



Tea India

2026



Arijit Raha
Secretary General, ITA

Editorspeak

Twenty Twenty-Five marked a year of measured recovery and renewed momentum for the Indian tea industry. The sector witnessed a rebound in production, record export performance and continued emphasis on quality and sustainability, even as weaker auction price realisations, climate variability, rising input costs, evolving global market dynamics and geopolitical developments posed significant challenges.

All-India tea production in 2025 registered a significant increase touching a level of 1395.53 million kilograms (mkg). Indian tea exports reached an all-time high of 285.53 mkg in 2025, surpassing the previous record of 256.17 mkg achieved in 2024. Export earnings also touched a historic high of Rs. 8659.44 crore, driven by strong demand from traditional markets as well as increased off take from the UAE, Iraq, Iran and China. This remarkable performance underscores the growing global appreciation for the quality, diversity and distinctiveness of Indian teas. The year witnessed a resurgence in promotional initiatives led by Tea Board in key emerging markets. This is commendable and needs to be sustained with participation from Industry

The issue of rising tea imports continued to engage the attention of the industry. Imports, though lower than the unusually elevated levels of 2024, continued to remain substantial at around 39.65 million kg. The continued inflow of comparatively lower-priced teas highlights the need for balanced and strategic trade measures to safeguard the interests of domestic producers while ensuring quality and traceability in the market. Recent initiatives by the Tea Board towards stricter monitoring and quality testing of imported teas are important steps in protecting the integrity of Indian tea.

All India Average Auction price realisations during the year 2025 declined by approximately Rs. 11.27 to Rs. 188.03 per kg thereby not keeping pace with the continued escalation in labour, energy, fertiliser and statutory compliance costs, resulting in sustained pressure on producer margins. The long-term sustainability of the industry will depend on ensuring price realisations that adequately reflect the rising cost of production and the investments necessary to maintain quality, sustainability and the welfare of the workforce.

The Indian Tea Association (ITA) and its members remain committed to producing safe and sustainable teas matching globally accepted quality standards. The challenges posed by climate change, emerging pest pressures and evolving regulatory requirements call for a broader scientific approach, including the expansion of the basket of approved crop protection solutions.

ITA's sustainability initiatives continued to make meaningful progress across tea-growing regions through programmes focused on agri-extension, sanitation, nutrition, skilling and the empowerment of small tea growers. Collaborative efforts with national and international partners further strengthened occupational safety, health and welfare initiatives, reaffirming the industry's commitment to inclusive and sustainable growth. ITA in partnership with Solidaridad completed the first pilot on regenagri certification for a few tea estates. This would strengthen efforts in leveraging the carbon footprints of estates, going forward.

Looking ahead, climate resilience, sustainability, quality enhancement, market development and ensuring remunerative returns for tea producers will remain central to the industry's agenda. As Indian tea continues to strengthen its global footprint, the ITA remains committed to working closely with all stakeholders to foster a progressive, competitive and future-ready tea sector, ensuring that the legacy of Indian tea continues to flourish for generations to come.

Office Bearers of ITA 2025-26



Mr. Hemant Bangur
Chairman, ITA



Mr. Suneel Singh Sikand
Vice-Chairman, ITA



Mr. Atul Rastogi
Addl. Vice-Chairman, ITA

142nd Annual General Meeting of Indian Tea Association

The Indian Tea Association (ITA) held its 142nd Annual General Meeting at The LaLiT, Kolkata on 9th October, 2025. The event brought together industry leaders and stakeholders across the value chain to reflect on the Indian tea industry's legacy, address pressing challenges, and outline an innovative vision for a sustainable future.



Mr. Hemant Bangur, Chairman, ITA addressing the audience at the 142nd AGM of ITA

In his address, the ITA Chairman, Mr. Hemant Bangur underscored the critical role of the tea industry in India's economic and cultural fabric while highlighting the need for strategic interventions to navigate global and domestic headwinds. The AGM emphasized innovation, sustainability, and resilience as cornerstones for the industry's growth amid evolving consumer demands and environmental challenges.

