

CONTEMPORARY

TEA TIME

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Publisher's Note

The tea industry has been steeped in conventional thinking for some time. If you should read a poem published three decades ago by a producer lamenting the state of affairs in the industry (you'll find it in the next few pages), you'll find little has changed over the years.

The power players are still doing the same things while expecting different results. A few new entrants are making headway, of course, by charting their own paths and have turned around their properties, making them profitable. These are the ones who have followed the dictum that one must create one's own future. The best way to create the future is to visualise it so clearly and deeply that you manifest it; some believe that imagining the future may be even more important than analysing the past.

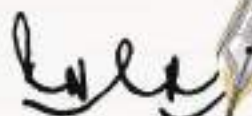

The late C K Prahalad said: "Strategy is about stretching limited resources to fit ambitious aspirations."

These words of wisdom are applicable to our industry. The bridge to the chasm that the industry is experiencing between aspirations and achievements today is locked between these quotes.

Those who are creating their future by stretching their limited resources, have found the way forward. Have you?

In conclusion, drawing up a vision, creating an end goal and then working towards it, is the way to go. Additionally those who innovatively stretch their resources (Indians call it *jugard*) to achieve their goals eventually succeed.

Signing off from Tea Time



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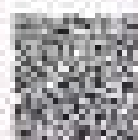
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Musings on Tea

Sourojit Palchoudhuri,
Director of Washabarie

shares his delightful musings on the
Ups and Downs of Tea



*When the market has been good, That is, be it understood,
Tea gets fifty rupees or more, Compliments will simply pour,
From everybody's happy lips, Teas are black, full of tips,
Clean and even, nicely made, BOP's a stylish grade,
Fannings too are useful size, (Just what the Russian market buys),
Infusion's, even-liquor's bright, Everything's infact all right,
Even stalky BP3, Is really quite a useful tea.*

*When the market takes a drop, All these nice allusions stop,
All teas now develop faults, Of the most alarming sorts,
Now no longer BOP, Is what it is supposed to be,
It is stalk, fibres grey, (Mixed, uneven so they say),
As for stalky BP3, It can no longer sell as tea,
Infusion's dull or black or green, Liquor's the thinnest ever seen,
Teas will now take a taint Of Hessian, onion or new paint,
And in fact you might as well, Just burn the stuff so what the hell.*

*After sunshine comes the rain, But the sun comes out again,
And I am sure that in the end, Tea will take an upward trend,
So in spite of all this fuss, Tea is just the stuff for us,
Although it's damn ridiculous.*

This poem first appeared in the July to September 1994 issue of the Tea Time.



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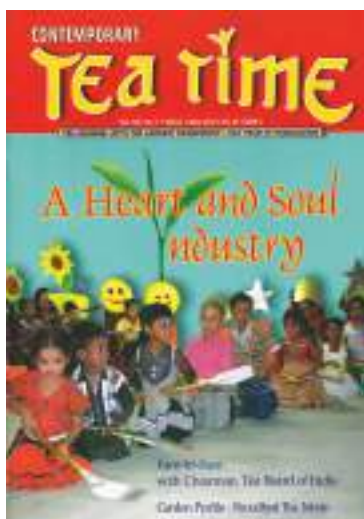
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Food Safety Regulations in India and around the world



Food control measures are regulatory frameworks, standards, and enforcement mechanisms implemented by governments and international bodies to ensure food safety, quality, and hygiene. These measures help protect public health, facilitate trade, and prevent food fraud. Various national and international organizations regulate food safety, akin to India's **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)**. Some of the most stringent food regulatory bodies worldwide includes the following:

1. Major Food Regulatory Bodies Around the World



A. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) – USA

The **FDA** is responsible for ensuring the safety of food, drugs, and cosmetics. Under the **Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)**, the FDA has shifted its focus from responding to food contamination to preventing it. FSMA includes stringent supply chain monitoring, traceability requirements, and hazard analysis.



B. European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) – EU

The **EFSA** provides scientific advice on food risks and develops regulations under **EU food law**. The **General Food Law (Regulation (EC) No. 178/2002)** mandates traceability across the

supply chain and rapid alerts for unsafe food. The **EU's farm-to-fork strategy** emphasizes sustainability, alongside stringent food safety.

C. Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) – Canada

CFIA ensures compliance with the **Safe Food for Canadians Act (SFCA)**, which mandates licensing, food safety controls, and traceability. Canada follows a **preventive control plan (PCP)** approach, requiring businesses to prove compliance with food safety measures.



D. Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) – Australia & New Zealand

FSANZ develops food standards under the **Food Standards Code**, which applies to food safety, labeling, and contaminants.



The agency focuses on **strict risk assessment** before food approval and **stringent allergen labeling** requirements.

E. United Kingdom Food Standards Agency (UK FSA) – UK

Following Brexit, the **UK FSA** has implemented independent regulations, focusing on **food authenticity, hygiene ratings, and stricter allergen labeling** (**Natasha's Law**), requiring clear ingredient disclosure.



F. Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) – International

Codex, established by **WHO and FAO**, sets global food safety standards. While not legally binding, Codex guidelines influence international food trade and national regulations.



G. China National Food Safety Standards (CFSA) – China



China's **State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR)** enforces food safety through the **Food Safety Law of China**, which includes **heavy penalties for violations** and **mandatory product recalls**.

2. Most Stringent Food Regulatory Systems

While all the above bodies enforce rigorous standards, some stand out for their **strict**

enforcement and regulatory measures:

- **European Union (EFSA)** – The EU has some of the toughest food regulations, including **bans on certain pesticides, hormones, and GMOs** that are allowed elsewhere.
- **United States (FDA/FSMA)** – The **Preventive Controls Rule** and **Foreign Supplier Verification Programs** ensure imported food meets U.S. safety standards.
- **Canada (CFIA)** – CFIA enforces **farm-to-table traceability** and rigorous allergen management.
- **China (SAMR)** – After past scandals, China has enforced **harsh penalties** for food safety violations.

In conclusion, food safety regulations vary globally, but the **EU, U.S., and Canada** have some of the strictest measures to ensure consumer protection.

The **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) Act, 2006** is designed to ensure the safety and quality of food products in India. Its core values in the food industry include **consumer health protection, transparency, accountability, innovation, and compliance**. The act aims to regulate food safety standards, prevent adulteration, and promote public health through stringent regulations.

Benefits to Consumers:

1. **Food Safety & Quality:** Consumers get access to hygienic, nutritious, and uncontaminated food products.
2. **Prevention of Adulteration:** The act curbs food adulteration, ensuring products are free from harmful substances.
3. **Labeling & Transparency:** FSSAI mandates clear labeling, helping consumers



make informed choices.

4. **Standardization:** It enforces uniform food standards, preventing misleading claims and ensuring fair practices.
5. **Redressal Mechanism:** Consumers can report violations and seek action against unsafe food products.

Demands on Producers:

1. **Licensing & Registration:** Food businesses



TEA TIME

must obtain FSSAI registration before manufacturing or selling products.

2. **Compliance with Standards:** Producers must meet safety, hygiene, and quality regulations.
3. **Labeling Requirements:** Accurate labeling of ingredients, nutritional values, and expiry dates is mandatory.

4. **Testing & Certification:** Regular testing of products in accredited labs ensures compliance.

5. **Traceability & Record-Keeping:** Producers must maintain records to track food safety throughout the supply chain.

The FSSAI Act ultimately balances consumer rights with producer responsibilities, ensuring a safer and more reliable food industry.

Global Food Safety Standards for Tea

Global food safety standards for tea are guided by international regulations and best practices to ensure product quality, consumer health, and trade compliance. The Codex Alimentarius, established by the FAO and WHO, sets the foundational international food standards, including maximum residue limits (MRLs) for pesticides and contaminants in tea.

These standards help harmonize safety regulations globally.

These global food standards, such as those set by the Codex Alimentarius, regulate pesticide residues in tea by establishing Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) for various chemicals. For instance, the Codex specifies an MRL of 0.1 mg/kg for chlorpyrifos-methyl and 20 mg/kg for cypermethrin in tea. While certain pesticides are banned in some countries, the Codex focuses on setting permissible levels rather than outright bans. It's important to note that MRLs can vary between countries and regions, reflecting differing agricultural practices and

safety assessments. Therefore, producers and consumers should consult local regulations to ensure compliance with the specific standards applicable in their area.

Action taken by the tea growing state Governments in India.

In India, the states of West Bengal, Assam, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala have undertaken various measures to enforce the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) guidelines for tea production:

West Bengal: The state labor department issued a gazette notification to curb the sale of teas containing banned pesticides and to monitor the influx of teas from neighboring regions. A list of 26 prohibited pesticides was annexed to reinforce compliance with FSSAI standards. Additionally, the health department initiated inspections and sampling of teas to ensure adherence to safety norms.

Assam: FSSAI collaborated with the Tea Board and local planters to enhance tea safety and

quality. Emphasis was placed on adopting bio-pesticides, conducting joint inspections, and ensuring compliance with Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) for pesticides. Financial assistance was provided to upgrade pesticide testing laboratories.

Tamil Nadu: Interactive sessions and training programs were organized for Small Tea Growers (STGs) in Coonoor. These initiatives focused on integrated pest management, good agricultural practices, and maintaining recommended intervals between pesticide application and tea leaf plucking to comply with FSSAI's MRLs.

Kerala: While specific measures were not

tolerance limit of 0.01 mg/kg in tea.

The supply of these banned pesticides to the tea industry often involves unauthorized agrochemical vendors. Reports indicate that despite bans, certain dealers continue to sell prohibited chemicals like Monocrotophos to tea growers, particularly small-scale farmers who may lack awareness of current regulations. To combat this, associations such as the United Forum of Small Tea Growers have urged government intervention to prevent the illegal sale of these substances.

Tea producers must comply with **Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)** and **Good**

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has strictly prohibited the use of the following 20 pesticides in tea production:

- | | | |
|---------------|------------------|---|
| 1. Aldicarb | 8. Carbofuran | 15. Diazinon |
| 2. Aldrin | 9. Methomyl | 16. DDT (Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane) |
| 3. Dieldrin | 10. Phosphamidon | 17. Fenitrothion |
| 4. Chlordane | 11. Captafol | 18. Fenthion |
| 5. Heptachlor | 12. Ferbam | 19. Methyl Parathion |
| 6. Lindane | 13. Formothion | 20. Ethyl Parathion |
| 7. Endosulfan | 14. Simazine | |

detailed in the provided sources, FSSAI, along with industry partners, planned to implement capacity-building initiatives across tea-growing areas, including Kerala, to promote safe and hygienic tea production.

These concerted efforts aim to ensure that tea production in these states aligns with national safety standards, safeguarding both consumer health and the industry's reputation.

Additionally, FSSAI has mandated testing for six other pesticides—Cypermethrin, Acephate, Imidacloprid, Acetamiprid, Dinotefuran, and Fipronil—to ensure they do not exceed the

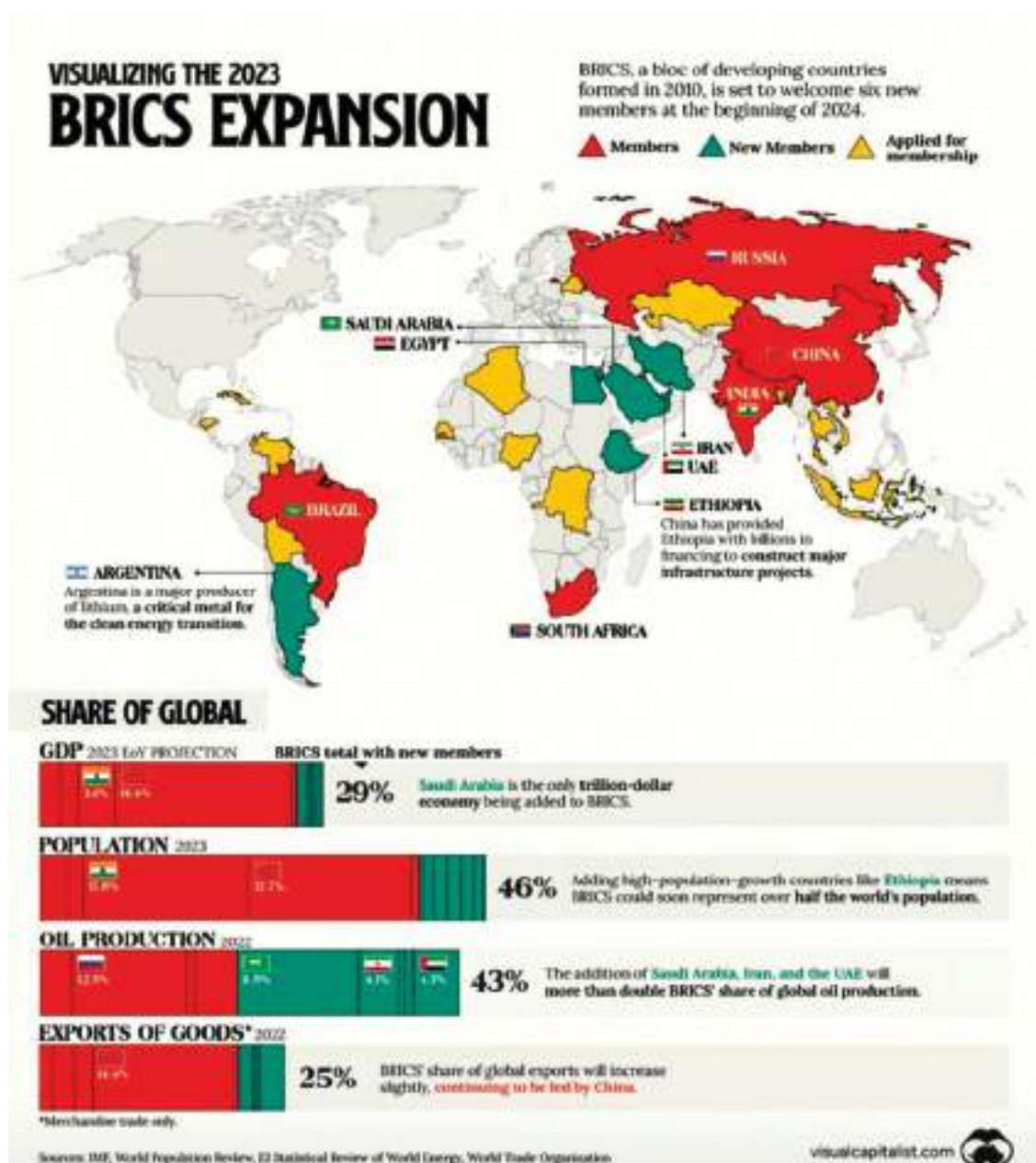
Manufacturing Practices (GMP) to maintain hygiene and reduce contamination risks during cultivation, harvesting, and processing. The **Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP)** system is widely implemented to identify and control potential hazards throughout production.

Key certification programs include **ISO 22000**, which outlines a comprehensive food safety management system, and **Global G.A.P.**, which ensures safe and sustainable farming. Additionally, import markets like the European Union and United States enforce

strict MRLs, microbiological limits, and labeling requirements under EFSA and FDA regulations, respectively.

