr. Christie resigned in 1933. Under a reorganization of the work to secure results more in harmony with the sums spent on propaganda in India, Mr. W.H.Miles was appointed acting commissioner for India late in 1933. The renewed activities covered in part propaganda in jute mills, with tea supplied to the workers, demonstrations in Northern and Southern India, a travelling cinema, liquid tea shops, tea supplies for railways, sugar factories, etc.

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Five Tea garden retreats that will lift your spirits



In the lap of nature: Scenic tea plantation experiences in and around North Bengal

Several tea gardens located in the foothills of the eastern Himalayas have been offering their bungalows for tourists for quite some time. In this tourism revival phase, these bungalows, destinations by themselves, are ideal for a holiday away from the crowds. The lofty mountains, the sprawling tea gardens, the crisp air, the springs and rivers, the birdlife, all add to the charm, not to forget the luxurious meals served at all of them. While most of them have provisions for hiking, bird watching, camping and tea factory tours, check with them always for seasonal availability.



Chamong Chiabari

Chamong Chiabari

Perched at 4,800 feet, surrounded by tea gardens, this mountain resort and spa is just the place to unwind before you step into the new normal world. This premium resort, run by Chiabari Retreat, part of the Chamong group, is located about 40 minutes from Mirik and half an hour from Ghoom. Enjoy stunning views of the Himalayas from the rooms.

Tumsong Chiabari

Also a Chiabari Retreat property, this is about 30km from the heart of Darjeeling. A perfect destination for those looking for a secluded place

with outdoor activities aplenty. You can go hiking in the undulating countryside. One of the biggest



Tumsong Chiabari

attractions is bird watching because you are likely to see many different species owing to the variation in altitude and diversity of habitat.

Baradighi Bungalow

Tucked inside serene Dooars (the foothills of the eastern Himalayas), about 45km from Siliguri, this charming tea estate is one of the best-kept secrets of the region. Surrounded by hills and rivers, it is ideal for those who are looking for a revitalising holiday. The elegant rooms in this



Baradighi Bungalow

luxury heritage bungalow built in 1891, exude an old-world charm through well-preserved furniture and other artefacts. A part of the surrounding tea gardens border the Gorumara National Park.



Ging Tea House

Ging Tea House

About half an hour's drive from Darjeeling and you are at this charming retreat, a restored heritage bungalow, in the middle of tea gardens.



The Temi Bungalow

The Temi Bungalow

Sikkim's only tea garden, it is tucked beyond Namchi in South Sikkim. Overlooked by snow-capped Himalayan peaks, surrounded by cherry blossoms, rhododendrons and other trees, it is ideal for a nature-based holiday. Eco Adventure Resorts, an enterprise of Kolkata-based Priya Entertainments, has built a tourism hub based on the heritage Bada Bungalow and cottages opening onto scenic views of mountains or tea gardens. According to a representative, this resort will be operational after the Sikkim government opens the state to tourists.

When Darjeelings were
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IDEAL FAMILY



In the mid sixties seven companies joined in a common marketing programme to distribute the condom on behalf of the Government of India — Brooke Bond, Imperial Tobacco (now ITC), Lipton, Union Carbide, Hindustan Lever, WIMCO and Tata Oil Mills. It was, I think, one of the finest examples of social or societal marketing and co-operation between the Private Sector and the Government for a cause. Brooke Bond were among the first to agree. We had a strong brief from our then Overseas Chairman John Brooke who wrote and said “For India this is a must. I would like Brooke Bond India to give it all support.”

The only problem India faces, in my opinion, is our rapidly rising population. I believe we have the technology and management capability to solve all our other problems if we can keep the numbers down. Whatever be the size of cake we produce by way of economic activity, the numbers it has to be shared with keep increasing. The crude and imperfect way in which we have implemented public health measures has brought about a dramatic fall in the death rate and life expectancy has gone up.

Infant mortality is down, malaria brought under control, smallpox has been eradicated and cholera is no longer endemic. The gap between the deaths and births has widened and 10-12 million human beings arrive on the scene every year.

The Government is no doubt aware of the problem and is doing its best. But it is deeply interwoven into India’s religious and cultural lives. Family planning is taboo in several religious doctrines. Language and religion are still the two most potent forces operating in the country.

With a view to solving the population problem several leading marketing companies in India took up the distribution of the condom Nirodh. Demographers reckoned that for the use of every five hundred condoms, one birth could be prevented. If we distributed five hundred million condoms we could prevent one million births, that is to say, a single effective programme can tackle ten per cent of the problem.

The Nirodh programme brought the whole subject of family planning out in the open. Indian ladies spoke freely about Nirodh, laparoscopy, the loop and terminal methods. This often embarrassed foreigners as the subject was taboo in western mixed company.

We as a company used to take our responsibility for the Nirodh distribution seriously. We motivated our salesmen to involve themselves completely.

The Health Ministry used to convene periodically meetings at which the programme progress would be reviewed. The meetings were usually



held in one of the companies' corporate offices and there was always a lot of laughter and hilarity. The latest stories on Nirodh would be traded. Most of them were of course, unprintable, but a few are worth repeating.

"What happens to an Egyptian lady who doesn't use Nirodh?" "She becomes a mummy!"

A woman complains to an attendant at a drug store that her husband always used to buy Nirodh but now that he is away in Tanzania for a few months "I am forced to buy it myself."

The feedback on Nirodh from some of the areas also could be amusing.