The Chief Guest for the AGM was:

Dr. Ravi Kota, Chief Secretary, Government of Assam

Key Highlights from the Chairman's Address

- **Economic Context:** India's emergence as the world's fourth-largest economy underscores the potential for growth, but the tea sector continues to face severe financial stress due to stagnant prices and rising costs.

- **Industry Viability:** Around 80% of organized estates reported cash losses in the past year, with profitability falling to unsustainable levels. A Minimum Sustainable Price Regime and level playing field for the organized and small-grower sectors were strongly advocated.

- **Production & Pricing:** Chairman emphasized optimizing global and domestic production to restore demand-supply balance, amid a 418 Mkg Global Surplus.

- **Exports:** Mr. Bangur highlighted that India's tea exports rose 10% to 256 million kg in 2024, maintaining the country's position as the third-largest tea exporter. The Chairman urged policy support including enhanced RoDTEP benefits to boost orthodox tea competitiveness and outreach to new markets in West Africa and the Middle East.

- **Imports & Safeguards:** Chairman informed that rising low-duty tea imports, particularly from Kenya and Nepal, are depressing domestic prices and distorting markets. Strong safeguards and implementation of Min. Import Price were called for.

- **Quality, Promotion & Branding:** Chairman stated that the industry must pivot towards young consumer preferences, promote ready-to-drink teas, strengthen quality certification marks, and leverage digital branding to reposition Indian tea globally.

- **Climate & Sustainability:** ITA's partnership with Solidaridad Asia to pilot regenerative tea farming aligned with international standards aims to enhance soil health, water efficiency, biodiversity, and carbon sequestration. While generation of Carbon Credits for Monetization & Revenue remains a challenge, ITA's vision is to explore & leverage carbon footprint opportunities for member estates through partnerships.

- **Innovation & Technology:** Chairman urged the adoption of AI, IoT, and drone technologies to enhance efficiency, reduce costs and ensure long-term viability.

Chairman called for a collective call for cross-sector partnerships, policy support, and inclusive innovation to secure the future of Indian tea through sustainability and technological transformation.

Highlights of the Address by Dr. Ravi Kota, IAS, Chief Secretary, Govt. of Assam



Dr. Ravi Kota, IAS, Chief Secretary, Govt. of Assam addressing the audience at the 142nd AGM of ITA

Addressing the 142nd AGM of ITA, Dr. Ravi Kota, IAS, Chief Secretary, Govt. of Assam, highlighted the evolving partnership between the Government and the tea industry, noting that tea has moved from being primarily an industry-managed sector to a shared responsibility involving the State, Centre and industry. He underlined Assam's pivotal contribution to India's tea economy and emphasised recent initiatives to strengthen the global positioning of Indian and Assam tea, including participation in international trade platforms and leveraging opportunities such as the India-UK FTA.

Dr. Kota identified key challenges facing the industry, including the cost differential between large estates and small growers, declining auction prices, rising out-lots, low-cost imports, climate change, and financial stress in tea estates. He stated that Minimum Sustainable Price/Floor Price for tea has merit, but must be practical, enforceable and aligned with market realities and does not disproportionately burden the Government or buyers. He called for measures such as a balanced framework for minimum import price and stronger origin disclosure, performance-linked support for orthodox tea, aligning Tea with the national agricultural programs, and revival of mechanisms for restructuring viable estate loans.

Looking ahead, Dr. Kota stressed the need to reposition tea as part of the global wellness and lifestyle economy through greater emphasis on quality, traceability, sustainability and innovation. He advocated greater use of AI and digital technologies, encouraging startups and young entrepreneurs, promoting tea tourism and new tea-based products, and strengthening domestic consumption of premium Indian teas. He concluded by emphasising that the future of Assam tea and Indian tea are intrinsically linked and called for closer collaboration among Government, industry, small growers, research institutions and financial agencies to make Indian tea a global benchmark.