Third-party certifications like Rainforest Alliance and Fair Trade also incorporate

safety and sustainability criteria. Compliance with these standards is essential for market access, consumer trust, and international trade. Regular testing, traceability systems, and continuous improvement are integral to meeting these global tea safety standards.





DUBAI SPECIALITY COFFEE AUCTIONS

Dubai Coffee Auction sets new record prices with Panamanian Geisha sold for US \$10,000 per kilo.

The inaugural Dubai Multi Commodities Centre (DMCC) Specialty Coffee Auction saw record prices set in an afternoon of frantic global bidding.

World of Coffee, Dubai

DMCC Specialty Coffee Auction sets record prices for specialty coffees.

New highest auction prices set for coffee from Bolivia, Ethiopia and the USA.

First auction of its kind at World of Coffee, Dubai with all lots held onsite in Dubai.

Dubai, UAE: The inaugural Dubai Multi Commodities Centre (DMCC) Specialty Coffee Auction saw record prices set in an afternoon of frantic global bidding.

The event saw 16 lots from 11 different producers across nine countries, featuring six different coffee varieties. Out of these, 11 lots were Geisha coffee, making it a truly global showcase of some of the best coffee producers in the world. Bidders were both in the room and remote via a digital auction platform.

The highest-selling coffee came from Finca Sophia, a farm in Panama, and sold for \$10,020 per kilo. Meanwhile, a lot of Kona SL 34 from Hawaii set a new record for American coffee, going for \$910 per kg, eight-times the previous highest price paid for Kona.

La Llama beans from the Los Rodriguez producer became the most expensive Bolivian coffee ever sold, fetching \$350 per kg, while a new record was set for Ethiopian coffee with \$1,100 per kg paid for Gesha Village Oma Natural. Overall, the top three bids were from the Geisha variety with another lot of Finca Sophia selling for \$8,614 and Finca La Mula selling for \$2,620.

Khalid Al Hammadi, Executive Vice President, DXB Live said: “The inaugural Dubai Coffee Auction by DMCC in 2025 has reinforced Dubai’s position as a global hub for the coffee trade. By bringing together producers, traders, and enthusiasts from around the world, the auction showcased some of the rarest and finest coffees, achieving remarkable results and setting new records for specialty coffee. This auction has not only highlighted the growing demand for exceptional coffee but also strengthened our commitment to driving growth, sustainability, and excellence within the industry.”

HAPPENINGS

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Who Grew India Tea

Tea is the world's favourite drink, and Kolkata can proudly claim to play a big part in the global tea market.

How the city became a hub for one of the most widely consumed beverages in the world is a story filled with some remarkable characters.

By the 1800s, tea had become the East India Company's most valuable traded commodity. But, the British had a problem.

They were entirely dependent on China for the tea and desperately needed another source.

In Assam, two Scottish brothers, Robert and Charles Bruce (both are buried in a Tezpur church), became the first Britishers to discover that tea plants grew wild locally and were consumed by the Singpho tribe.

Some Indian tea was exported to England and the Assam Company — the first joint stock tea company — was formed. But unfortunately, Indian tea was seen as inferior to the Chinese variety and never really took off.

Lord Bentinck, who was then the Governor General, formed a tea committee to figure the way forward. The committee decided it was best to smuggle tea saplings from China into India,

along with the knowhow of how to process the leaves.

A Scottish botanist, Robert Fortune, was hired for this corporate espionage; an apt name for a person who was about to steal an entire industry.

Fortune arrived in China in 1848. He shaved his head, adopted the name Sing Wa, disguised himself as a Chinese government official, and travelled for three years across the country's tea-producing provinces, making detailed notes.

When Fortune sailed back to India, he carried a huge quantity of plants and seeds and six Chinese tea masters, in an act that today would be termed an epic corporate fraud.

Ironically, despite this daredevil tea heist, the Chinese plants Fortune brought to India proved unsuitable for Assam.

It was left to some breakthrough research at Calcutta Botanical Gardens — led by its Danish-origin head Nathaniel Wallich — to rescue the Indian tea story.

Wallich identified that both the Assam and China tea plants were of the same *Camellia sinensis* species, and with this the focus shifted



to using the local tea bush for expanding Indian tea cultivation.

Meanwhile, another character joined this list of remarkable personalities.

Robert Thomas landed in Kolkata in 1833, as a young Welshman, seeking his fortune.

He saw an opportunity for setting up an auction house trading in commodities — indigo, silk, cotton, tea — and founded J. Thomas and Company, the first company to conduct an auction of Indian tea in Kolkata.

It was Robert Thomas's auction system that anchored the tea trade to Kolkata, placing this city at the centre of the tea map.

The auctions helped tea growers from remote areas access wider markets, brought buyers and sellers together on the same platform, and provided the transparency of demand and supply for discovering a fair price. To this day, weekly tea auctions are held in Kolkata, and the longevity of the tea auctions has proven their effectiveness.

Among the list of amazing personalities that made Kolkata a centre for the tea trade, only Robert Thomas is buried in the city.

So, I decided to search out his grave and see for myself this slice of tea heritage that few know about.

On a hot and clammy April afternoon, I arrived at the Lower Circular Road cemetery, carrying with me an old photograph of Thomas' grave that I had found from past research.

I met Margaret Ekka, the secretary of the Christian Burial Board, at her small office near the entrance to the cemetery and she kindly agreed to help me. We sat together under a whirling ceiling fan while my photograph was

passed around among the workers, and one of the maalis recognised the burial place, guessing from the location of the trees in the background.

We entered the cemetery and searched among thousands of silent graves, under the shadow of huge mango and jamun trees with bunches of fruit waiting to be plucked, our feet crunching on the dried leaves and twigs strewn on the ground. Finally, we found the burial place of Robert Thomas (1808-65), The Father of the Tea Trade and Auction System in India.

I stood beside Thomas's grave in the still and humid air, with just the cawing of birds and the scampering of squirrels for company. The grave was beginning to fall apart, and its headstone was faded with age.

As I looked at this silent reminder of the city's tea story, I wished I could have enjoyed a cuppa with Robert Thomas and heard his many tales. Hurrah for the cup that cheers.

Source: Telegraph

Author: Adil Ahmed

Adil Ahmad is a Kolkata-born discoverer deeply curious about the city's heritage and history.

You can read his blogs at www.indiaheritage.in and reach Adil at hello@indiaheritage.in



Will Instant Tea replace the Tea Bag?

The Tea Bag Story

Introduction

In the current times, with increased demand for quicker and more convenient tea brewing methods, will sales of instant tea soon take over the sale of regular tea bags?

In India, the The Indian Railways serve instant teas flavoured with ginger and cardamom. This switch has taken place over the past two years. All major national packeteers are producing instant tea for the urban Indian markets and have found a way to diversify into production of milk powder, and flavours. We wonder whether the flavours can be patented like ink colours. The colour black is not the same produced by the various brands for instance and neither the colour red or blue.

A super market chain in the UK is marketing what they call *Kadak Chai* and they say that those on the go prefer instant tea sachets over tea bags. "Add hot water and the brew is ready". they say.

However flavoured infusions may still need tea bags for a while.

Modern Efficiency: The Rise of the Tea bag

The idea of selling tea in portion-sized small bags was devised in the United States in the early twentieth century. Early examples used textile sachets, known as tea balls, that could be placed in a teapot or urn. Numerous entrepreneurial American tea importers claimed to have been instigators of this innovation. In 1903, for example, two women took out a patent for a fabric 'small pocket with terminal flap... especially adapted for holding

tea leaves', suitable to make a single cup of tea in a cup. Other tea companies claimed to have been selling similar items from around the same period: one tea man, Thomas Sullivan, maintained that the tea bag evolved in 1908 from the sample sachets of tea he had made up in silk bags. The rationale in each case was convenience and efficiency: in this sense, the tea bag is an indicator of modernity and of the American century. The tea bag appealed to the manufacturer because it was frugal.

It was not until 1953 that the first British company, Tetley, began selling similar tea bags. Tetley was an old grocery firm, founded in 1837, specializing in the Indian trade. Their early tea bags, packed in individual paper envelopes, were recognized as an American intervention. A verse satire in the Manchester Guardian in 1953 complained.

Of tea alone Great Britain brags;
Americans have not a clue.
Americans make tea with bags.

Despite the frosty reception, the American invention prospered. A packet of 'De Luxe Quality Tetley Tea Bags' was expensive - a box containing 48 bags cost 7s. 11d.- and contained, they claimed somewhat hyperbolically, 'the finest high grown tea, and only the tenderest tips of that', 'made the connoisseur way'. Their advice about the method was simple: 'drop the tea bag into a warmed pot, pour out tea pure, clear and flavourful, with never a leaf in sight.' Early adopters had to be reminded not to open



Instant Tea powder

smallest tea grade, sifted or winnowed out of the higher grades. However, as impecunious tea drinkers have long known, dusts and fannings produce strong, dark tea liquor. Tea bags allowed companies to use these cheaper grades to make a strong and flavoursome tea without muddying the liquor.

Changing technology in the tea industry helped produce more tea of these low and strong grades suitable to tea bags. In 1931, Sir William Mckercher, of Amgoorie Tea Estate in Assam, developed a more efficient and quicker method of manufacturing tea. Now known as the crush-tear-curl system, his process radically shortened and entirely mechanized the tea manufacturing

the bag itself and pour out the tea leaves. Other British tea firms followed: Twinings developed a tea bag for the American market in 1956, for example. But Tetley led the growth: tea bags comprised 0.75 per cent of overall tea sales in 1960, 6 per cent in 1967 and 16 per cent in 1972. All the tea companies were forced to respond, launching tea bag versions of best-selling tea brands such as Brooke Bond, PG Tips and Typhoo in the 1960s. By 2013, tea bags accounted for 91 per cent of the tea drunk in Britain.

The tea bag changed the sociability of tea. Making tea in a teapot imagined a slow service, steeping the leaves for three to six minutes, with the infusion available for a number of people. While the teapot was communal and sociable, the tea bag was essentially a lonely singleton: one bag per mug. Tea bags made it more convenient for a drinker to make tea quickly, but in so doing, the almost ineluctable connection between tea and sociability was revised. Tea bags also changed the tea itself, making use of the lowest-quality grades of tea, known as fannings and dust. These grades comprise very small particles of tea leaf, originally produced only as a by-product of the manufacturing process of higher-grade leaf teas. 'Dust grade' is literally tea waste, while 'fannings' are the second

Salada tea-bag, 1975. Tea bags were pioneered by various American companies at the beginning of the twentieth century, but became popular in the post-war period. To the consumer they offered convenience and efficiency, while to the manufacturer they allowed cheaper and lower grades of tea a wider use. By 2013, tea bags accounted for 91 per cent of the tea drunk in Britain.



TEA TIME

process, turning the essentially handmade artisanal production of tea into one organized by the work-time discipline of factory labour. The machinery continuously processes the tea through a series of contra-rotating toothed rollers, so that the leaves are cut, torn and curled, producing a relatively fine-grained and completely oxidized black preparation. This method, industry apologists enthuse, produces a 'quick infusing tea' that can 'penetrate the paper barrier' of the tea bag. Faster and cheaper than the classical methods of tea manufacture, crush-tear-curl involves little direct human labour: furthermore it results in a reliable tea, with a strong liquor, consistent flavour and mild bitterness. Crush-tear-curl has become the

dominate method of tea production, especially in South Asia and Africa, where 90-95 per cent of production follows the method.

In the post-war period, tea fitted itself for the modern world by becoming more convenient and more efficient. The tea bag transformed tea making from a semi-ritualized preparation process requiring specialist equipage and skill into a quick, dependable and quotidian event. Tea, too has changed, produce a consistently dark and highly flavoured liquor. Becoming modern made tea more-accessible and more reliable. Consumers could now purchase a branded product that would produce the same taste day after day, year after year.



New self-service tea machine, c. 1945. Twentieth-century dreams of automatic tea imagined a technologically enhanced experience, combining speed and efficiency with the relaxation and leisure implied in tea drinking.



*This article includes extracts from the **Empire of Tea** published in 2016 written by Markman Ellis, Richard Coulton, and Matthew Mauger*

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

CTC Tea

A true testament to the wide range of CTC processing equipment offered by us are as follows:



CTC Roller



CTC Roller



CTC Roller



CTC Roller



CTC Roller



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CTC Roller



CTC Roller



CTC Roller



CTC Roller

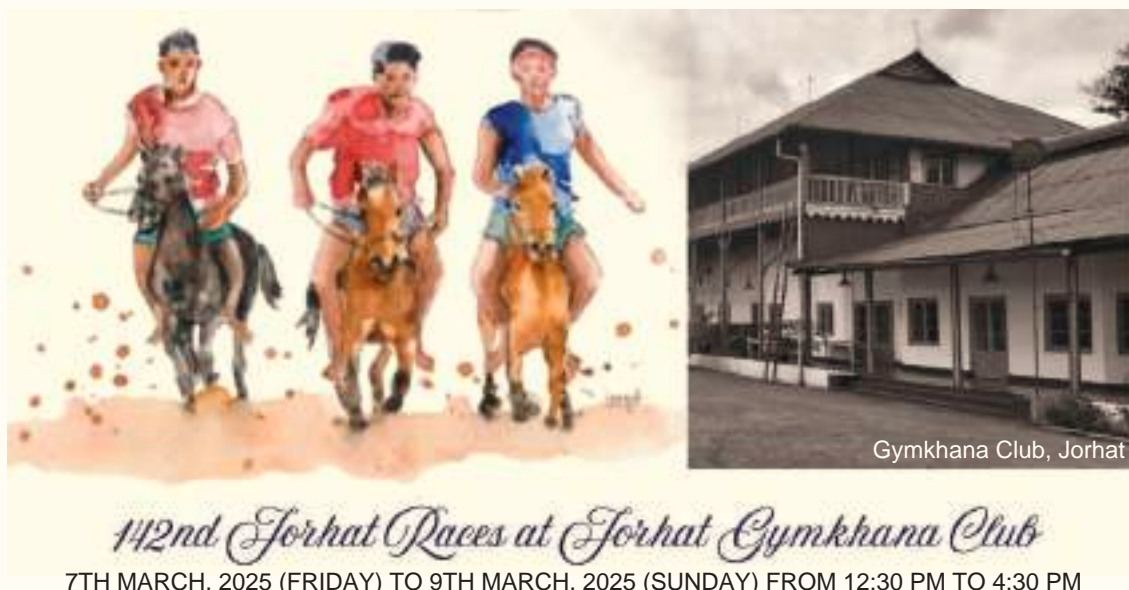


CTC Roller



CTC Roller

Marshall Fowler has been a range of CTC Tea processing machinery are represented by most of the processing plant for tea processing using equipment. The machinery offered also reduce labour cost and ensure consistency in quality.



JORHAT RACES



The Jorhat Gymkhana Races, held at the historic Jorhat Gymkhana Club in Assam, India, are among the oldest organized horse racing events in the region. The inaugural race took place on January 16, 1877, under the honorary secretaryship of C.I. Showers.