"Sales from Punjab are very brisk. A letter from a user says "Sirs, I have been very satisfied with the results of Nirodh but please tell me when I should take it off."

Our overseas Director at that time became so much of a convert to family planning that he became a one-man mission propagating the gospel of Family Planning wherever he went in India.

On one occasion at a major managers' conference he came out with a stentorian address on Family Planning. It was a grave sermon. He spoke of the

ideal family, i.e. a boy and a girl. An ideal family was a happy family and an ideal family meant a better standard of living. He also touched on executive health and eating habits.

Later at lunch we found the managers giving the rich food at the buffet a miss and crowding around the salad table. The Director was pleased to see that the managers had taken his advice on eating to heart. He missed the longing looks that were cast in the direction of the tandoori rotis, butter masala, fried fish and dessert. Fie had got into a conversation with Krishnamouli and launched headlong into his favourite topic. "By the way Krishnamouli," he said "What is the size of your family?"

Known for his tact and diplomacy, Krishnamouli felt caged. He shifted, fidgeted before he said evasively, "Oh I have an ideal family sir."

"Marvellous", said the overseas Director, "a boy and a girl?"

"No sir, four times more ideal, I have four boys and four girls."

By T. S. Nagarajan

Former Managing Director

Brooke Bond India when it was a separate company

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Both Jar contains CTC with green leaf

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Contact
9830176315

HAPPENINGS



Run for Tea

For the promotion of Tea With the help of Tea Board and initiative taken by the Tripura Tea Development Corporation the event Run for Tea.



Tea Tasting Session at Nagrakata

Tea Tasting Session at Nagrakata conducted by Contemporary Brokers Pvt Ltd on 10 September 2022.

Packet teas and the type of teas required by the Blenders and Packers was showcased.



FAITTA 8th AGM

at ITC Royal Bengal Hotel Kolkata on Saturday 17th September 2022

Tea Production & Exports: Tea Production in the calendar year 2021 closed at 1329 m kgs against 1258 m kgs in 2020. This was a recovery from the pandemic effect but production remained still short of the 2019 level of 1390 m kgs.



Sanjay Shah in-coming FAITTA Chairman delivering the Vote of Thanks

After years of relative stagnation Indian Tea Exports experienced a growth trajectory. After successive years of 250 m Kg plus exports sharply declined in 2020 and 2021 to 210m kgs and 196 m kgs respectively. Sharp increase in prices rendered Indian Tea uncompetitive in the global market.

Tea Prices: All India CTC prices closed was higher by Rs 55 per kg, in 2020-21 compared to 2019-20. With some recovery in demand from the pandemic period prices to date in 2022 currently higher levels than last year.

The Orthodox market was buoyant as the Sri Lanka situation has turned in India's favour.

Tea Consumption: FAITTA has been observing that the Producer Associations and the Tea Board have been concerned over the sluggish consumption demand growth in India. As retailers within the FAITTA fold we are witnessing the market movements at close quarters. It is a fact that loose tea consumption has been giving way to packet tea.

Rising levels of food inflation remain a concern as they adversely impact household and consumption levels. Given that Incomes do not adjust as fast as Prices high inflation in essentials tend to adversely impact demand for non-essentials. Even within essentials consumers may shift to lower priced non premium products.

Tea Promotion: FAITTA is at one with our producer friends and the Tea Board in seeking more action at the Promotion end. There are major challenges to fund the kind of programs that we perhaps want to drive. The Board's funding resources appear to be under strain and the FAITTA's efforts towards a public private partnership model of promotion did not see any traction. We had formulated a relatively low cost social media centric



L-R Aurobinda Nayak, Hemant Shah, Dharmesh Nagda, Milind Shah & Paras Desai

strategy and presented it to the Tea Board.

Auction Matters: Despite expectations that the Bharat Auctions would bring in the anticipated advantages and result in better prices the reality points to a different position.

FAITTA is of the view that the intrinsic form of the Bharat Auction will not be delivering the intended benefits.



Deepshikha Pasari of Duff-Flating TE on her Tea journey

It is basically a tendering system where the Buyer is, more often than not, confronted with unexpected and uncontrolled results and therefore not in a position to correctly match buying with business needs. The Tender approach is dissuading rather than encouraging buyer participation. This may deliver short term spurt in prices at times of short supply but will be ruinous for industry at most other times.

MRLs: During the year under review one FAITTA member packer and retailer was served a Notice by the FSSAI that certain packets drawn from the market were tested and found to have failed against FSSAI MRL parameters. The concerns led FAITTA to do a structured testing of Tea purchased in Kolkata Auctions keeping the Tea Board and our producer friends duly informed. The results did not provide comfort as over 30% failure rate was observed. A re-test following a meeting in the Tea Board last June confirms the initial test results.

While it is possible that the problem may have occurred the first flush teas and may dissipate thereafter the experience underscores the need to remain vigilant and to significantly step up testing throughout the season.

Furthermore FAITTA is of the view that testing of samples should ideally be at the production end as a promissory - or Warranty for FSSAI compliance - accompanies Auction offerings.

Colour in Tea: FAITTA remains deeply concerned over the growing incidence of colouring matter being added in Tea. Several disturbing reports continue to appear of unscrupulous traders engaged in this malpractice. Amidst all this a brand selling Premix Tea with added colour is seeking to justify its action by differentiating its product from Tea. FAITTA has already initiated legal proceeding to prevent this misuse which is not in conformity with Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.