Asia Tea Alliance – Asia International Tea Summit

The 6th Annual Summit of the Asia Tea Alliance (ATA) was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 27th November 2025, bringing together tea industry leaders and representatives from the major tea-producing nations of India, Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. The Summit was chaired by Mr. Nimal Udugampola, Chairman, Tea Small Holdings Development Authority (TSHDA), Sri Lanka, who currently serves as the Chairman of the Asia Tea Alliance. Mr. Arijit Raha, Secretary General, Indian Tea Association (ITA), represented India at the Summit.

A key outcome of the Summit was the adoption of the Colombo Declaration by the member countries of the Asia Tea Alliance. The Declaration lays down a collaborative framework for advancing a sustainable, climate-resilient, regenerative, and inclusive future for the Asian tea sector, reaffirming the collective commitment of the member nations to strengthen cooperation and address the common challenges confronting the industry.



6th Asia Tea Alliance – 27th November 2025 – Colombo, Sri Lanka

Core Objectives

• **Decarbonisation & Regenerative Agriculture:**

Promotes soil health, biodiversity, climate-resilient cultivars, and decarbonisation roadmaps to reduce emissions.

• **Empowerment of Tea Smallholders:** Focuses on strengthening inclusive policies, improving access to technology and fair prices, enforcing fair trade practices, and supporting the formation of Smallholder Societies.

• **Scientific Cooperation & Research:** Calls for institutional collaboration, joint research initiatives (e.g., harmonising Maximum Residue Limits), and knowledge sharing across member countries.

• **Digitalisation & Knowledge Exchange:** Aims to enhance transparency through the ATA Digital Hub and introduce the ATA Digital Digest, alongside establishing a Regenerative Agriculture Hub in Sri Lanka.

• **Market Expansion & Consumer Engagement:** Focuses on promoting responsible tea consumption globally, with an emphasis on high-potential markets like Africa.

The Secretary General was also an invited panellist at the Technical Session, "Tea Reimagined: Regenerative, Resilient and Carbon Free," during the Asia International Tea Summit. He delivered a presentation on "Industry Leadership and Collective Action for a Regenerative and Resilient Tea Sector," highlighting the importance of collaborative action in advancing sustainability, climate resilience, and responsible growth across the tea industry.

FAO Workshop on Net Zero Carbon Framework for Global Tea Sector

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Markets and Trade Division hosted an inception workshop on 24th to 25th April, 2025 in Nairobi to outline a Global Framework of Net Zero Carbon for the Tea Sector. Building on the earlier FAO initiative, "Collaborating for an Inclusive, Resilient and Sustainable Tea Sector," the event gathered global stakeholders to establish a

standard decarbonization roadmap tailored for both large tea estates and smallholders.

Key Takeaways & Event Highlights

• **Carbon Sink Potential:** Discussions highlighted that tea estates with large plantation areas serve as critical carbon sinks where sequestration levels frequently exceed operational emissions.

• **Standardized Roadmap:** The proposed framework aligns with national emission-reduction objectives, offering structured guidance to help both major tea producers and small tea growers transition toward net zero.

• **Economic & Ecological Benefits:** Beyond climate change mitigation, the framework promotes regenerative agriculture and unlocks new financial opportunities through carbon credit generation via inseting initiatives.

The Secretary General, Indian Tea Association (ITA), attended and spoke at the event, sharing perspectives on integrating Indian tea producers into the global sustainability roadmap.



FAO Meet –Nairobi – April, 2025



India Tea Trade Dinner 2026

The 16th Edition of the India Tea Trade Dinner (ITTD) was held on 8th April 2026 at Taj Bengal, Kolkata.

The event was organised under the aegis of the India Tea Trade Dinner Committee, chaired by Mr. Hemant Bangur, Chairman, Indian Tea Association, with members representing the key segments of the Indian tea industry.