This event was initiated by British tea planters who sought to showcase their equestrian skills and provide entertainment for all levels of workers involved in tea plantations. The races were designed as a carnival-like atmosphere, reflecting the social fabric of the time and offering a communal space for relaxation and festivity.

The Jorhat Gymkhana Club itself was established a year earlier, in 1876, by D. Slimmon, a British planter. Originally serving as a 'planter's club' for British tea planters, it quickly became a hub for various sports and social activities, including polo, golf, cricket, lawn tennis, and billiards. The club's facilities have evolved over time, but its commitment to equestrian sports, particularly horse racing, has remained steadfast. In the mid-20th century, as tea planters ceased using horses for work-related activities, the races faced potential decline. However, the integration of Mising riders and their indigenous ponies from the Brahmaputra riverbanks revitalized the event. These riders,





known for their exceptional equestrian skills, began participating in the races, riding bareback without saddles and stirrups. This collaboration not only preserved the tradition but also enriched it by incorporating local cultural Today, the Jorhat Races continue to be a significant cultural and sporting event in Assam. The races are organized by the Jorhat Gymkhana Club, which has expanded its role to include various community activities. The event typically spans several days and features a range of activities beyond horse racing, such as car rallies, dog shows, traditional food exhibitions, and live music performances, fostering a festive atmosphere. These additions have broadened the event's appeal, attracting diverse audiences and despite facing challenges such as economic downturns in the tea industry and regional disturbances, the races have demonstrated resilience. There were periods when the event was suspended, notably between 1991-1993 and 2004-2007. However, dedicated efforts by the organizing committee and the local community have ensured its revival and continuity. The

Royal Calcutta Turf Club has also played a supportive role by providing technical guidance to ensure the smooth running of the heritage event. The races have also served philanthropic purposes. Traditionally, around 30% of the collections are earmarked for direct charity, with the balance going towards organizational expenses and supporting the ponies and riders. For instance, in previous years, the organizers offered financial support to Mising villages by sponsoring the renovation of community halls. This charitable aspect underscores the event's commitment to community development and cultural preservation. In recent years, efforts have been made to adapt and sustain the event amid changing socio-economic conditions. The inclusion of activities like car rallies and exhibitions aims to widen viewer appeal and transform the races into a city festival.





A finance graduate pursued a Masters in Entrepreneurship and Innovation after which she joined her family tea business Bohagi Tea Co. Pvt. Ltd. Leveraging this experience, she recently conducted an insightful survey on urban Indian tea preferences, providing valuable consumer insights.

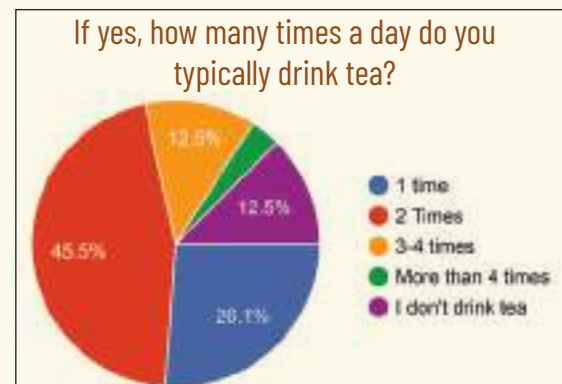
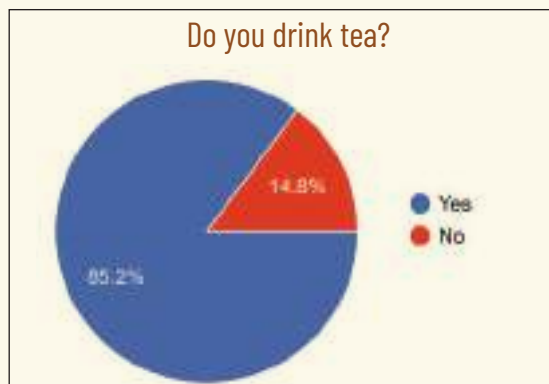
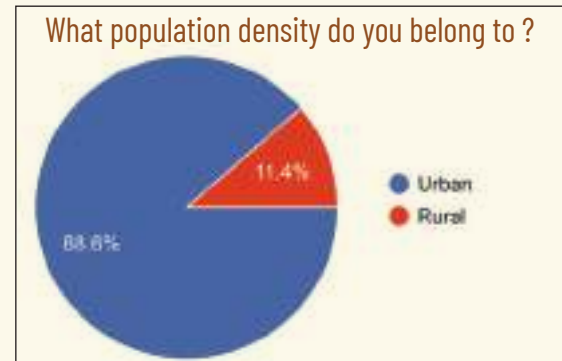
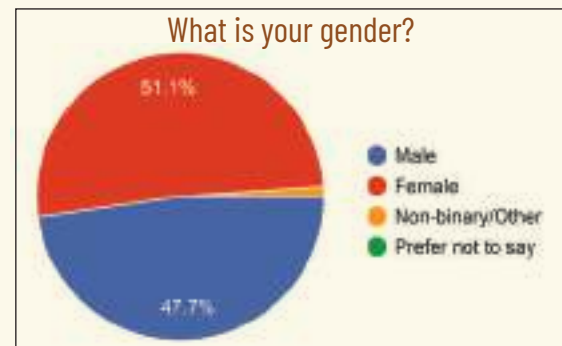
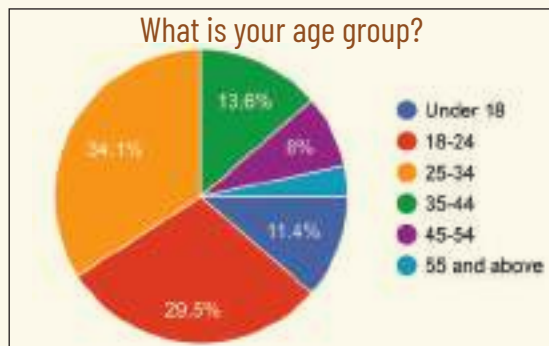
A survey of Tea Consumption in India

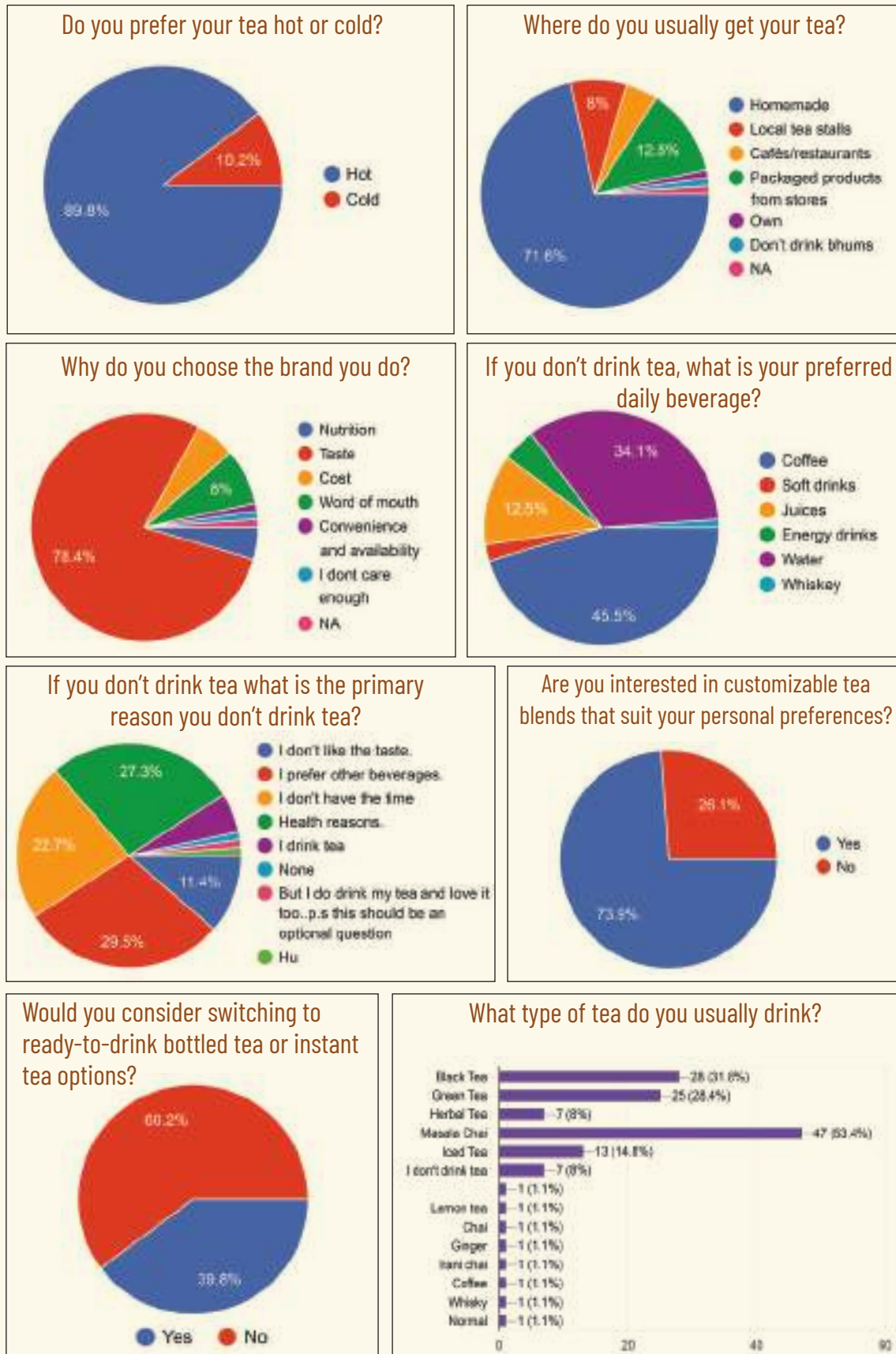
Bhumika Beria

Bhumika, carried out a survey of tea drinking preferences in India, recently. In her own words “I completed my graduation in Finance and Accountancy from Christ University and began my career as an auditor at EY GDS. While I liked auditing, but the

thought of spending my life behind a desk didn’t sit well with me. The open tea gardens of my childhood and the urge to do more felt far more inviting, so I left my job to pursue masters in Entrepreneurship and Innovation at Trinity Business School, Dublin. After my masters, I joined my family business to learn the intricacies of tea and immerse myself in the world of plantations and trade.”

This survey is mostly of the urban sector and quite informative. The results of her findings are reproduced below.





RUNGTA TEA

Legacy Brewed with
Passion and Perseverance



Tea is more than just a beverage—it is an emotion, a tradition, and for some, a lifelong pursuit. One such story of passion and dedication is that of **Mr. Dinesh Rungta**, the visionary behind Rungta Tea. Over the past 25 years, he has built a brand that stands for quality, authenticity, and an unwavering commitment to excellence.

From FMCG Distribution to Premium Tea

Born in Muzaffarpur, Bihar, Mr. Rungta's entrepreneurial journey began initially with distributorships and then super Distributorship and C&F for brands like Britannia, Marico, Bikaji, Nirma and other national brands. But his true ambition lay elsewhere. In 2001, he moved to **Siliguri** with his wife and children, carrying nothing but determination and a dream—to establish his own tea brand.

With no family or relatives in the city, he stayed with friends and in hotels while navigating the complexities of the tea trade. Starting from scratch, he learned the market intricacies, sourcing sourcing 50 thousand kilograms of tea before October's off-season and slowly building his brand.

The Birth of a Brand

Determined to build something of his own, he launched his first tea brand, *Real Gold*, in 2002. The early years were challenging, facing stiff competition from established players, pricing hurdles, and quality gaps. Yet, through perseverance and strategic market positioning, he found his buyers and learned how to carve a niche in the industry. Today, the company's portfolio stands tall with nine successful brands under its name.

What began as a modest office with a 1,500 sq. ft. warehouse and a small team of just 15 employees has now expanded into a sprawling 100,000 sq. ft. facility with a workforce of over 300. At their state-of-the-art production unit, tea is processed and packaged using advanced machinery, ensuring a fully automated, human-touch-free experience for the highest standards of quality and consistency. With a well-equipped production setup and a dedicated quality team,





they have now opened doors to private labeling, supporting larger players in the market with their expertise and infrastructure.

A Family Rooted in Tea

At the heart of Rungta Tea's success lies not just business acumen but a deep familial bond, where each member has played a crucial role in shaping the brand. While Mr. Dinesh Rungta laid the foundation, his wife and daughter have been instrumental in expanding and refining the company's vision, especially in tea tasting, blending, and flavored teas.

Mrs. Rungta: From Homemaker to Tea Connoisseur

When Mr. Rungta started his tea business, his wife had little knowledge about tea tasting or procurement. For years, she remained a silent observer, managing home and family while her husband worked tirelessly to build the brand. However, as their children grew up and moved away for studies, Mr. Rungta encouraged her to step into the business, knowing that her involvement could add immense value.

Determined and resilient, she took up the challenge, immersing herself in the world of tea.

Her learning journey spanned multiple stages:

- **Three years of training under a family friend and an experienced tea garden manager**, where she learned the basics of tea varieties, grading, and market trends.
- **A year-long professional training with a leading Tea broker house**, which refined her expertise in tea tasting and blending.
- **A certification course from IIPM, Bangalore**, one of India's premier institutions for tea education, where she received formal training in tea processing, sensory evaluation, and quality control.

Going back to academics after **two decades** was no easy feat. Yet, with her family's unwavering support, she not only completed her training but emerged as a **key decision-maker** in Rungta Tea. Today, she heads the **purchasing and tea-tasting department**, ensuring that every blend maintains the brand's high standards.

Anushi Rungta: The Next Generation of Innovation

Just like her mother, **Anushi Rungta** found herself drawn into the world of tea, though her entry into the business was unexpected.

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After completing her schooling at **Delhi Public School**, she was all set to pursue higher studies in **London**. However, the **COVID-19 pandemic changed everything**. With global travel restrictions in place, she stayed back in Siliguri and began assisting her parents with the business.

What started as temporary support soon turned into a passion. Curious and eager to learn, Anushi began experimenting with different tea blends, spending hours tasting liquor teas and understanding the nuances of flavors. Following in her mother's footsteps, she underwent the same training.

With a fresh perspective and a deep appreciation for tea craftsmanship, she took charge of the **flavored tea division**. After **two years**

of **rigorous experimentation**, she launched Rungta Tea's first flavored tea—"Elaichi Chai" & "Masala Chai". Since then, she has led the brand's **Research & Development team**, continuously innovating and crafting new blends to cater to modern tea enthusiasts.

A Legacy Steeped in Dedication

Mr. Rungta's story is one of resilience, adaptation, and a deep-rooted passion for tea. From understanding the complexities of tea procurement to building a **dedicated team of professionals**, his vision has shaped Rungta Tea into a brand synonymous with quality.



Article by
Ena Bandyopadhyay

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Obituary



NAVIN BHATT

Born on 8th November 1953 in Kolkata, he began his journey in the tea industry at a remarkably young age—starting work in a tea firm while still in Class 6, earning a modest salary of just ₹60 a month.