Ms. Nayantara Palchoudhuri Chairperson ITA addressing FAITTA AGM

The Tea Board needs to be far more pro-active to join forces with FAITTA and oppose the designs of the Brand that has been given Product Approval by the FSSAI. A number of initiatives were taken by FAITTA constituents including the Telangana Tea Merchants Association to engage with the Media on this issue of Colour.

Tea is good for your brain and mind-a no-brainer?



Dr Kallol K Dey

‘Tea began as a medicine and grew into a beverage.’-Kakuzo Okakura, author of the Book of Tea (1906)

Five thousand years ago, the Chinese Emperor, Shen Nong, is said to have accidentally brewed a cup of tea as a few leaves from the tree fell into his boiling water. He used to boil all his water for health reasons. He apparently recognised some of the beneficial properties of *Camellia sinensis* and included it into his list of healthy plants. Drinking tea as a tonic became part of the traditional folk medicine.

Extracted by the action of the heat and water, the soluble constituents of the tea leaves migrate into the liquor. Certain constituents present aplenty in the fresh leaves get destroyed by the manufacturing process. For example, vitamin C can't withstand high temperatures. Others are transformed into new compounds, some of which will dissolve during infusion:

polyphenols, alkaloids, amino acids ,

glucides, minerals, a number of vitamins, and aromatic substances.

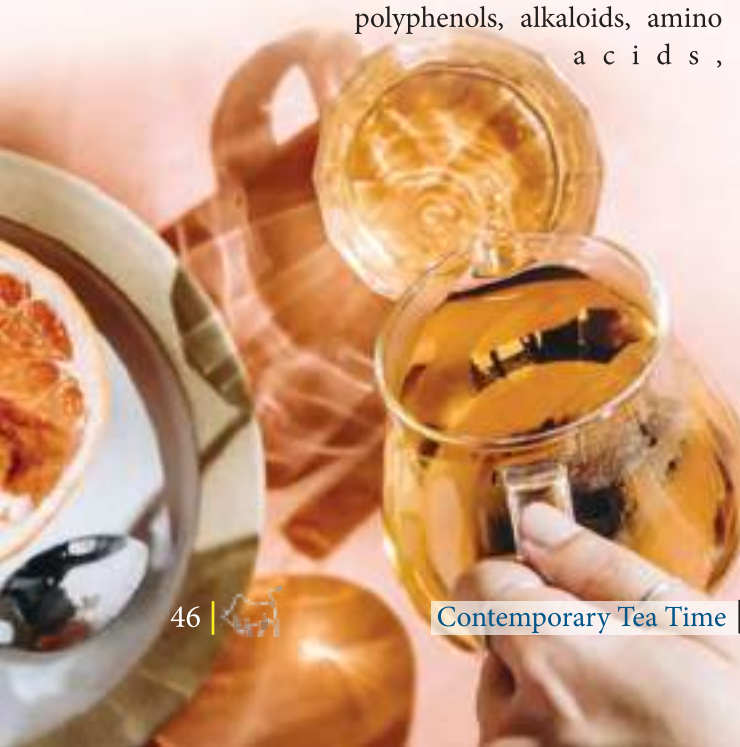
Polyphenols are also known as tannins. Catechins are the main polyphenols found in the tea. EGCG (epigallocatechin-3-gallate) is the major catechin in green tea and accounts for 50%-80% representing 200 to 300mg per brewed cup of green tea. During oxidation some catechins transformed into thearubigin and theaflavin. These tannins play a major role the scientific research into the health benefits of tea.

There are three alkaloids present in tea : caffeine, theophylline and theobromine. The caffeine found in the tea is also known as theine.

Around 20 amino acids have been found in tea, of which the key one, theanine, is specific to tea and represents 60% of the total amino acids.

Caffeine in tea is the same as that in coffee but it lends a different effect on the brain. Caffeine in coffee is absorbed swiftly into the circulation to reach the brain in less than five minutes. This produces the ‘pick me up’ effect of a cup of coffee. This effect dissipates over two to five hours. On the other hand, caffeine in tea being trapped by polyphenols is released progressively over approximately ten hours. The effect is a stimulation of the nervous system but not a sudden excitation or arousal.

The other two brain boosting compounds are L-theanine (amino acid) and EGCG (polyphenol). In 2016 Scholey and colleagues reported that volunteers who drank a nutrient drink containing 200 milligrams of L-theanine equivalent to eight cups of tea had lower stress



hormone cortisol and they reported being more relaxed after performing stress-inducing tasks compared to those who drank only a placebo. Magnetoencephalography (MEG) demonstrated alpha brain waves associated with relaxation as a consequence of consuming L-theanine. L-theanine acts synergistically with caffeine on the brain to improve reaction time and memory. L-theanine relaxes only those parts of the brain not needed to perform any tasks. As a result it induces a relaxed yet capable state of mind just like being ‘in the zone’.

L-theanine acts on brain chemistry in several ways. The compound passes through the blood-brain barrier, so it could directly benefit the brain plasticity. Plasticity is the process through which the brain regenerates itself. It could also act on the hypothalamic pituitary adrenal axis and reduce the cortisol and stress level. L-theanine has been shown in animal studies to boost the neurotransmitter GABA (gamma amino butyric acid), which in turn reduces anxiety.