The Chief Guest for the evening was Mr. C. Murugan, IAS, Deputy Chairman, Tea Board India. The event also featured Mrs. Jaya Row, one of India's foremost exponents of Indian philosophy, as the Guest Speaker, who delivered an inspiring address to the distinguished gathering.

The Dinner witnessed the participation of stakeholders from across the Indian tea value chain, international buyers and representatives, as well as senior officials from the Government, reaffirming its stature as one of the industry's premier annual networking and engagement platforms.



Mr. C. Murugan, IAS, Dy, Chairman, Tea Board India addressing the delegates at the ITTD 2026



Mrs. Jaya Row speaking at the ITTD 2026

BRANCH BUZZ

135th AGM of Assam Branch Indian Tea Association

The 135th AGM of Assam Branch ITA was held on 14th March 2026 at the Jorhat Gymkhana Club, Jorhat. Held under the chairmanship of Shri Ashok Trivedi, Chairman, ABITA, the event was graced by Padma Shri Arup Kumar Dutta, renowned writer and journalist as the Chief Guest. Other dignitaries who were present in the AGM were, Shri Suneel Singh Sikand, Vice-Chairman, ITA, Shri Arijit Raha, Secretary General, ITA, Shri Apurba Chutiya, Vice-Chairman, ABITA, Honorary Officials, Branch and Zone Stipendiaries, tea planters from member gardens and other prominent personalities from the tea industry.

In his welcome address, the Chairman, ABITA spoke on the current tea scenario and the challenges being faced by the Industry. Delivering his speech, Shri Suneel Singh Sikand, Vice-Chairman, ITA spoke on the production scenario, exports, imports, prices as well as the challenges being faced by the Industry due to climate change. He thanked the Government of Assam for its continued support to the Tea Industry. The meeting was also addressed by the Chief Guest, Shri Arup Kumar Dutta.

The ABITA awards for best performing gardens in health & family welfare during the year 2025 were distributed to the selected gardens in course of the AGM.



135th AGM of ABITA

125th AGM of Surma Valley Branch Indian Tea Association (SVBITA)

The 125th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Surma Valley Branch of the Indian Tea Association (SVBITA) was held on 21st February 2026 at Hotel Cachar Club.

The meeting was graced by Shri Parimal Suklabaidya, Hon'ble Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha (Silchar), as the Chief Guest, and Dr. Rajive Mohan Pant, Vice-Chancellor of Assam University, as the Guest of Honour.

In his address, Mr. I.B. Ubhadia, Chairman of the Surma Valley Branch, highlighted the key challenges confronting the tea industry in Barak Valley and emphasized the need to formalize a comprehensive long-term strategic framework to ensure stability, adaptability, and future sustainability.

Mr. Atul Rastogi, Additional Vice-Chairman, Indian Tea Association (ITA), Kolkata, and Mr. Debashish Chakravarti, Secretary, Indian Tea Association (ITA), Kolkata, also addressed the gathering. They spoke on the broader challenges facing the Indian Tea Industry in general, discussing the economic, environmental, and operational issues affecting the tea sector.

The AGM was attended by a distinguished gathering of members of the tea fraternity, government officials, and tea planters representing the member gardens of the Surma Valley Branch of the Indian Tea Association. A MoU on collaboration between SVBITA & Assam University was entered into during the function.



125th AGM of SVBITA

148th AGM of Dooars Branch Indian Tea Association (DBITA)



148th AGM of DBITA

The 148th Annual Meeting of the Branch was held on 31st January 2026 in the presence of members, past Branch Chairmen, senior Government officials, industry representatives, and the media. Mr. Atul Rastogi, Additional Vice Chairman, Indian Tea Association, and Mr. Arijit Raha, Secretary General, ITA, attended the meeting and addressed members on the key challenges facing the tea industry and the importance of sustainable practices.

Mr. Rajkumar Mondal, Branch Chairman, presented the Annual Report, highlighting the Branch's initiatives in addressing labour issues, illegal encroachments on leasehold land, reservation matters, and supply chain challenges.