In 1976, he moved to Guwahati to pursue better opportunities, joining a tea company with a salary of ₹600. Just two years later, in 1978, he founded **Raj Tea Company**, becoming one of the pioneering figures who played a crucial role

in establishing the Guwahati Tea Auction as a major hub in the Indian tea trade.

Through unwavering dedication, strong ethics, and firm principles, he successfully expanded his business to Kolkata and Siliguri, earning respect and admiration across the tea fraternity.

He will always be fondly remembered as “Navin Bhai”—an ever-smiling, kind-hearted soul who was always helpful and cooperative with everyone in the trade.



ROSEBERRY: SHAHS SALUTE RAJ BERRY

The newly inaugurated Roseberry Tea Factory, located within the 840-hectare estate in Tinsukia district, is Assam's first purpose-built orthodox tea factory in decades.



From Left to Right: Himanshu Shah (Chairman), Jaydeep Shah (Director), Raj Berry (Ex. Director)

Guwahati: For the first time in India's tea industry, a tea estate has been renamed to honour a living planter. MK Shah Exports Limited has announced the inauguration of Roseberry Tea Estate, marking a historic milestone in Assam's tea sector.

Formerly known as Daimukhia Tea Estate, the estate has been renamed in tribute to Raj Berry, a legendary tea planter whose six-decade-long contributions have shaped India's tea landscape.

The newly inaugurated Roseberry Tea Factory, located within the 840-hectare estate in Tinsukia district, is Assam's first purpose-built orthodox tea factory in decades.

More than just an infrastructure upgrade, the factory represents a commitment to excellence, sustainability, and Assam's rich tea heritage.

"This isn't just about bricks, steel, and machines. It's about the people who built it, the partnerships we forged, and the legacy we are carrying forward," says Jaydeep Shah, Director of MK Shah Exports Limited, who played a key role in bringing this project to life.

Himanshu Shah, Chairman of MK Shah Exports Limited, added, "Renaming Daimukhia Tea

Estate to Roseberry is our way of paying tribute to Raj Berry's unwavering dedication to tea craftsmanship.

His vision and expertise have shaped the industry, and we hope this estate becomes a beacon of quality, just as he has been."

Berry, known for his passion for cultivating roses in Assam, earned the affectionate nickname 'Roseberry'—a name now immortalized through

this estate.

With an annual tea production capacity of almost 2 million kilos, Roseberry Tea Factory is set to produce orthodox teas of exceptional quality, upholding the highest industry standards.

The estate's steadfast commitment to ethical sourcing, sustainability, and craftsmanship will strengthen Assam's reputation as a global tea powerhouse.

The inauguration ceremony on March 23 witnessed overwhelming support from industry leaders, dignitaries, and the local community, all celebrating this momentous achievement.

A seasoned planter, Raj Berry began his career in the 1960s. Now 88 years old, he serves as the Executive Director of MK Shah Exports Limited (MKSEL). Since joining MKSEL in 1999, he has played a key role in over 16 tea plantations acquired by the company over the past two decades.

A walking encyclopedia on all things tea, he is always eager to share his vast knowledge with those who seek his guidance. With a deep passion for planting and a remarkable

green thumb, he has led groundbreaking R&D initiatives at MKSEL. His pioneering contributions include the company's renowned rejuvenation technique, which extends the productivity of 60 to 70 year old tea bushes, yielding 2,400-2,600 kg per hectare.

He is also credited with introducing a two-year pruning cycle, an innovation that challenges the industry norm of three- to four-year cycles, along with numerous other advancements in both field and factory operations.

Despite his decades of experience, Berry remains relentless in his pursuit of innovation, consistently outworking even the youngest executives in the company.

MK Shah Exports: *Leading India's Orthodox Tea Sector*

MK Shah Exports Limited is India's largest orthodox tea producer, with an annual production of nearly 21 million kilos across its



estates in Assam. The company manages over 14,400 hectares of tea plantations in Assam and an additional 1,500 hectares in Africa (DR Congo).

— News Source: East Majo



DNA MAPPING OF TEA

Could Stave off a Pending Crisis

Chungui Lu

Tea is under threat. We already know much about the threat of climate change to staple crops such as wheat, maize and rice, but the impact on tea is just coming into focus. Early research indicates that grown in some parts of Asia could see yields decline by up to 55% thanks to drought or excessive heat, and the quality of the tea is also failing.

The intensive use of pesticides and chemical fertilizer in tea plantations has also led to soil degradation at an average annual rate of 2.8%. This also cause chemical runoff into waterways, which can lead to serious problems for human health and the environment.

However, hope may be on the horizon now that scientist at the Kunming Institute of Botany at the Chinese Academy of Sciences have sequenced the entire tea genome. Mapping the exact sequence of DNA in this way provides the foundation for extracting all the genetic information needed to help breed and speed up development of new varieties of the tea plant. And it could even help improve the drinks flavor and nutritional value.

In particular, the whole tea tree genome reveals the genetic basis for teas tolerance to environmental stress, pest and disease resistance, flavor, productivity and quality. So

breeders could more precisely produce better tea varieties that produce higher crop yields and use water and nutrients more efficiently. And they could do this while widening the generic diversity of tea plants, improving the overall health of the tea plant population.

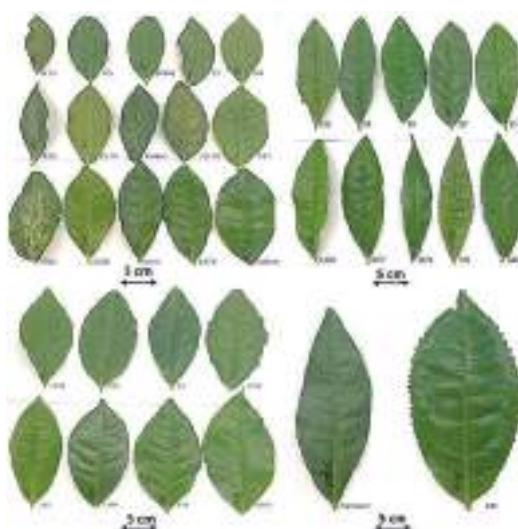
This as also an important for scientists because it provides a deeper understanding of the complex evolution and the functions of key genes associated with stress tolerance, tea flavour and adaptation.

The tea genome is very large, with nearly 37,000 genes, more than four times the size of the coffee plant genome. The process of evolution by natural selection has already helped the tea plant develop hundreds of genes related to resisting environmental stress

from drought and diseases.

These genes are like molecular markers that scientist can identify when selecting plants for use in breeding. This will allow them to be more certain that the next generation of plants they produce will have the genes and so the traits they want, speeding up the breeding process. Sequencing the genome also raise the possibility of using Genetic Modification (GM) technologies to turn on or enhance desirable genes (or turn off undesirable ones).

The same principles could also be used to enhance



the nutritional or medicinal value of certain tea varieties. The genome sequence includes genes associated with biosynthesis. This is the product of the proteins and enzymes involved in creating the compounds that make tea so drinkable, such as flavonoids, terpenes, and caffeine. These are closely related to the aroma, flavour and quality of tea and so using genetic breeding techniques could help improve the taste and make it more flavourful or nutritional.

For example, we could also remove the caffeine

biosynthetic genes from the tea plant to help breeding of low or non-caffeine varieties. By boosting certain compounds at the same time, we could make tea healthier and develop entirely new flavours to make caffeine tea more appealing.

An estimated 5.56 metric tons of tea is commercially grown on more than 3.8 million hectares of land (as of 2014). And its huge cultural importance, as well as economic value, mean securing a sustainable future for tea is vitally important for millions of people.

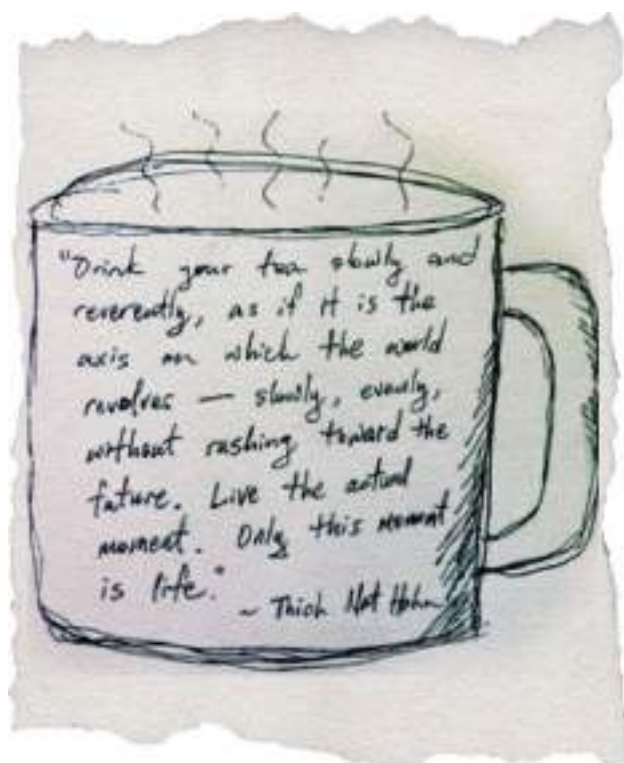
So the first successful sequencing of the tea genome is a cultural step to making tea plants more robust, productive and drinkable in the face of massive environmental challenges.



Chungui Lu Professor of Sustainable Agriculture, Nottingham Trent University.
This was originally published on the Conversation in STIR

- This article is from the Tea Time archives.

It was first published in the issue vol. xxvi No. 4, October - December of 2017



6th STAC Sports Carnival 2025

– A Thrilling Weekend of Sports & Camaraderie!

The 6th STAC Sports Carnival 2025 was nothing short of spectacular! Held on February 13th, 15th, and 16th, the event brought together sports enthusiasts for a power-packed weekend filled with intense competition, teamwork, and high-energy performances.

The Line-Up

The carnival kicked off with a high-stakes player auction, where four dynamic teams—5 Star, STTA Bengal Gold, Millionaire Boys, and Savana Hunters—strategically built their squads, setting the stage for an electrifying tournament.

The Futsal League Matches on February 13th kept the adrenaline pumping as teams clashed in fast-paced, action-filled games at the G.O.A.T Playing Arena, followed by a well-deserved celebratory dinner.

On February 15th, cricket fever took over at Utsav Resort, where the Cricket League Matches unfolded in all their glory. From fierce batting displays to nail-biting finishes, the matches had fans on the edge of their seats. A delicious breakfast and lunch added to the day's excitement.

The grand Finals & Other Sports Events on February 16th brought the carnival to a thrilling conclusion. The Prize Distribution Ceremony recognized the champions and standout performances, making it a day to remember. The event wrapped up with a delightful spread of breakfast, lunch, and high tea, ensuring that both players and spectators left with full hearts and satisfied appetites.

With its blend of fierce competition and camaraderie, the STAC Sports Carnival 2025 proved to be a resounding success. As the dust settles and the cheers fade, one thing is certain—next year's edition promises to be even bigger and better!

✧ Until next time, STAC fans—keep the spirit of the game alive! ✧

Article by:
Ena Bandyopadhyay







Gaurav Poddar

A Family Legacy

Gaurav Poddar of Chaizup

with Indranil Bhattacharjee of Tea Time

What evoked in you the need to get into the business of tea? Was it your family legacy?

The journey began with our family legacy in the tea business, and as a second-generation entrepreneur, I feel privileged to continue this heritage. Tea has always been more than just a business for us—it's a way of life. Witnessing the passion and dedication my father, Mr. Gopal Poddar, put into building this business from scratch, I was naturally drawn to the industry. It's both a responsibility and a joy to carry this legacy forward while also contributing my own vision to Chaizup Beverages LLP.

2. Who is your business role model and why?

Without a doubt, my father, Mr. Gopal Poddar, is my role model. He started this tea business from scratch, demonstrating unwavering dedication, resilience, and strategic vision. His ability to lead both in business and within our family has been inspirational. Watching him build a legacy with integrity and passion has shaped my approach to leadership and entrepreneurship.

3. What are your aspirations for your company?

When we started, we had one premium brand, Nargis. Over the years, with new generations joining, we've expanded our portfolio significantly. Today, we offer multiple brands, including Chaizup, Foodzup, and Good Cop, as well as our joint venture in the UK, Chaizfy Ltd. Additionally, we've ventured into the fast-growing segment of Ready-to-Drink (RTD)

beverages, instant tea premixes, and other value-added products. These innovations cater to the modern consumer's need for convenience, health, and quality. My aspiration is to make Chaizup Beverages a global leader in both traditional and contemporary tea products, combining heritage with innovation.

4. What are the opportunities for the industry?

The Indian tea industry is at an interesting juncture. With Ceylon tea prices rising, Indian Assam Orthodox teas have a strong opportunity to gain market share in regions like Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. Maintaining consistent quality and meeting international standards will be key to capitalizing on this.

Additionally, Indian teas are progressing towards more sustainable and MRL-compliant sourcing. Support from the government and initiatives by the Tea Board are helping the industry reduce pesticide levels and improve export potential. With global consumers increasingly prioritizing sustainability and health, India has immense opportunities to expand its reach.

5. What do you perceive as threats to this industry?

One of the significant challenges is the ongoing geopolitical conflict in West Asia, which threatens supply



Gopal Poddar

chains and increases shipping costs. Moreover, Indian teas face stiff competition from African teas, which are not only pesticide-free but also more cost-effective.

Another concern is the growing trend of importing teas from Kenya, Iran, and Vietnam for re-export, which affects the reputation and competitiveness of Indian tea exports. As an industry, we must address these challenges collaboratively to safeguard our position in global markets.

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

We are optimistic about the future of the value-added tea segment. While bulk tea remains a part of our business, we've been focusing on instant tea premixes and RTD beverages, which are gaining popularity both in India and globally. Young consumers, especially, are drawn to the convenience and versatility of these products. By continuing to innovate and adapt, we aim to strengthen our presence in these emerging categories.

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

Absolutely. The tea industry has witnessed a wave of innovation driven by young entrepreneurs. Brands like Tea Box, Vahdam Teas, Chai Break, and Chai Point are great examples of how e-commerce, unique café experiences, and premium branding are redefining the industry. It's encouraging to see this fresh energy and creativity contributing to the evolution of tea culture in India.

8. What are your hobbies, passions, and interests outside the world of tea?

Travelling and meeting new people have always been my passions. I enjoy exploring different cultures and understanding their perspectives, which often inspires me to innovate and connect better with diverse audiences in my business. Building relationships and learning from others' experiences is something I deeply value.





but also provide a curated experience for customers, attracting young and elite audiences. This trend highlights how the new generation is reimagining tea culture, making it more accessible and appealing.

11. How would you compare the new leaders in tea with the previous ones?

The older generation led with emotion, camaraderie, and a strong sense of values. Their focus was on long-term relationships and steady growth. The new generation, while still evolving, brings a sharper focus on technology, branding, and scalability. Both approaches have their merits, and I believe the future lies in blending the wisdom of the past with the dynamism of the present.