The other brain boosting compound is EGCG-a catechin. Studies using electroencephalogram shows that the EGCG drink induces a relaxed and attentive state of mind. Animal studies have shown that this compound crosses the blood brain barrier to act directly on the brain to improve the health of the blood vessels and cognitive function of the brain.

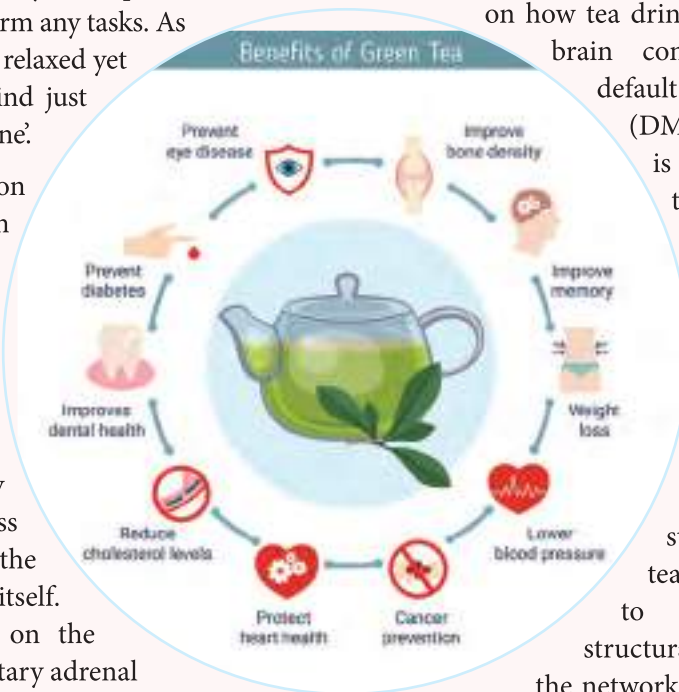
Epidemiological studies suggest that long-term habitual consumption of green tea might reduce the risk of dementia. One study of people aged over 55 in Singapore, for example, found that those who drank as little as one cup

of tea per week performed better at memory and information-processing tasks than did non-tea-drinkers.

Another study shows that in a healthy Korean population, those who habitually drank green tea were 21% less likely to develop depression over their lifetime than those who were non-drinkers.

Recently a group of researchers have focussed on how tea drinking can modulate brain connectivity in the default mode network (DMN). The DMN is a large network that connects a large number of brain regions. The network is responsible for the sense of self, moral reasoning and imagining the future. This study shows that tea drinking leads to more efficient structural organisation in the network. This study for the first time unlocks the direct effect of tea drinking on brain structure.

There is now a growing body of scientific evidence showing clear benefits of drinking tea on the function of the brain and mind. Be it white, black or green, just keep drinking tea and stay healthy! As Kenneth Graeme, author of *The Wind in the Willows*, said, “Come along inside . . . We’ll see if tea and buns can make the world a better place.”



Dr Kallol K Dey

MD MRCP (UK) FRCP (London)

is a consultant neurologist. He is passionate about tea and writes about diseases of the brain, mind, nerves and spine. His social media portal - www.facebook.com/cmristroke.

PIONEERING INDIGENOUS ASSAMESE TEA PLANTERS

There were several indigenous Assamese persons who were pioneers in tea plantation in Assam in the beginning years of tea plantation in Assam in spite of all the odds against them. They established and ran tea estates successfully with tremendous business acumen and enterprising zeal.

Maniram Dewan, the real discoverer of tea in Assam with Singpho Beesa Gam in all probability, was the first Assamese commercial tea planter (Baruah, 2008). Maniram Dutta Bar Bhandar Borua Dewan, popularly known as Maniram Dewan, an Assamese nobleman, was the first Indian tea entrepreneur and commercial tea planter, and was also a martyr in India's initial freedom struggle against the British rule. Tea plants were discovered growing wild in Upper Assam in 1823 and many believe that it was Maniram Dewan who in fact informed Major Robert Bruce about existence of wild tea plant in Assam and might have even introduced Beesa Gam, head of Singpho tribe, to Major Robert Bruce. He was the first native Indian tea planter establishing his two own tea estates competing with the mighty British rulers in tea cultivation and business in those days (Baruah, 2014).

Maniram Dewan started two tea estates, namely Cinnamara near Jorhat of Jorhat and the other Senglung near Sonari of Shivasagar district. Maniram Dewan was a great entrepreneur

and intelligent business person with in depth knowledge of the region of the North East India with great business acumen. He learnt about technique of tea plantation and labour management while he was working as Dewan of Assam Tea Company. In fact, he started developing a garden in 1842 'possibly with Company's labour and seedlings' like some

other employees of the Company. After his resignation in 1845, Maniram concentrated fully to develop two tea estates of his own- one at Cinnamara in south of Jorhat town and the other at Senglung near Suffry, Sonari of Shivasagar. Maniram became a successful tea planter and it is in record that in 1853, Cinnamara garden comprised of 270 acres of land and there were about 200 acres of tea in full bearing consisting of about 100 acres put out in 1854 and 100 acres in 1855. There were about 143 acres of young tea plants put out in 1856 and 1857. The 200 acres of mature tea produced a crop of 45,000 lb in 1857 which increased to 70,000 lb in 1858.

Crop and area record of Senglung garden are not available (Dutta, 1990). This shows the far reaching vision of Maniram Dewan who could visualise from the beginning the important role that tea would play in the economy of Assam (Barua, 1992).