The meeting featured technical presentations by Prof. (Dr.) Prateek Madhav Bhattacharya, who spoke on integrated disease management in tea, Mr. Partha Biswas, Additional Labour Commissioner, West Bengal, on the importance of social dialogue in plantations, and Mrs. Sweta Srivastav, Secretary, District Legal Services Authority, Alipurduar, on alternative dispute resolution mechanisms in the tea sector.

64th AGM of Terai Branch Indian Tea Association (TBITA)

The 64th Annual General Meeting of the Terai Branch, Indian Tea Association was held on 30th January 2026 at the Conference Room of TBITA, Bengdubi.

The meeting was attended by Mr. Atul Rastogi, Additional Vice Chairman, ITA; Ms. Nayantara Palchoudhuri, National Committee Member and Past Chairperson, ITA; Mr. D. Mallik, Chairman, TBITA; Mr. D.S. Roy, Vice Chairman, TBITA; and Mr. Arijit Raha, Secretary General, ITA, along with senior officials from the Government, District Administration.

Labour Directorate, Tea Research Association (TRA), and tea broking agencies.

The deliberations focused on the key issues confronting the tea industry, including quality and compliance, production and price realization, auction reforms, imports and exports, industrial relations, labour and productivity, the role of small tea growers, FSSAI and MRL compliance, generic promotion of tea, Tea Board-related matters, banking infrastructure, EPF, electricity supply, wildlife depredation, floods, and issues relating to land pattas and encroachment of tea garden land.



64th AGM of TBITA

Annual Meeting of Darjeeling Indian Tea Association (DITA)

The 4th Annual Meeting of the Darjeeling Indian Tea Association (DITA) was held on 29th January 2026 at the Banquet Hall of Hotel Crescent, Darjeeling.

The meeting was attended by Mr. Rajeev Kumar, Chairman, DITA; Ms. Nayantara Palchoudhuri, National Committee Member and Past Chairperson, ITA; Mr. Sudhangshu Shaw, Director, Giddapahar Tea Estate; Mr. Arijit Raha, Secretary General, ITA; and representatives from member tea gardens.

The Chairman, DITA, Secretary General, ITA, Ms. Palchoudhuri, and Mr. Shaw addressed the gathering on the current scenario of the Darjeeling tea industry, highlighting the key challenges and opportunities facing the sector.



4th Annual Meeting of DITA

Consultation on Human-Leopard Conflict – TBITA

Consultation meeting on Human-Leopard Conflict was organised ON 11th June 2025 at Terai Branch ITA in collaboration with World Wildlife Fund (WWF). The meeting was attended by Managers and representatives of 17-member tea estates, along with the State Director and other officials from WWF.

The deliberations focused on the growing challenge of human-leopard conflict in tea-growing areas, with detailed discussions on preventive strategies, mitigation



Consultation on Human-Leopard Conflict – WWF

measures and the importance of coordinated action to ensure the safety of both estate communities and wildlife.

Stakeholders' Meeting on Women Empowerment and Safety in Tea Gardens- ABITA Zone 1

The Secretary, ABITA Zone 1, participated in a stakeholders' meeting on *Women Empowerment and Safety* in Tea Gardens organised by the National Commission for Women (NCW), New Delhi, on 8th January 2026 at Manohari Resort, Dibrugarh.

The meeting was chaired by Smt. Vijaya Rahatkar, Chairperson, NCW, and attended by representatives from the District Administration, Labour Department, trade unions, NGOs and other stakeholders.

During the discussions, the Secretary highlighted key issues relating to financial inclusion, access to banking services in tea gardens and the education of the girl child. It was emphasised that strengthening these areas would contribute significantly towards addressing several social challenges in tea garden communities. Government initiatives such as the Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana were also highlighted as effective instruments for promoting the long-term financial security and educational empowerment of girls.