Indranil Bhattacharjee

9. Who has been your greatest teacher?

Time has been my greatest teacher. It has taught me patience, adaptability, and resilience. Over the years, I've learned to embrace change and draw lessons from both successes and failures, which has helped me grow personally and professionally.

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

The emergence of tea cafés and boutique tea stores has created exciting new opportunities. These spaces not only offer unique blends



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Darjeeling Tea has recorded the lowest production in its 169-year history, with the industry blaming absenteeism, ageing bushes and the high cost of re-plantation for the sharp decline. The only other time the output had witnessed such a steep plunge was in 2017 but that was because the gardens had to be shut down for 104 days owing to the Gorkhaland agitation. The industry could only produce 3.21 million kg of made tea that year.

Data released by the Tea Board of India shows that Darjeeling produced only 5.6 million kg of made tea in 2024. This is also the first time the industry has produced less than 6 million kg of made tea. The highest-ever yearly production was 14 million kg in the 70s.

Darjeeling Tea industry, comprises 87 gardens. At present, around 12 gardens are closed.

The industry has listed multiple reasons for the dismal production. “Absenteeism is as high as 60 per cent in some gardens. Ideally, a tea garden would complete anything between 25

and 30 rounds of plucking in a year. This has now come down to 16-18 rounds a year,” said a planter. The migration of workers to cities after the 2017 agitation is another reason. Around 55,000 permanent workers and 15,000 temporary workers are on the industry rolls.

A planter said the average age of workers in his garden had gone up from 38 to 47 years. The slide in revenues since the 2017 agitation had compounded the problem.

“The cost of replanting ranges between ₹3 lakh and ₹10 lakh per hectare depending on the topography in hill areas,” said a planter. Moreover, the break-even point is almost 8 to 10 years in the hills compared with around 4 to 5 years in the plains, an industry insider said.

The industry has not been able to revive most gardens after 2017. The entry of cheap Nepal tea has compounded the problem. The cost of production in Nepal is quite low compared to Darjeeling.

Courtesy - Vivek Chhetri



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Darjeeling: Misty Mountains and the Toy Train

Darjeeling! The land where the mist is thicker than your aunt's homemade thukpa, and people sit in dense fog watching a full football match, only to clap when others do, because no one knows where the ball is. A place where you go out to buy laangshyaa and somehow end up watching a high-stakes carrom match that lasts longer than your relationships.

This is a town where you walk through the bazaar once and meet the same people ten times. By the eighth time, you start wondering if they're stalking you or if you're unknowingly walking in circles. The doodhwalas here sell milk that has less fat than a gym instructor's diet, yet somehow charge you as if they're selling pure buffalo nectar.

Fashion here is an enigma. The unemployed dress better than the employed, strutting around in crisp jackets and polished boots while the ones with actual jobs shuffle past in oversized sweaters knitted by well-meaning but color-blind grandmothers. And speaking of jobs, let's not forget the entrepreneurial jeep drivers—who drive from Ghoom to Darjeeling town entirely in NEUTRAL, charge you at least ten rupees per seat, and still manage to look like they've been financially wronged by society.

The local menu? Simplistic yet undefeated. You enter a restaurant, study the menu with an air of importance, and then order the only two things that truly matter—thukpa and momo. Anything else is a betrayal of tradition and a

gamble with your stomach.

And oh, the distances! The whole world measures in kilometers, but Darjeeling? We count in miles. Cha Mile, Dus Mile, Baarah Mile—ask for directions and you might as well be given a riddle.

The trains here? Well, let's just say they operate on a democratic system. When they get stuck on the tracks, passengers are required to disembark and push, like it's a community exercise in patience. And if you ever see a train caught in a traffic jam, don't be alarmed—that's just Darjeeling being Darjeeling. You can jump off, take a leak, grab a quick chai, and still catch the train before it moves an inch.

The love stories here are short-lived but legendary. Boys carry two different love letters in their back pockets—one in English, one in Nepali—because heartbreak is inevitable, but preparedness is key. And as history has proven time and again, the prettiest girl always elopes with a driver. No one knows why, but it is a fact as undeniable as the rising sun over Tiger Hill.

And let's not forget the jeeps—those sturdy, battered chariots of the hills. Some carry eggs on their hoods, secured with nothing but faith, while their fuel tanks are nothing more than a jerry can tied precariously to the side. You might think twice about boarding such a contraption, but then again, this is Darjeeling—where the roads are adventurous, the drivers are fearless, and the journey is always, always memorable.

So, if you ever find yourself here, embrace the madness, the charm, and the fog-induced confusion. Because some things, my friend, can only happen in Darjeeling.

Courtesy: Koi Hai



Imagine sipping a refreshing bottle of green tea on a hot afternoon, knowing it's packed with powerful antioxidants that support your immune system. Or applying a skincare serum infused with Assam tea extract to shield your skin from pollution and premature ageing. This isn't just a passing trend - it's a revolution in how tea is being integrated into everyday life. The tea industry is undergoing a major transformation, with tea extracts emerging as a gamechanger. Traditionally enjoyed in loose-leaf or bagged form, tea is now being harnessed for its bioactive compounds in wellness drinks, dietary supplements, and even skincare. As health-conscious consumers seek functional benefits, tea extracts are leading the way, reshaping industries with their potent properties.

What are tea extracts?

Tea extracts are concentrated forms of tea that retain key bioactive compounds, including catechins, theaflavins, and caffeine. Extracts can be derived from green, black, white, or oolong teas and are widely used in the food, beverage, supplement, cosmetic, and pharmaceutical industries. Unlike traditional tea, which varies in composition due to soil, climate, and processing factors, extracts provide consistent, standardized benefits.

Green tea extracts, particularly those rich in epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG), are celebrated for their antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects. Black tea's theaflavins and thearubigins

support heart health and metabolism, while the balance of caffeine and L-theanine in tea extracts offers a smooth, focused energy boost without the jitters associated with coffee.

The rise of functional beverages and skincare

The global ready-to-drink tea market is expanding rapidly, fuelled by the demand for natural, plant-based beverages. Functional foods and supplements incorporate tea extracts into nootropic blends for brain health and gut-friendly formulations to improve digestion. From sparkling teas to kombuchas, the beverage industry is innovating with tea extracts to create healthier, more effective drinks.

But the impact of tea extracts extends beyond beverages. In the beauty industry, green tea has become a prized ingredient in serums, face masks, and shampoos. Its potent

antioxidants help combat signs of ageing, reduce inflammation, and protect against environmental stressors. As consumers seek natural, plant-based skincare, tea extracts are becoming a sought-after solution.

ATE: A breakthrough in skincare

A groundbreaking discovery highlights Assam tea extract (ATE) as a powerful anti-ageing ingredient for skincare. Researchers from Mae Fah Luang University in Thailand and the National Nanotechnology Center (NANOTEC) found that ATE, derived from Assam's *Camellia sinensis* var. *assamica*, is exceptionally rich



in catechins and tannins, making it highly effective in protecting the skin. Their study, published in Scientific Reports, revealed that ATE reduces UV-induced oxidative damage, suppresses inflammation, and inhibits enzymes that break down collagen - key factors in maintaining youthful skin. Notably, Assam tea's catechin and tannin content surpasses that of traditional green tea extracts, giving it superior anti-ageing properties. Additionally, ATE retains its potency for over six months, making it ideal for long-lasting skincare formulations. Led by Dr. Mayuree Kanlayavattanakul, the research team used advanced extraction and testing techniques to analyse ATE's effects. Their findings not only elevate Assam tea's status as a premium variety but also opens new opportunities for Assam's tea industry to enter the high-value skincare market.

A lifeline for our tea industry

The discovery of Assam tea's skincare benefits comes at a crucial time for the region's tea industry. Assam, India's largest tea-producing State, faces significant challenges, including fluctuating market prices, rising production costs, labour disputes, and climate change. Extreme weather patterns, erratic rainfall, and soaring temperatures are affecting tea yields and quality, putting immense pressure on tea growers.

A three-way collaboration is underway in Assam to develop tea extracts for medicines and wellness. The project is led by Evolving Innovation, using technology from Fast Track Agro LLP, in collaboration with the National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research, Guwahati. "With improved and lower cost extraction methods, this could be the breakthrough for Assam tea extraction to deliver higher value of lower cost," a tea industry expert said. By investing in extraction technology, Assam's tea producers could create high-value products such as catechin-rich green tea extracts, theaflavin-enhanced black tea powders, or caffeine-controlled formulations for functional beverages. This shift could help struggling tea estates generate alternative revenue streams and reduce their dependence on traditional auction prices.

Innovation in tea-based products

Tea extracts are opening doors to innovative products tailored for modern consumers. In the food and beverage industry, tea-infused sparkling waters, kombuchas, and plant-based energy drinks are gaining popularity. Probiotic tea powders, which combine tea polyphenols with gut-friendly bacteria, are creating a new category of functional wellness drinks.

Tea extracts are also making their way into fitness and nutrition. Matcha-infused protein bars and supplements provide a natural energy boost for active lifestyles, bridging the gap between fitness culture and traditional tea consumption. By integrating tea extracts into diverse product lines, brands can cater to evolving consumer demands while maximizing the health benefits of tea.

Sustainability and the future of tea extracts

Sustainability is another key advantage of tea extracts. Traditional tea production can generate significant waste, from discarded leaves to excessive water usage. However, extraction technologies enable maximum utilization of tea leaves, reducing waste and improving efficiency.

Some innovations, such as supercritical CO₂ extraction, offer chemical-free decaffeination, making the process more environment-friendly. Additionally, companies are exploring ways to upcycle spent tea leaves into compostable packaging materials or plant-based dyes, further reducing the industry's ecological footprint.

Beyond the cup

Tea extracts are pushing the boundaries of what tea can be. Whether in a beverage, a supplement, or a skincare product, they are shaping the future of the industry. As science continues to uncover new benefits of tea compounds, the possibilities for innovation are endless. From brain-boosting nootropics to collagen-enhancing skincare, tea is no longer just a comforting drink - it's a powerhouse of wellness, ready to transform industries far beyond the cup.

- Source:
Assam Tribune



Status Symbol

CALL ME TIPPOO

T S Nagarajan

A filler, but it illustrates our managers' obsession for titles and other status symbols.



Late Mr. Nagarajan, was a retired Managing Director of Brooke Bond India now merged with Hindustan Unilever. His area of specialization was marketing, and his field of expertise was Tea and Coffee. As Marketing Director he spearheaded the launch of Taj Mahal Tea and Bru Instant Coffee, both runaway successes. He was also associated with Management Education in India and served as visiting faculty at IIM Ahmedabad and IIM Calcutta.

This is an extract from his book '*Meet Peter Drucker*'.

Generally I have noticed that Indian executives are very conscious about designations, titles and other status-symbols. Not that executives in other parts of the world are any better. One of the most delightful pieces written on executive ambition was by Stephen Mead, an advertising copy writer who wrote the best seller "How to succeed in business without really trying." It was a runaway success and was later produced as a hit play.

Designations were always important and separate cabins, even if only six by six, a must. Life would be unthinkable without peons, calling bells and buzzers. We tried to do away with this executive snobbery. Several attempts were made and there was practically a revolt. We also tried the open office plan. It was in vogue in London at that time. We had glass partitions for the cabins to give more light. Very soon curtains of various hues sprang up. Somehow an executive does not feel secure without cloistering himself up in a cabin, or having a retinue to do his chores. Despite all our claims that we have entered the industrial society, we continue to be waited upon. Then there is the question of designation. Overnight sales managers called themselves

**"Not high, Not high,
but very, very, high."**



*Business must seize every opportunity for
profit and growth*

There is no standing still

When the moon is not waxing it is waning



TEA TIME

marketing managers. Accountants called themselves finance managers and buyers became purchase executives.

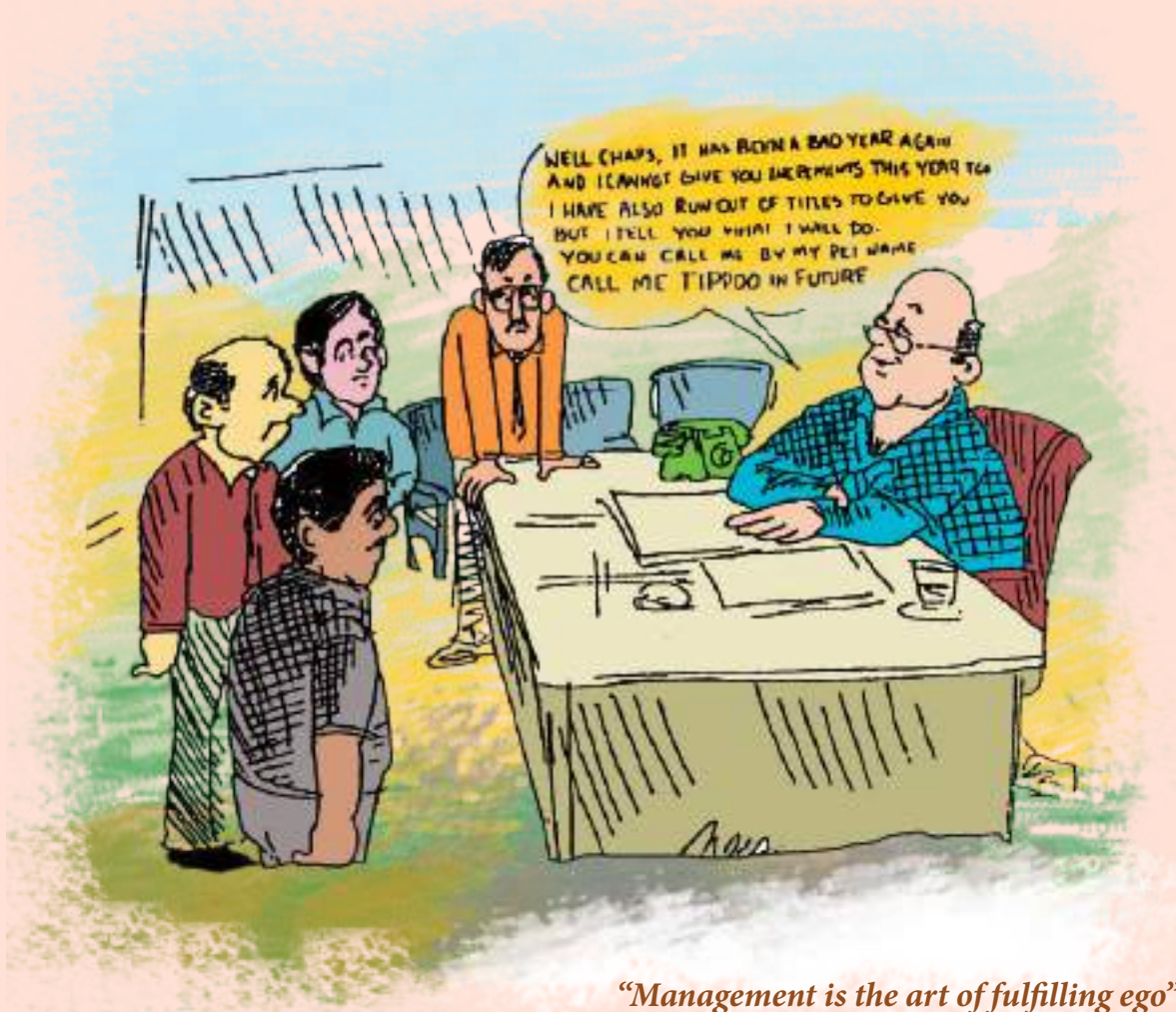
At a farewell function at the Sewri complex of Lever Bros. soap and vanaspati units many years ago, a farewell was being arranged for the great man who had introduced Dalda vanaspati into India. "Times have changed" he said with feeling and nostalgia. "I feel out of touch with things. In my days we sold soap, now you claim to market it. We bought raw materials, you purchase it and we made the soap, now you manufacture it."