The British could not tolerate that a 'native' would go for tea plantation competing at par with them and put many obstacles. Maniram



HISTORY



Dutta Barua was a great patriot and a person of firm determination. He established the two tea estates successfully in spite of all the obstacles (Barua, 1993). Maniram Dewan was hanged by



the British in the year 1858 for taking part in the India's freedom movement of 1857. It is said that before his execution, Dewan exhorted the Assamese people to look after the golden tea bushes of his two tea estates. Maniram Dewan was not only the one to discover or the first to have brought tea growing wildly in Assam to the notice of

the Britishers, but was also the first to start tea plantation on individual basis and the first martyr for India's freedom from North East India and tea's first martyr (Dutta, 1992).

After his execution, the two tea estates were confiscated by the British and sold in auction. George Williamson was the purchaser who got the tea estates at a very nominal rate. It had been reported that Williamson repented for taking unfair advantage in this purchase and later donated £ 10,000/- for opening libraries, schools of Industry and Arts in Jorhat and Golaghat areas. Execution of Maniran Dewan apparently acted as a set back from which Assamese businessman took some time to recover (Barua, 1992).

Tom Davey



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TEA TIME

Tiding from BANGLADESH



By Monjur Hossain

Government to take initiatives to boost tea exports

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi said that the tea production in Bangladesh was 60 million kg in 2009, which increased to 97.51 million kg in 2021, but the product was not exported much, so the government has decided to take steps to increase its export.

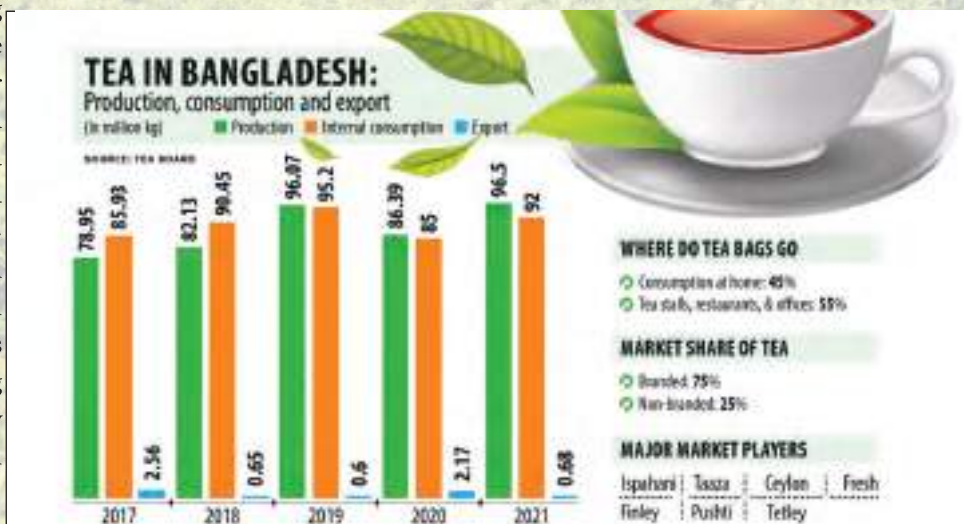
Minister for Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Imran Ahmad, who was the special guest at the programme, said, “Tea is one of our most important cash crops and it was the second most exported product.” He went on to add, “We have taken new initiatives for the tea industry, but one cannot get very quick returns in this sector as it takes four-five years for the plant to be ready for harvest. Investors have to wait for a long time to go into production, so long-term investments are made in this industry. As a result, development of the tea industry requires long-term financial support.”

National Tea Day was being celebrated for the second time in the country this year. Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman served as the chairman of the Tea Board from 4 June, 1957 to 23 October, 1958. As such the National Tea Day is being observed on 4th June to commemorate his birth centenary, his outstanding contribution to the tea industry and his joining as the chairman of the Tea Board.

Mirza Salman Ispahani, Chairman, Ispahani Tea Limited, received the award on behalf of Ispahani Group on the occasion of National Tea Day, being organised by the Bangladesh Tea Board since 2021. Special honours as well as recognitions were given to various individuals and organisations for their key contributions to tea production and the development of the industry in Bangladesh.

Record in tea production, yet import grows to ensure quality

Top brands sourcing teas import premium quality . The country failed to satisfy the quality market in tea , while recording an all-time high in its production.”Consumers are used to having tea from the finest leaves. To produce the premium quality tea, we need quality-grade leaves, which we do not find in local auctions,” said Mohammad Idris, executive director of HRC Group, one of the tea marketers. Noted



companies import tea from different countries, Kenya included, for ensuring the quality of their premium brands, he told *The Business Standard*. Simultaneously with production increase, the authorities concerned should prioritise quality, added Idris.

Echoing Idris, several other senior officials of top tea marketing companies expressed how majority of the existing 167 tea gardens in the country “failed” to produce quality tea leaves. They (garden owners) were in a competition to increase their yields and bag higher profits.

It was suggested the Board be strict to maintain the quality of the leaves. The professional tea taster, seeking anonymity, opined that there was no problem with the quality of tea grown in local gardens, further stating that big companies import ‘inferior quality’ tea to add colour to their brands. “The quality of local tea is absolutely okay. Import should be discouraged,” he said.