Secretary, ABITA Zone 1 speaking at the Stakeholders' Meeting

Tea Quality Awareness Week- SVBITA

The Tea Board of India, Regional Office, Silchar, organised a training programme on Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) at Koomber Tea Factory on 19th May 2026 as part of Tea Quality Awareness Week, leading up to International Tea Day.

The programme was addressed by Shri Arupjyoti Das, Assistant Director of Tea Development, Tea Board of India, Shri A. Gurung, Manager, Koomber Tea Factory, and Shri S. Ghosh, Officiating Secretary, SVBITA, who highlighted the importance of quality plucking practices and sustainable manufacturing to enhance tea quality and safety.



Training Programme on Good Manufacturing Practices

Flood Relief and Medical Camps by ABITA Zone 2

Assam witnessed one of the most severe flood situations in recent years, with widespread inundation affecting several districts, especially Charaideo, Jorhat and Sivasagar. Thousands of families were displaced, and extensive damage was caused to lives, livelihoods and infrastructure.



Medical Camp organised by ABITA Zone 2

In response, ABITA Zone 2 PAF organised Flood Relief and Medical Camps in the flood-affected areas of Jorhat and Golaghat districts, extending essential relief materials and medical assistance to the affected communities as part of its commitment to humanitarian support.

Awareness Programme on Obtaining NOC for Ground Water Extraction – ABITA Zone 3



A one-day Awareness Programme on obtaining NOC for Ground Water Extraction and Compliance Requirements was organised by ABITA Zone 3 at Thakurbari Planters' Club on 28th July 2026. The programme was attended by Mr. T. Chakraborty, Regional Director, Central Ground Water Board, North Eastern Region, along with his team.

The programme provided members with valuable insights into the regulatory framework governing groundwater extraction, the process for obtaining the requisite No Objection Certificate (NOC), and the associated compliance requirements.



BUDGET 2026-27 - KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR THE TEA INDUSTRY

ASSAM

• **ATISIS:** Production subsidy for Orthodox and Specialty Tea enhanced from Rs.10/- to Rs.15/- per kg. Additionally, a new subsidy of Rs.3/- per kg will be introduced for export oriented and premium quality Assam CTC Tea, directly exported through recognized export channels and contributing to foreign exchange earnings;

Matcha Tea to be incentivized by including such tea within the eligible category of Orthodox and Specialty Tea;

Agricultural Income Tax (AIT) for larger assesses restored with effect from 1st April 2026. For STGs, AIT exemption threshold enhanced from Rs 2.5 lakh to Rs 10 lakh. Proceeds of Agricultural Income Tax collected from Tea Industry to be henceforth earmarked exclusively for the welfare and development of tea garden communities.

• **Health:** To strengthen health care in tea garden areas, State Govt to support tea garden hospitals by way of infrastructure up-gradation, diagnostics, medicines, equipments, deployment of dedicated Doctors and human resources;

In remote areas including tea garden areas, State Government to strengthen Jan Aushudhi Kendras and expand Tele-medicine along with Atal Mobile Medical units, Aragya Biman Medical Drones and Hospital ships; deployment of 40 mobile medical units in tea garden districts of Upper Assam.

• State Govt. will continue providing Rs.15,000 as support to pregnant women workers in tea gardens;

• State Govt. to promote organic certification for high value export-oriented crops and support exporters. Supplement export logistics including air cargo facility in Guwahati;

• Over next 5 years, Assam's power network to be strengthened through addition of 120 new sub-stations and 20,000 high voltage distribution transformers;

• State Govt. to undertake ambitious irrigation expansion programme under Rural Infrastructure Development Fund, externally aided projects, central sector schemes;



(Left – Right) Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Assam; Mr. Jayanta Malla Baruah, Hon'ble Finance Minister, Assam

• Government to accelerate Mission Basundhara 4.0 towards updating digital integrated land records, modernize land registration system and establish unified digital land governance eco-system;

• **Land Patta:** State Govt to ensure land rights for 1.14 lakh tea garden worker families within 2026-27 and 3.5 lakh families over next 5 years;

The Govt of India's in-principal decision to provide PMAY Housing benefits to eligible tea garden workers lauded in the Budget Speech.