The story is told about a proprietor who had a lean year. Trading results were poor and the going wasn't good. He called his managers in and said: "Well chaps. It has not been a good year and we

have made no profits. I cannot afford to give you any increments. But I will tell you what I will do. I will give you all special titles. You will be Corporate Planning Manager and you, General Manager, Human Resources, and so on."

Everyone felt happy and reassured and the proprietor was pleased with the way things had worked out. Next year again results were poor and there were no profits in the kitty.

He called them all again. They trooped in rather sheepishly not knowing what he was up to. "Well chaps" he said. "It has been a bad year again and I cannot give you any increments this year either. I have also run out of titles to give you. But I tell you what I will do. You can call me by my pet name. Call me Tippoo in future."



"Management is the art of fulfilling ego"



Kenya : An extract from the study report on the visit by WBTPWA in 2024



Summary Report on the Study Visit to Kenya, by the Delegation from North Bengal Tea Producers Welfare Association.

NORTH BENGAL TEA PRODUCERS WELFARE ASSOCIATION

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Preface

As the secretary of the North Bengal Tea Producers Welfare Association, I am honoured to present the study visit report and to share the objectives, challenges, opportunities, and collaborative prospects identified during our study trip to the Kenyan tea industry from 28th January to 5th February, 2024. The delegation comprised of 13 officials. The Tea Board of India was at hand to provide the initial administrative support to pave way for the visit.

Report on The Study Tour of Kenya by The North Bengal Tea Producers Welfare Association From 28th January - 5th February, 2024

1.0 Introduction

The delegation to Kenya comprised of thirteen members (See Annex I). The delegation was accompanied by an official from the High Commission in Kenya. The study visit was coordinated by the Enterprise Skills Development Consultants Africa (ESDA) Limited and conducted from Sunday, 28th January to Monday, 5th February, 2024.

One of the terms of reference of the delegation was to examine the tea sector best practices in the Kenya and international context of co-operation.

The purpose of the benchmarking visit was to:

- a) Gain valuable insights into the efficient manufacturing processes of Kenyan tea factories, as well as understanding the operational intricacies of tea gardens and factories in Kenya.
- b) Observe first-hand the innovative techniques and technologies employed in the production and processing of tea through visits to some of the renowned tea gardens and factories in Kenya,
- c) Understand the optimization system used in Kenyan tea factories, as well as how high standards of quality, efficiency, and sustainability in tea production and exports are maintained.
- d) Provide a platform for the exchange of valuable insights between the two countries' respective tea industries, fostering a collaborative environment where both the Indian and Kenyan tea industries stand to benefit from each other's knowledge and experiences.
- e) Create an opportunity to build enduring relationships and explore possibilities for future cooperation and mutual growth in the global tea market, benefiting both nations in the long run.



TEA TIME

The study tour of the tea sector in Kenya from 28th January to 5th February, 2024 imparted vast knowledge to the delegation from North Bengal Tea Producers Welfare Association to understand better the dynamic operations of the tea sector in Kenya.

All the Tea Producer Associations and organizations were visited. These include the Kenya Tea Development Agency, Independent Tea Producers Association of Kenya and the Kenya Tea Growers Association. The companies that were visited are members of the three organizations. These include Ngorongo Tea Factory Limited, Karirana Tea Factory Limited, Mau Multipurpose Tea Cooperative Limited and Toror Tea factory (KTDA) and Ekaterra Tea Kenya Limited. The Tea Board of Kenya and Tea Research Institute were also visited to obtain the Government perspective.

2.1 Kenya Tea Development Agency (Nairobi)

- The Kenya Tea Development Agency is a unique successful model that empowers the 650,000 farmers from the grassroots.
- KTDA is a robust organization that offers its services to its shareholders, the small-scale tea factories and ultimately the small holder tea farmers.
- Farmers in KTDA model working together significantly reduce operating costs as efficiency is realized through economies of scale and scope.

The current subsidiary are as follows: -

- **KTDA (MS) Ltd** - Established specifically to deal with management of the tea factory companies in line with the recommendations made by the Tea Industry Taskforce of 2007.
- **Chai Trading Company Ltd (CTCL)** - Core mandate is warehousing, blending, clearing & forwarding, value addition, export and general tea trading. It is now one of the top 10 buyers at the Mombasa tea auction.

- **Majani Insurance Brokers (MIB)** - Established to provide insurance brokerage services for all categories of insurance requirements for the Tea factories & KTDA Group companies.
- **Greenland Fedha Ltd. (GFL)** - Set up as a non-deposit taking MFI with the objective of facilitating easy access to affordable credit for small scale farmers using their tea deliveries as collateral.
- **KTDA Power Company (KTPC)** - KTPC was set up to spearhead development of renewable energy starting with small hydro power projects across the tea growing regions as a way of addressing the ever-increasing energy costs.
- **Kenya Tea Packers Company Ltd (KETEPA)** - KETEPA undertakes tea blending, packaging, distribution & Marketing for local and export markets.
- **Tea Machinery and Engineering Company Ltd (TEMEC)** - TEMEC was established to provide a modern workshop for fabrication and assembly of tea machinery for the tea factories. Will reduce the need for imports.
- **KTDA Foundation** - The vehicle through which KTDA, its subsidiaries and managed factory companies give back to the community through CSR activities. Has provided 4 years secondary school scholarships to students and also involved in community health, environmental conservation and energy projects.

2.2 Independent Tea Producers Association (Kericho)

The Independent Tea Producers Association of Kenya (ITPAK) is a non-political association of private tea manufacturers within Kenya that satisfies specific lobbying, advocacy, research and training requirements of members as provided for within the Association's constitution and governance manual.

ITPAK is an umbrella association that serves approximately 200,000 small scale tea farmers

who supply their green leaf to our 22 Tea Factories.

2.3 Kenya Tea Growers Association (KTGA)- (Kericho)

- Established in 1931 as an Association of East African Tea Producers, the Kenya Tea Growers Association (KTGA) is the representative body of large-scale tea producers in Kenya.
- The mandate is to promote the common interests of our members in the cultivation and manufacture of tea and to promote good industrial relations and decent work for employees.
- Membership is drawn from publicly listed and private Tea Companies in Kenya mainly the tea gardens found in Kericho, Bomet, Nyamira, Nandi and Kiambu Counties. As at January, 2024, KTGA has 19 members operating 24 tea factories.

Functions of the Association

As the representative of industry and business support organization whose members contribute about 35% of tea production in Kenya, KTGA undertakes the following functions:

- Advocacy on industry direction and policies
- Legislative and lobbying engagement with National and County Government and Government Agencies
- Publicity and media relations for our members ► Support Regulatory compliance by members: NEMA on Stack Emission Standards, WARMA on Dams compliance
- CSR Coordination: About Kshs. 90Million worth of CSR since 2016
- Advisory to members on legal and policy matters
- Liaison and relationship building with relevant stakeholders of our members
- Advise and support on Certification Standards

2.4 Tea Board of Kenya (Nairobi)

- Mr. Willy K Mutai, the Chief Executive Officer of the Tea Board of Kenya made a presentation on the operations of the organisation. He indicated that the tea production was above 570 million kilogrammes in 2023. The weather conditions were favourable. There were 834,129 farmers, 134 factories, 100 buyer/exporters, 13 tea brokers, 20 warehousemen, 60 tea packers and 2 auction organizers.
- The Tea Board of Kenya is a State Corporation in the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development established by Tea Act No. 23 of 2020 to develop, regulate and promote tea sub-sector.
- The Board is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the Cabinet Secretary in charge of Agriculture and Livestock Development while day to day operations is directed by the Chief Executive Officer. The Board has three representatives from the Government and representatives from the private sector.

International Tea Promotion

- Guided by the structured approach to export market prioritization, the Tea Board undertakes to identify export market opportunities for Kenya Tea and formulate appropriate market entry and penetration strategies.
- This will be realized through informed market research and survey's findings, trade missions, contact promotion programmes, buyer/ seller meetings, trade fairs and exhibitions and inward buying missions.



3.0 Comparison of The Tea Sector in Kenya and India

There are a lot of similarities and differences in the tea sector in Kenya and India. These can be viewed in respect to Tea production and productivity; Tea incomes and the farmers' livelihoods; Tea processing; Tea trade and marketing; Value addition and product diversification; Innovation; R&D and capacity development; Tea sector governance, policy, regulatory environment and Cross cutting issues (climate change, gender mainstreaming, and food security and nutrition mainstreaming). The following are the similarities and differences.

a) Similarities

The first is the passion for making a better cup of tea is evident in both countries.

Tea production and productivity

Both Kenya and India are significant global producers of tea, contributing to the overall tea production and supply. Both in India and Kenya there is more production of CTC Tea than orthodox Tea.

The two countries share similarities in terms of tea cultivation practices, crop management, and yield optimization strategies. There is a general increasing trend in production by smallholder tea farmers and a declining trend by large scale commercial tea producers in both countries.

Tea incomes and the farmers' livelihoods

Both countries rely on tea production as a major source of livelihood for a substantial number of farmers and their families. Both have tea growing areas that are labour oriented. Small growers are a prime factor.

Similar challenges and opportunities exist in terms of improving the incomes and livelihoods of tea farmers, such as fair pricing mechanisms and access to market opportunities.

Tea processing

Both Kenyan and Indian tea sectors involve similar processes for tea leaf processing, including withering, rolling, oxidation, and drying, which contribute to the distinct qualities of the final tea products.

Primarily the flowchart or production process is largely similar, with similar machinery and steps followed regarding processing styles from farm to packing. Most of the tea machinery utilized in Kenya is imported from India.

Tea trade and marketing

Both countries are actively involved in the global tea trade and share common interests in market diversification, export competitiveness, and market access.

Both countries have Tea auctions as a marketing channel. Whereas in Kenya there are two auctions- Mombasa Tea auction and iTea there are six auction centres in India (Calcutta, Guwahati, Cochin, Coimbatore, Siliguri, Coonoor). Other Tea auctions in the world are in Sri Lanka (Colombo); Indonesia (Jakarta); Bangladesh (Chittagong); and Malawi (Limbe).

Value addition and product diversification

Both countries are exploring opportunities to enhance value addition and diversify tea products, such as flavored teas, specialty teas, and herbal infusions to meet evolving consumer preferences.

Innovation, R&D, and capacity development

Both the Kenyan and Indian tea sectors focus on innovation, research, and development initiatives to improve tea cultivation practices, processing technologies, and product innovations.

Capacity-building efforts are aimed at enhancing the skills and knowledge of stakeholders across the tea value chain in both countries.

Tea sector governance, policy, regulatory environment:

Both countries have regulatory bodies and policies governing the tea sector to promote sustainable practices, quality standards, and market regulation. Both countries have Tea Boards and Tea Research Institutions.

Governance structures aim to address issues related to climate change, gender mainstreaming, food security, and nutrition within the tea industry.

Cross-cutting issues

Both countries recognize the importance of addressing cross-cutting issues, such as climate change adaptation, gender equality, food security, and nutrition integration within the tea sector, reflecting a shared commitment to sustainability and holistic development.

These similarities provide a basis for potential collaboration and knowledge exchange between the Kenyan and Indian tea sectors, fostering opportunities for mutual learning and advancement.

Climate change is affecting green leaf production in both the countries.

b) Differences

Tea production and productivity

Kenya and India have distinct geographical and climatic conditions, with rainfall and temperature variations being high in India vis-à-vis Kenya leading to variations in tea cultivation practices, varieties, and growing seasons.

There are variations in the soil type, the weather pattern with all months getting sunshine and fair rains in Kenya. Unlike in India where there are four seasons it is mostly dry and wet seasons in Kenya. India does not receive rain throughout the year. In India trees get affected by pests and harsh weather conditions.

Production varies from season to season as there are four seasons in India. There is no production during the winter season. Conversely there is production in Kenya is throughout the year with quantities varying depending on the climatic conditions. In addition, maintenance of bushes is expensive in India as there is need to irrigate the bushes in dry season.

Differences in terrain, elevation, and soil characteristics contribute to unique challenges and opportunities for tea production and productivity in each country. Most of the tea cultivated in Kenya is high altitude. As a result, there is no use of pesticides in Kenya.

Tea incomes and the farmers' livelihoods

Variations in land tenure systems, farm structures, and historical contexts result in differences in the socio-economic impact of tea farming on local communities and farmers' livelihoods. Small growers are independent decision makers in terms of quality green leaf production in India. In most areas prices of green leaf are declared on a daily basis in India.

Tea processing

Differences in processing techniques, machinery, and regional preferences contribute to variations in the flavor profiles and characteristics of Kenyan and Indian teas.

Tea trade and marketing

Variations exist in the market dynamics, including the types of tea products traded, the structure of tea auction systems, and the distribution channels used for domestic and international trade.

Kenya is an exports dominant market vis-à-vis India which is more focused on domestic consumption of its produce. Whereas more than 90% of the produced tea in India is consumed in the country on the converse more than 90% of the Kenyan tea is exported. Whereas Kenya exports more than 450 kilogrammes of tea, India exports 200 million kilogrammes.

- Courtesy: Neeraj Poddar and Gautam Bhalla



Photo Gallery



North Bengal Tea Producers Association delegates upon arrival at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport.



KTDA (H) Group CEO Mr. Wilson Muthaura and KTDA Management at KTDA Head Office.



Mau Tea Multipurpose Cooperative CEO Mr. Jackson Rono and Management at the Kericho office.



Independent Tea Producers Association Chairman Mr. Collins Cheruiyot at the Sunshine Hotel, Kericho.



Tea Research Institute CEO Dr. Kamunya and Management at the Kericho office.



Mr. Evans Ragira, Factory Unit Manager, TOROR Tea Factory and Management at the Tea Factory in Kericho.

Visit to Maasai Mara National Park



- Extracts of NBTPWA study tour of Kenya



Let's celebrate the 'Gup-Shup' Cup

That lowly, insignificant, cup which contains our coffee, tea or sundry warm liquids, needs much more attention than we tend to accord it.

True, it only dons a vibrant, steamy, effervescent, avatar once a liquid of substance is poured into it. But once a cup does transform itself into a cuppa, people's moods change, and there is every reason for meaningful conversations to be ignited.