Record in production

Tea production recorded an all-time high in 2021, according to the Bangladesh Tea Board. In that year, the 167 tea gardens produced 96.5 million kg of tea, up by 11.7% from 86.39 million kg in the previous year (2020). It was 96.07 million kg in 2019, 82.13 million kg in 2018, 78.95 million kg in 2017.

The production was registered at 53.40 million kg in 2006. It has been on a consistent rise since then. However, in 2020, the trend lost its momentum due to the Covid-19 outbreak in the country.

Since the past decade, tea cultivation has spread to plain surfaces, particularly in northern Bangladesh, apart from traditional hilly areas, which greatly contributed to the surge in production. According to the Tea Board data, small-scale farmers of the plain-land area produced 14.5 million kg of tea in 2021, which was 13 million in the previous year.

Usually, tea leaves grown on plain surfaces are sold at Tk 100-200 per kg, while the price is Tk 200 for teas in hilly areas. Besides, frontline gardens sell their tea at TK 260-270 per kg.

Presently, the annual consumption of tea is around 90-95 million kg. Which has been increasing by 3-4% every year.

Imports on the sharp decline

Tea imports dropped 93% over the past four years. The import was 8.73 million kg in 2017 and decreased to only 0.62 million, or 6.25 lakh, kg in 2021. The reason behind the drop is just simple – a sharp surge in local production. The imports were 7.44 million kg in 2018, 1.52 million kg in 2019, 0.67 million kg in 2020. Top brands are continuing imports to meet the demand for premium tea products.

The current year, Abul Khair Group, one of the top tea marketers in the country, received the authorities’ nod to import 1,60,000 kg of tea, according to the Tea Board. It will import “Black Tea” from Kenya. Ispahani Tea was also allowed to import 2,88,000 kg on the same ground.

In addition, the board is expected to grant several other companies to import tea this year.

Ups and downs in export

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

In 2021, the country exported 0.68 million kg of tea leaves, a sharp drop from 2.17 million kg in 2020. The exports were 0.6 million kg in 2019, 0.65 million kg in 2018 and 2.56 million kg in 2017. Industry insiders observed the gradual rise in domestic consumption and ups and downs in productions were the reason behind the zigzag export trend. Furthermore, the quality of the local leaves was also a fact.

Overview of Bangladesh Tea Industry

Currently, there are five types of tea produced in Bangladesh: Green Tea, Black Tea, Oolong Tea, Instant Tea, and White Tea. According to the Bangladesh Tea Board, Abul Khair Consumer Products Ltd is in the top position among the six leading companies in Bangladesh in tea exports. In addition, Kazi & Kazi Tea Estate Ltd., Halda Valley Food & Beverage Ltd., and M.M. Ispahani Limited are ranked second, third and fourth, respectively, and Meghna Tea Company is fifth, and The Consolidated Tea & Lands Co. (BD) Ltd is at sixth position. According to a UNB report published in 2021, the three top tea brands in Bangladesh are Ispahani Mirzapur, KK or Kazi & Kazi, and Fresh



TEA TIME

purchasing power raising awareness among the people about different health benefits from different types of tea, the domestic consumption of tea has also increased, which is one of the reasons for the growth of the tea industry in Bangladesh.

The Government of Bangladesh has taken on several plans and initiatives to maintain the growth of its tea industry. Bangladesh Tea Board Chairman Major General Md. Ashraful Islam said about the expansion of the tea industry, “The government is helping to develop tea estate in areas where tea has never been produced before.”

Premium Tea. Among them, Kazi & Kazi tea estate produces organic tea and has been promoting Green Tea in Bangladesh. In addition to Kazi & Kazi, several local and foreign brands, including Ispahani, Lipton, Halda Valley, and Finlay, are currently working to popularise several more tea categories. There are two auction centres - Chittagong Auction Centre and the Srimangal Auction Centre. in Bangladesh, where tea produced is sold to various brands Over time, the per capita income of the people of Bangladesh has increased and changed the preferences of the consumer. The number of middle and upper-middle class people are growing in Bangladesh. As a result, the per capita tea consumption of the people of Bangladesh has reached more than 580 grams, which used to be only 100 grams. According to the Bangladesh Tea Board, in 2019, 99% of the tea produced in Bangladesh was consumed locally. However, according to a source, in 2021, 6 lakh 256 thousand kg of tea was imported as well. In addition to the changing preferences and

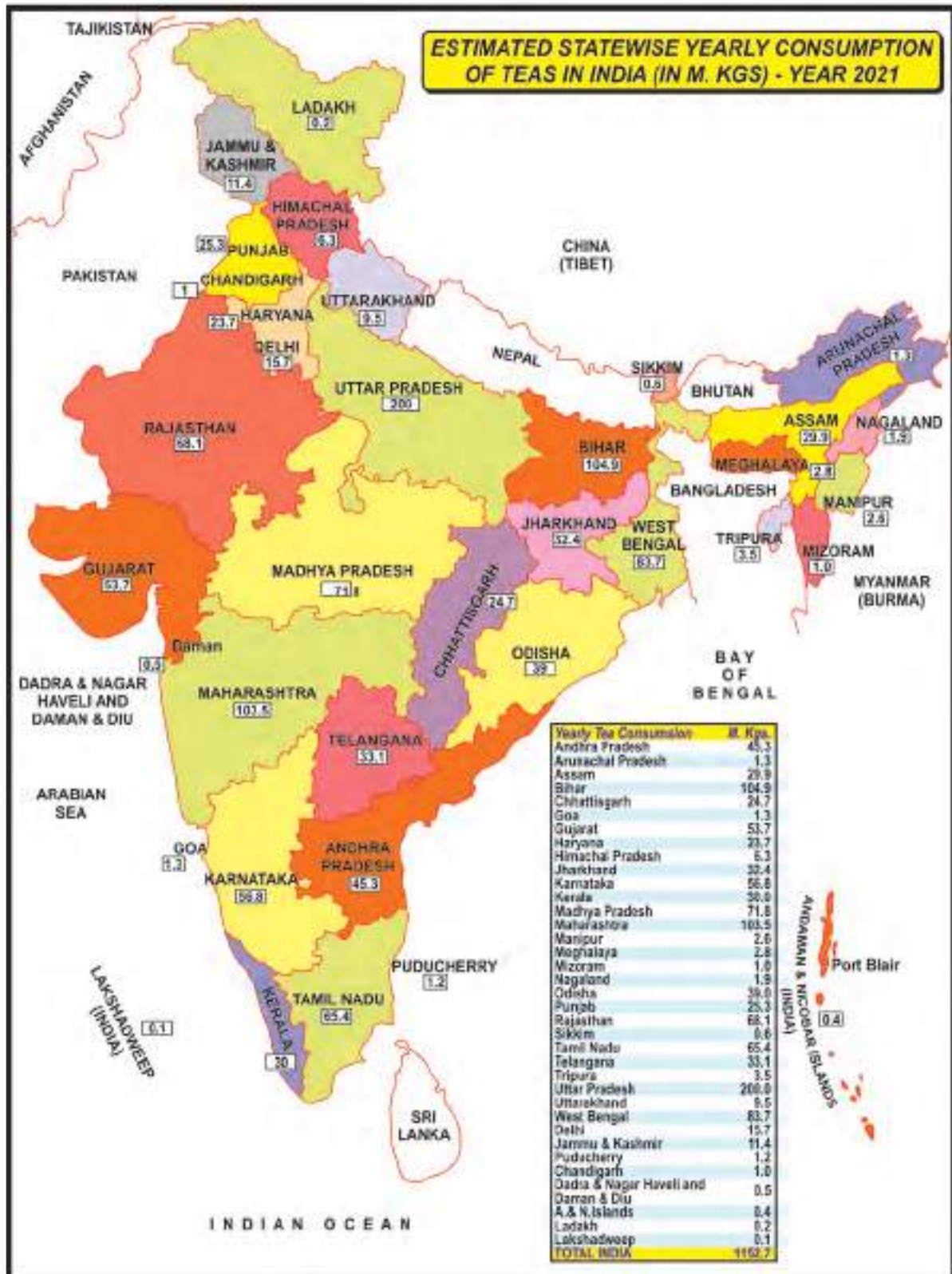
In addition to the Chittagong Hill Track Area, many projects are being implemented in the country’s northern districts for developing new tea estates. Alongside, there are some ongoing projects where the government is working towards expanding , by organising and motivating small-scale tea farmers. Under the schemes, besides providing necessary technical and financial support to these farmers, training is also being provided for their skill development. In addition, a tea-processing factory has been set up in the project area as planned. According to Dr. Nazneen Kawshar Chowdhury, Member (Joint Secretary), Bangladesh Tea Board, Bangladesh’s tea production will reach 140 million kg by 2025 if everything goes as planned.

The writer is Managing Director, PMTC (Bangladesh) Limited

In memory of Deepak Atal, a bench has been put up by his family members at the Tollygunge Club



Estimated Consumption Of Tea In India



ESTIMATED INDIAN STATE WISE CONSUMPTION OF TEA : 2019, 2020 & 2021

Sl. No.	STATE	2019		2020		2021	
		Monthly (M Kg)	Yearly (M Kg)	Monthly (M Kg)	Yearly (M Kg)	Monthly (M Kg)	Yearly (M Kg)
1	Andhra Pradesh	3.6	43.6	3.7	44.4	3.8	45.3
2	Arunachal Pradesh	0.1	1.3	0.1	1.3	0.1	1.3
3	Assam	2.4	28.8	2.4	29.3	2.5	29.9
4	Bihar	8.4	100.8	8.6	102.8	8.7	104.9
5	Chhattisgarh	2.0	23.8	2.0	24.3	2.1	24.7
6	Goa	0.1	1.3	0.1	1.3	0.1	1.3
7	Gujarat	4.3	51.6	4.4	52.6	4.5	53.7
8	Haryana	1.9	22.8	1.9	23.2	2.0	23.7
9	Himachal Pradesh	0.5	6.0	0.5	6.1	0.5	6.3
10	Jharkhand	2.6	31.2	2.7	31.8	2.7	32.4
11	Karnataka	4.5	54.6	4.6	55.7	4.7	56.8
12	Kerala	2.4	28.8	2.5	29.4	2.5	30.0
13	Madhya Pradesh	5.7	69.0	5.9	70.3	6.0	71.8
14	Maharashtra	8.3	99.5	8.5	101.5	8.6	103.5
15	Manipur	0.2	2.5	0.2	2.5	0.2	2.6
16	Meghalaya	0.2	2.7	0.2	2.8	0.2	2.8
17	Mizoram	0.1	1.0	0.1	1.0	0.1	1.0
18	Nagaland	0.2	1.8	0.2	1.9	0.2	1.9
19	Odisha	3.1	37.5	3.2	38.2	3.2	39.0
20	Punjab	2.0	24.4	2.1	24.8	2.1	25.3
21	Rajasthan	5.5	65.5	5.6	66.8	5.7	68.1
22	Sikkim	0.05	0.6	0.05	0.6	0.05	0.6
23	Tamil Nadu	5.2	62.9	5.3	64.1	5.5	65.4
24	Telangana	2.7	31.8	2.7	32.4	2.8	33.1
25	Tripura	0.3	3.4	0.3	3.4	0.3	3.5
26	Uttar Pradesh	16.0	192.2	16.3	196.0	16.7	200.0
27	Uttarakhand	0.8	9.1	0.8	9.3	0.8	9.5
28	West Bengal	6.7	80.5	6.8	82.1	7.0	83.7
NCT	Delhi	1.3	15.1	1.3	15.4	1.3	15.7
UT1	Jammu & Kashmir	0.9	11.0	0.9	11.2	1.0	11.4
UT2	Puducherry	0.1	1.1	0.1	1.2	0.1	1.2
UT3	Chandigarh	0.1	0.9	0.1	1.0	0.1	1.0
UT4	Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu	0.04	0.5	0.04	0.5	0.04	0.5
UT5	A. & N. Islands	0.03	0.3	0.03	0.3	0.03	0.4
UT6	Ladakh	0.02	0.2	0.02	0.2	0.02	0.2
UT7	Lakshadweep	0.005	0.1	0.01	0.1	0.01	0.1
TOTAL INDIA		92.3	1108.0	94.2	1130.1	96.1	1152.7