There's something of an X factor in the fragrance, feel and touch of a hot cup in hand which elevates the human consciousness to a potentially supreme level. Gossip and lowly thoughts also tend to germinate sometimes when two friends meet over a cuppa. But it is my experience that people are generally better behaved once they envelope a cup of coffee or tea in their hands. For one thing, they don't want to utter some foolhardy words which may annoy the recipient enough to become physical at a time when a piping hot beverage is available to be hurled, god forbid!

Thus, coffee groups, and even tea collectives, would normally indulge in friendly banter and laughter while sipping something together.

There is something very compelling about imbibing caffeine in togetherness which makes the 'gup-shup' cup an almost indispensable facet of our lives. Votaries of Bacchus might argue that such bonhomie could also emanate from those enjoying a drink together at a bar. and I have no argument with that. But decidedly, tea and coffee, or even green tea and black coffee, are usually social drinks and they add volumes to the social health of humanity at large. Workers at a construction site, office goers gathered near a coffee machine, cricketers watching their team play from the sidelines, and even a lonesome writer of random forays typing away at a keyboard, we all feel nourished and rejuvenated once a cup of our favourite 'hottie' is at hand to be sipped and relished. But conversation is almost an integral ingredient of the process of gulping down a cup, however quickly or slowly that may be.

Tea and coffee have been the subject of conflicting

scrutiny at the hands of this writer in the past, so I won't go into their relative merits and demerits here. But both have their place in the glorious annals of human history, even though they are relatively young drinks in a historic landscape dotted with landmark moments.

In a 2013 study published in the Asia-Pacific Journal of Management, Research and Innovation, professor Harsh V Verma writes, "Tea is instrumental in bringing families together in close proximity and provides a platform for sharing and caring.

A certain mystique is associated with coffee. Coffee is predominantly an outside drink; it derives its utility from social, aesthetic and emotional roles." Yet, even while tea is usually a homely beverage, chai stalls have cropped up ail over the world and tea serves just as much a reason to meet in a cafe as does coffee.

We coffee lovers, on the other hand, find numerous reasons to land up at coffee places. And we also find excuses to prepare some filter coffee at home! The aforementioned lowly cup that stores these delicacies for us to sip has also undergone several transformations, of course. While in Turkey, we noticed that a unique shapely glass cup was used all over the country to serve tea, while coffee was presented in innovative varieties of containers.

A visit to Maharashtra or Gujarat will probably introduce unfamiliar foreign residents and even north Indians to the tiniest of 'cutting' chai cups. Paper cups, especially when used for hot liquids, are not entirely conducive to good health, and the internet is flooded with information about their shady origins. But they too have found a semi-permanent place in the realm of tea-coffee drinking across the globe.

The finest of minds bloom with innovative and far reaching thoughts, while the tongue savours the feel of a beverage, which in itself is worthy of celebration. Apart from the lovingly prepared concoction, the hand which knows the precise formula is worthy of applause as well. For those who love their tea or coffee, each sip from each cup is a matter of sheer joy.

- Courtesy- Vivek Atray, Hindustan Times, Mumbai, Vivek.atray@gmail.com



Toyota Production System



Think standardization kills teamwork? Toyota proved it actually fuels collaboration and innovation. Standardization is the engine of improvement. Yet many fear it slows creativity.

Here's why the Toyota Way's 6th principle proves the opposite:

1. Standardization

Clear tasks lead to smooth execution.

2. Foundation

Strong systems provide a stable base to build on.

3. Continuous Improvement

Spot inefficiencies fast and improve without delay.

4. Employee Empowerment

Processes free teams to innovate and own results.

5. Efficiency

Wasted time and resources are reduced or eliminated.

6. Quality Control

Reliability and high standards become the norm.

7. Training

Skills grow quickly with consistent methods.

8. Flexibility

Systems adapt easily to change and new tech.

9. Measurement

Tracking shows where to focus and how to grow.

10. Teamwork

Shared steps create seamless collaboration.

Don't let the word "standardization" fool you. It's a launchpad, not a cage.

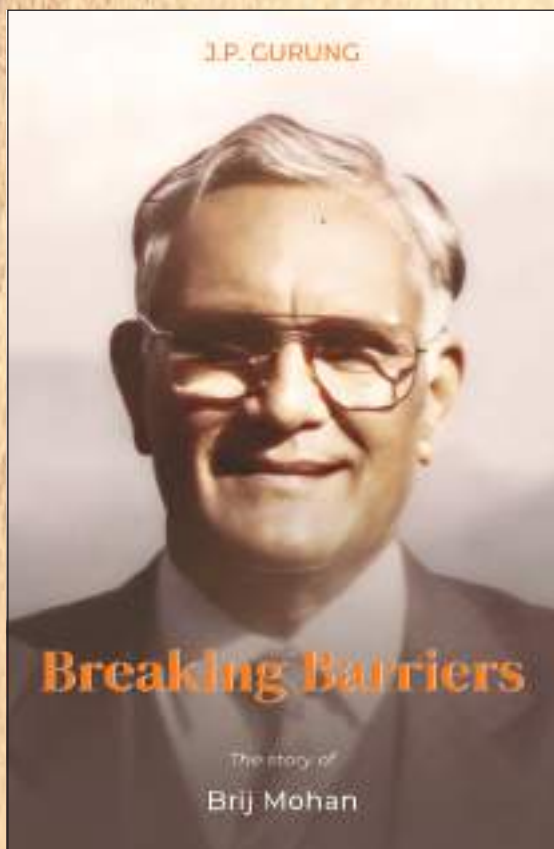
- Credits: Sergio D'Amico, CSSBB



A TEA STORY

‘Breaking Barriers: The Story of Brij Mohan’ is as much a lesson in the tea industry as it is an education on the game-changing spirit of a young man.

J P Gurung



Change can be daunting – especially when you are the one affecting it in a system that’s well established. But for disruptors like the late Brij Mohan, who went from hawking plastic ware on the streets of Calcutta (now Kolkata) to revolutionising the tea industry in India a few years after the Partition (1947), it was all in a day’s work.

Mohan, who was in Calcutta post-Independence, found himself faced with an unusual opportunity – a posting in the

Darjeeling tea industry in spite of not having a background in tea. He took it, relishing the challenge of new frontiers; his lack of knowledge only fuelled Mohan’s curiosity and lead him to showing greater empathy to his juniors.

The book *Breaking Barriers: The Story of Brij Mohan* by J P Gurung wraps itself around Mohan’s life – following him as he navigates the new field, the hostile welcome from the British community on its way out of the tea industry, and the changes he makes to the lives of the workers on the estates, including by facilitating the growth of trade unions to better the working conditions of labourers.

It also goes through his impact on the Fair Trade movement — the management structure he created for Samabeong Tea Estate was the basis of the Fair Trade Standards for Hired Labour.

Gurung vividly captures Mohan’s initial impressions of Darjeeling, from the serene atmosphere of the railway station, a stark contrast to the bustling city he left behind, to his warm and welcoming reception by a garden chowkidar [guard]. This introduction immediately immerses the reader in the sights and sounds of a world unfamiliar to Mohan, setting the stage for his transformative journey.

The author paints a rich and evocative picture of his early days at Arya Tea Estate, a relatively small garden nestled on the outskirts of Darjeeling. Gurung skilfully portrays Mohan’s earnest efforts to connect with his staff and workers, navigating initial scepticism and



cultural differences to foster a harmonious and productive working environment.

He also zones in on another deployment, at Longview Tea Estate. It's here that Mohan takes on greater responsibility and becomes known as a capable and resilient manager.

Mohan goes on to cement his place in the industry with a posting in Chongtong, a troublesome garden with a strong trade union. However, he navigates the challenges with ease – by yielding to some demands, by creating several welfare schemes, and by introducing a working four-bed clinic with a qualified doctor. He also disarms them by offering greater roles to the local men.

For the children of the community, he helps the local Missionary School. Soon, Chongtong, a notorious garden, morphs into a model garden.

Because no journey is complete without the context of time, the book also dives into the broader context of the challenges faced by the Darjeeling tea industry. Gurung provides

valuable insights into the economic pressures, including market slumps and the unsettling cancellation of crucial purchase contracts, and political upheavals' that threatened the stability of the industry.

Throughout the book, Gurung weaves in a tapestry of anecdotes that not only illuminate Mohan's character but also provide a fascinating glimpse into the social and cultural fabric of the era. These personal stories add depth and texture to the narrative, making it more than just a chronological account of a career. We see Mohan's integrity, his empathy, and his commitment to his work, all set against the backdrop of post-independence India and the evolving dynamics of the tea-growing region.

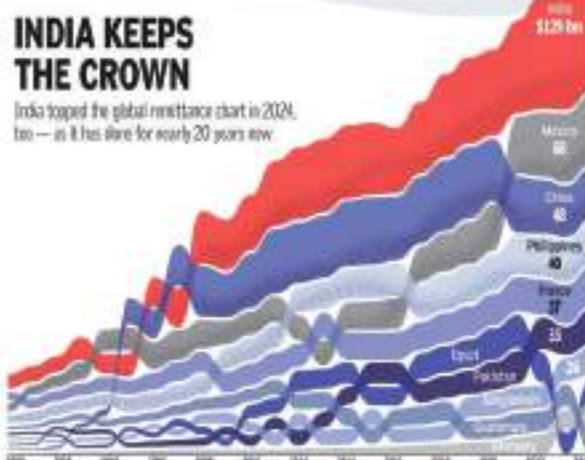
Breaking Barriers is more than just a biography; it is a testament to the power of determination, the importance of resilience, and the profound impact of human connection. Gurung's vivid storytelling, meticulous attention to detail, and ability to bring historical events to life make this book a captivating and rewarding read. It will resonate with anyone interested in stories of personal growth, the rich history of the Darjeeling tea industry, and the enduring capacity of the human spirit to overcome obstacles and forge meaningful relationships. The book offers valuable lessons in leadership, cultural sensitivity, and the pursuit of excellence. Happy reading.



J P Gurung has several books to his credit. Darjeeling Tea, Muscatel Memories, All in a Cup of Tea, apart from The Flavours of Darjeeling and is currently writing on strategies to revive the famous Darjeeling tea and the brand.

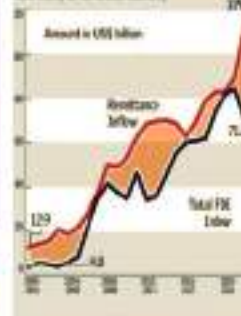
*The review is written by
Amarendra Nandkeolyar*





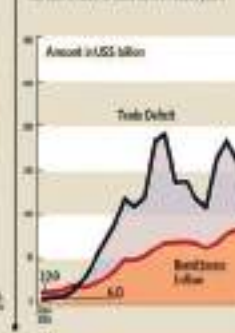
Remittances 3 Times Foreign Investment

For a long time, money from Indians abroad has topped over foreign direct investment. It's not just corporations but families abroad who are sending back more money to fuel India's economy.



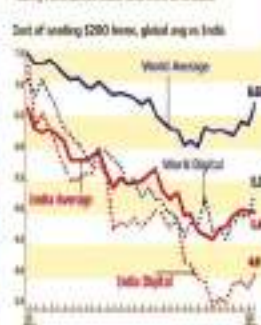
It Cushions India's Trade Deficit

Remittance inflows stood at over 200% of India's trade deficit in the early 2000s. Even in international trade, too, India is now around 50% in excess of years.



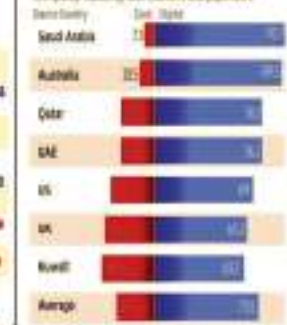
Beating The World On Transfer Cost

It's cheaper to send money to India than almost anywhere else. At just 4% cost per \$100 transfer, India beats the global average — thanks to digital options that are making remittances faster and more affordable.



3 Out of 4 Remittances Now Sent Online

73% of remittances to India now arrive via digital channels. Countries like Saudi Arabia and Australia lead the list, offering more mobile apps and online platforms, one quickly replacing cash couriers and paperwork.



Maha, Kerala Biggest Beneficiaries

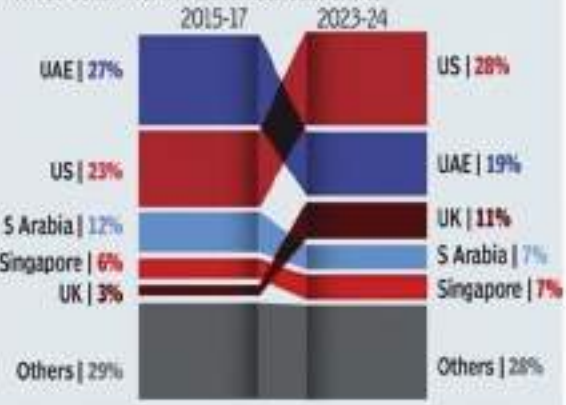
Maharashtra leads in remittance inflows, followed closely by Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Telangana and Karnataka are catching up, thanks to rising student migration.

Destination State (% of total)



US, UK, Singapore Now Top Senders

In just 7 years, the US surged past the Gulf as India's top remittance source. The UK and Singapore, too, jumped ahead — signalling a shift from blue-collar Gulf jobs to white-collar work in advanced economies.