Estimates based on Tea Consumption Study Report by M/s Deloitte.

*The actual consumption during 2020 and 2021 may vary due to lockdown conditions and availability of tea

Month wise District wise Auction averages : 2022

CTC Leaf & All Dust

Assam : Estate

Month	Average (Rs.)
April	279.77
May	212.13
June	256.24
July	258.17
April to July	249.97

Dooars & Terai : Estate

Month	Average (Rs.)
April	257.17
May	205.59
June	241.23
July	223.82
April to July	231.19

Cachar : Estate

Month	Average (Rs.)
April	237.92
May	182.96
June	182.71
July	190.59
April to July	188.29

Tripura : Estate

Month	Average (Rs.)
April	227.34
May	160.47
June	151.56
July	153.80
April to July	157.81

Kerala : Estate

Month	Average (Rs.)
April	133.81
May	127.87
June	121.34
July	133.32
April to July	128.25

Tamil Nadu : Estate

Month	Average (Rs.)
April	122.50
May	122.12
June	118.53
July	120.60
April to July	120.67

Assam : BLF

Month	Average (Rs.)
April	195.83
May	157.82
June	163.97
July	165.95
April to July	165.70

Dooars & Terai : BLF

Month	Average (Rs.)
April	159.63
May	131.46
June	123.53
July	120.99
April to July	128.89

Kerala : BLF

Month	Average (Rs.)
April	91.26
May	89.62
June	82.73
July	85.08
April to July	86.28

Tamil Nadu : BLF

Month	Average (Rs.)
April	90.19
May	85.34
June	78.32
July	79.09
April to July	82.46

Orthodox

Assam : Estate

Month	Average (Rs.)
April	283.91
May	266.75
June	357.50
July	357.03
April to July	333.55

Kerala : Estate

Month	Average (Rs.)
April	141.28
May	167.55
June	171.77
July	176.38
April to July	168.65

Tamil Nadu : Estate

Month	Average (Rs.)
April	139.86
May	157.39
June	156.47
July	165.50
April to July	156.35

Compiled by Soumen Bagchi



Tribute

MR. KRISHNA KUMAR KALYANI

(13.04.1951 – 20.04.2022)

Mr. Krishna Kumar Kalyani, a legend in the North Bengal Tea Industry took on the reins of the Kalyani Group at the age of 21 years, after the demise of his father Late Sita Ram Kalyani in 1972.

Kishan Babu, as he was fondly addressed by all his employees, managed 8 Tea Estates upto 1997, had created a strong position for the Kalyani Group within the North Bengal Tea Industry. An able administrator, he took utmost care of his employees. His knowledge in tea husbandry was profound and benefited the Group immensely. He was a pioneer in production of Green Tea and steered the Kalyani Group as the largest producer of Green Tea in India.

At the age of 31, he became the youngest Chairman of Indian Tea Planters Association, Jalpai-

guri. Further on, to be elected as a Member of the Tea Board of India for 2 terms between 1984 to 1990. He also served on the Governing Body of the Siliguri Tea Auction Committee.

Mr. Kalyani was a multi-faceted personality. A member of the All India Congress Committee he served as the Treasurer of the West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee. Later on, he became the President of the Jalpaiguri District, All India Trinamool Congress. A true philanthropist, he was the Charter Member of Rotary Club of Jalpaiguri. An ardent devotee of Maa Durga, he spearheaded the renowned Kalyani Group Durga Puja festivities at Jalpaiguri for 35 years.

We pray for the departed soul and strength to the family to overcome these difficult times.



RAJENDRA KUMAR PODDAR

(07/12/1950 - 10/07/2022)

Started his tea journey at the age of 10 with his father Bajj Nath Ji Poddar in his company Harchandrai Kidarnath.





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Automation



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(Uniform Green Leaf Feeding)

Smart Discharge

(For Dryer Mouth Tea)



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