Estimated BG & SG Production of Tea In India

January to December											(IN MILLION KGS)					
DISTRICT/STATE	2024					2023					Difference					
	BG	%	SG	%	TOTAL	BG	%	SG	%	TOTAL	BG	SG	TOTAL	+/-	%	+/-
ASSAM VALLEY	300.74	49	309.78	51	610.52	333.97	50	325.18	50	649.15	-13.23	-7	-15.40	-5	-38.63	-6
CACHAR	37.83	96	1.49	4	39.32	37.84	97	1.34	3	39.18	-0.01	-0	0.15	11	0.14	0
TOTAL ASSAM	338.57	52	311.27	48	649.84	341.81	53	326.52	47	688.33	-23.24	-6	-15.25	-5	-38.49	-6
DOOARS	89.65	47	110.78	53	209.43	115.96	49	121.75	51	237.71	-17.31	-15	-10.97	-9	-28.28	-12
TERAI	29.47	19	128.98	81	158.45	37.91	20	151.91	80	189.82	-8.44	-22	-22.93	-15	-31.37	-17
DARJEELING	5.51	98	0.09	2	5.60	5.89	98	0.12	2	6.01	-0.38	-6	-0.03	-25	-0.41	-7
TOTAL WEST BENGAL	133.63	36	239.85	64	373.48	159.74	37	273.78	63	433.54	-26.13	-16	-33.93	-12	-60.04	-14
OTHERS	11.97	35	22.69	65	34.66	11.29	32	23.82	68	35.11	0.68	6	-1.13	-5	-0.45	-1
TOTAL NORTH INDIA	484.17	46	573.81	54	1,057.98	532.84	46	624.12	54	1,156.98	-48.69	-9	-50.31	-8	-99.00	-9
TAMIL NADU	55.16	34	108.76	66	163.92	60.38	36	106.82	64	167.40	-5.42	-9	1.94	2	-3.48	-2
KERALA	48.24	83	10.14	17	58.38	52.79	83	10.96	17	63.75	-4.55	-9	-0.82	-7	-5.37	-8
KARNATAKA	4.20	93	0.30	7	4.50	5.28	95	0.25	5	5.53	-1.08	-20	0.05	20	-1.03	-19
TOTAL SOUTH INDIA	107.60	47	119.30	53	226.80	118.65	50	118.03	50	236.68	-11.05	-9	1.17	1	-9.88	-4
ALL INDIA	591.77	46	693.01	54	1,284.78	651.51	47	742.15	53	1,393.66	-59.74	-9	-49.14	-7	-108.88	-8

January to February											(IN MILLION KGS)					
DISTRICT/STATE	2025					2024					Difference					
	BG	%	SG	%	TOTAL	BG	%	SG	%	TOTAL	BG	SG	TOTAL	+/-	%	+/-
ASSAM VALLEY	0.65	49	0.68	51	1.33	0.21	57	0.16	43	0.37	0.44	210	0.52	315	0.96	259
CACHAR	0.07	88	0.01	13	0.08	0.08	89	0.01	11	0.09	-0.01	-13	0.00	0	-0.01	-11
TOTAL ASSAM	0.72	51	0.69	49	1.41	0.29	63	0.17	37	0.46	0.43	148	0.52	306	0.95	267
DOOARS	1.03	20	4.22	80	5.25	0.38	33	0.78	67	1.16	0.65	171	3.44	441	4.09	353
TERAI	0.54	13	3.64	87	4.18	0.07	11	0.56	89	0.63	0.47	671	3.08	550	3.55	563
DARJEELING	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0
TOTAL WEST BENGAL	1.57	17	7.86	83	9.43	0.45	25	1.34	75	1.79	1.12	249	4.52	487	7.64	427
OTHERS	0.02	12	0.15	88	0.17	0.01	33	0.02	67	0.03	0.01	100	0.13	650	0.14	467
TOTAL NORTH INDIA	2.31	21	8.70	79	11.01	0.75	33	1.53	67	2.28	1.56	208	7.17	469	8.73	383
TAMIL NADU	7.87	36	14.25	64	22.12	8.09	37	13.50	63	21.59	-0.22	-3	0.75	6	0.53	2
KERALA	7.25	81	1.74	19	8.99	8.34	85	1.50	15	9.84	-0.09	-13	0.24	16	-0.85	-9
KARNATAKA	0.61	92	0.05	8	0.66	0.62	93	0.05	7	0.67	-0.01	-2	0.00	0	-0.01	-1
TOTAL SOUTH INDIA	15.73	50	16.04	50	31.77	17.05	53	15.05	47	32.10	-1.32	-8	0.99	7	-0.33	-1
ALL INDIA	18.04	42	24.74	58	42.78	17.80	52	16.58	48	34.38	0.24	1	8.16	49	8.40	24

Source: Tea Board

SG: Area under Tea: less than 10.12 Hectare

Indian Tea Exports

January to December

2024	N. India			S. India			All India		
	Qty (M.Kgs)	Value (Rs.Crs)	Average (Rs.)	Qty (M.Kgs)	Value (Rs.Crs)	Average (Rs.)	Qty (M.Kgs)	Value (Rs.Crs)	Average (Rs.)
Jan	11.2	311	277.55	8.9	189	212.03	20.1	500	248.51
Feb	13.7	352	257.68	9.7	203	210.59	23.3	555	238.18
Mar	13.0	349	269.34	8.3	189	228.26	21.2	538	253.32
Apr	11.6	322	276.76	8.3	161	194.92	19.9	483	242.80
May	9.5	288	302.34	7.6	156	205.84	17.1	444	259.56
Jun	10.4	294	283.37	9.5	249	262.39	19.9	543	273.34
July	12.6	410	325.22	10.4	233	223.55	23.0	643	279.20
Aug	14.3	495	346.65	9.0	210	232.61	23.3	705	302.44
Sep	14.5	503	346.80	7.8	152	195.68	22.3	655	294.12
Oct	13.6	512	377.34	5.5	133	241.64	19.1	645	338.18
Nov	16.0	514	321.81	7.6	216	283.66	23.6	730	309.52
Dec	14.6	485	332.55	7.4	188	254.50	22.0	672	306.35
Jan to Dec	154.8	4833	312.20	100	2278	228.15	254.7	7111	279.24

2023	N. India			S. India			All India		
	Qty (M.Kgs)	Value (Rs.Crs)	Average (Rs.)	Qty (M.Kgs)	Value (Rs.Crs)	Average (Rs.)	Qty (M.Kgs)	Value (Rs.Crs)	Average (Rs.)
Jan	11.4	347	303.16	5.4	137	252.08	16.9	484	286.72
Feb	9.7	280	288.58	6.4	154	241.56	16.1	434	269.89
Mar	10.5	297	283.43	5.1	131	258.36	15.5	428	275.25
Apr	8.0	230	287.81	5.8	133	230.69	13.8	364	263.85
May	11.2	291	260.78	7.4	163	219.21	18.6	454	244.17
Jun	9.9	270	271.70	8.1	176	218.11	18.0	446	247.64
July	10.2	316	310.89	7.7	168	218.11	17.9	484	270.95
Aug	12.1	382	315.87	7.9	181	228.65	20.0	563	281.30
Sep	15.0	488	325.15	9.5	209	219.48	24.5	697	284.21
Oct	13.7	400	291.23	9.5	201	212.26	23.2	601	259.00
Nov	15.4	423	274.94	9.4	212	224.77	24.8	635	255.91
Dec	13.9	381	274.15	8.5	191	224.57	22.4	572	255.33
Jan to Dec	141.0	4105	291.13	90.7	2056	226.69	231.7	6161	265.91

Variance	N. India			S. India			All India		
	Qty (M.Kgs)	Value (Rs.Crs)	Average (Rs.)	Qty (M.Kgs)	Value (Rs.Crs)	Average (Rs.)	Qty (M.Kgs)	Value (Rs.Crs)	Average (Rs.)
Jan	-0.3	-36	-25.61	3.5	52	-40.05	3.2	16	-38.21
Feb	4.0	72	-30.89	3.3	49	-30.97	7.2	121	-31.71
Mar	2.5	52	-14.09	3.2	58	-30.10	5.7	110	-21.93
Apr	3.6	92	-11.05	2.5	27	-35.77	6.1	119	-21.06
May	-1.6	-3	41.56	0.2	-7	-13.37	-1.5	-10	15.38
Jun	0.4	24	11.67	1.4	73	44.29	1.9	97	25.70
July	2.4	94	14.33	2.7	65	5.44	5.2	159	8.25
Aug	2.2	113	30.78	1.1	29	3.96	3.3	142	21.14
Sep	-0.5	14	21.65	-1.7	-57	-23.80	-2.3	-42	9.91
Oct	-0.2	112	86.11	-4.0	-68	29.38	-4.1	44	79.18
Nov	0.6	91	46.87	-1.8	4	58.89	-1.2	95	53.60
Dec	0.7	104	58.40	-1.1	-4	29.93	-0.5	100	51.02
Jan to Dec	13.8	728.1	21.1	9.2	222.5	1.5	23.0	950.6	13.3
+/- %	0.1			0.1			0.1		

Source: Tea Board



N. India Market Graphs April to March



North India -Assam - Estate CTC Leaf & Dust

Months	2024/25	2023/24	24 vs 23	2022/23	24 vs 22
APR	284.13	284.07	40.31	183.77	7.57
MAY	257.83	222.53	35.08	133.38	44.22
JUN	312.88	260.67	51.46	157.96	54.11
JUL	307.88	258.20	58.26	160.81	48.89
AUG	297.25	251.73	65.58	160.07	39.42
SEP	298.18	226.90	71.28	137.02	91.30
OCT	279.55	226.89	52.66	133.89	46.60
NOV	248.76	217.81	38.95	114.22	32.54
DEC	201.73	185.29	36.58	188.36	13.37
JAN	183.52	152.31	31.21	163.76	-8.24
FEB	167.37	137.95	29.42	159.83	-2.46
MAR	161.38	129.68	31.72	155.80	5.57
April to March	234.48	213.82	41.67	124.13	89.89

Dust : Excluding Orthodox Dust

North India -Dooars & Terai - Estate CTC Leaf & Dust

Months	2024/25	2023/24	24 vs 23	2022/23	24 vs 22
APR	272.92	242.16	30.76	263.70	11.22
MAY	235.04	228.31	6.73	209.17	23.67
JUN	281.96	238.87	44.48	245.75	37.20
JUL	258.88	228.13	30.75	227.81	29.83
AUG	253.98	187.74	55.82	223.53	32.68
SEP	254.72	193.65	61.07	204.45	50.27
OCT	247.80	183.23	53.78	238.72	36.28
NOV	227.00	197.13	29.87	200.36	26.75
DEC	186.63	186.79	-3.15	187.38	-1.75
JAN	167.84	157.93	4.96	169.82	-7.58
FEB	181.56	185.23	-10.33	153.52	7.90
MAR	241.45	147.63	97.82	299.25	46.20
April to March	226.73	188.28	26.45	209.55	15.18

Dust : Excluding Orthodox Dust



North India -Cachar - Estate CTC Leaf & Dust

Months	2024/25	2023/24	24 vs 23	2022/23	24 vs 22
APR	192.24	206.53	-34.28	238.48	-44.23
MAY	186.88	200.38	-17.2	183.35	3.33
JUN	215.80	186.67	26.34	182.81	32.99
JUL	213.89	188.38	15.51	193.67	22.22
AUG	229.18	188.84	48.94	202.25	37.53
SEP	238.28	187.79	50.49	184.04	44.24
OCT	227.77	188.52	39.26	188.99	40.82
NOV	204.07	176.97	27.10	180.58	23.49
DEC	168.75	155.86	12.68	162.19	6.56
JAN	182.22	182.68	-0.52	145.01	37.63
FEB	128.88	122.75	66.73	128.78	-0.24
MAR	125.07	127.81	-4.86	135.40	-11.81
April to March	186.58	188.64	-36.84	175.77	30.71

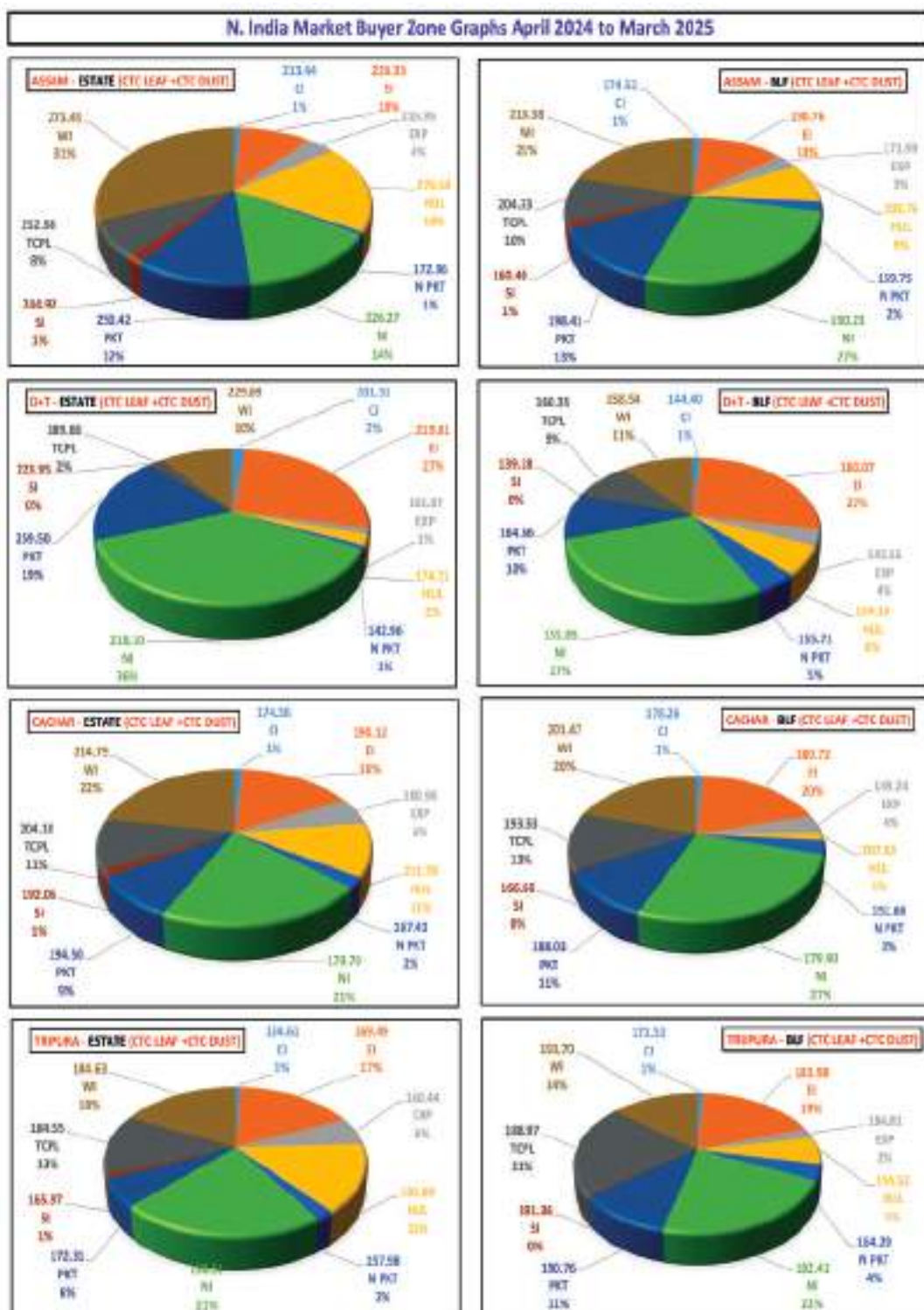
Dust : Excluding Orthodox Dust

North India -TRIPURA - Estate CTC Leaf & Dust

Months	2024/25	2023/24	24 vs 23	2022/23	24 vs 22
APR	287.75	115.71	-11.96	227.34	-25.58
MAY	186.13	166.51	-10.28	160.47	-4.20
JUN	180.39	160.76	19.63	151.56	28.83
JUL	180.88	185.41	-17.44	153.80	27.08
AUG	189.16	152.07	47.09	181.65	37.50
SEP	226.47	152.88	52.40	157.57	47.90
OCT	202.93	144.38	58.55	149.58	53.34
NOV	182.44	138.82	44.03	146.68	35.96
DEC	145.99	130.20	15.13	136.92	8.47
JAN	126.70	107.91	18.75	128.89	-3.19
FEB	117.92	101.61	16.30	126.31	-8.60
MAR	188.71	187.34	-6.63	121.23	68.63
April to March	176.51	182.21	-32.27	149.50	25.01

Dust : Excluding Orthodox Dust





Compiled by Soumen Bagchi

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