• Dibrugarh as the second capital region to be transformed into a modern administrative and developmental hub, equipped with world class amenities;

- Strengthening of the administrative infrastructure in Barak Valley with full-fledged functioning of Assam Secretariat at Silchar.
- Government is to expand clean and affordable energy across Assam – piped natural gas network being developed in major towns of the Brahmaputra and Barak Valleys;

- Government proposes to launch Assam Tea and Golf Trail Tourism Initiative. Assam's globally renowned tea heritage and distinctive golf courses to be transformed into world class experiential tourism circuit;
- Government to promote formation of Tea Labourers and Consumers Co-operative Societies in tea gardens with an outlay of Rs.172 crore, bringing tea workers into the cooperative movement.

WEST BENGAL

- The exemption of Agricultural Income Tax on green tea leaves is further extended for one year, i.e. till 31.03.2027.
- The exemption of Cess on Tea production is also extended till 31.03.2027
- Tea Workers Development Board: A dedicated Board will be established to oversee implementation of welfare schemes for tea garden workers, covering healthcare, housing and social security benefits.
- PM Cha Shramik Protsahan Yojana: The State Government will implement the scheme in collaboration with the Government of India to strengthen welfare support for tea workers.
- Tea Sector Revival: The Government has committed to working closely with industry stakeholders to address issues relating to closed tea gardens and improve the overall health of the tea sector.
- Tea Tourism Policy: The permissible commercial utilization of tea estate land for diversification activities under the Tea Tourism Policy has been proposed to be reduced from 30% to 15%.
- Revival of Tea and Agro-Processing Clusters: Under the Government of India's Legacy Industrial Clusters Scheme, for Jute as well as Tea and agro-processing, clusters in Siliguri and Darjeeling will be revitalized. A provision of Rs. 1,000 crore has been made for FY 2026–27.
- Tea Garden Infrastructure Development: To rejuvenate the tea industry, internal roads and infrastructure in tea gardens will be upgraded, and a Common Tea Processing Centre will be established at Siliguri. Allocation: Rs. 100 crore.



Mr. Suwendu Adhikari, Hon'ble Chief Minister, West Bengal

- Tea Processing Zone: A Tea Processing Zone will be developed in collaboration with Shyama Prasad Mookerjee Port, comprising processing facilities, packaging units, auction infrastructure, and allied trade services.
- Border Trade Facilitation: Trade infrastructure at Indo-Bangladesh, Indo-Nepal, and Indo-Bhutan border points will be strengthened through testing and certification laboratories, truck terminals, warehousing, and related facilities.
- Darjeeling Heritage Tourism Promotion: Mapping of heritage tea bungalows and colonial-era structures will be undertaken to position Darjeeling as a leading eco-adventure and heritage tourism destination.



- **Siliguri Logistics Hub:** The Government will promote Siliguri as a major logistics and trade hub with an allocation of Rs.200 crore.
- **Spring Rejuvenation Programme:** An allocation of Rs. 50 crore has been earmarked for spring rejuvenation projects in the hills to improve drinking water availability.
- **Ayushman Bharat–PMJAY Implementation:** The scheme has been launched in the State, providing health insurance coverage of up to Rs. 5 lakh per family per year for eligible beneficiaries, supported by a budgetary allocation of Rs. 3,100 crore.
- **Airports:** Existing Coochbehar Airport to be expanded. Govt. to also identify available land near Kalyani to set-up a new green field Airport.
- **Solar Power:** State Govt. to encourage more generation and consumption in order to make power affordable as well as meet climate goals.
- **All existing social protection schemes** to continue with modifications where necessary.



Dr. Swapan Dasgupta, Hon'ble MIC, Finance Department, West Bengal

- State Govt. has introduced a new outreach helpline for citizens viz. 'Apnar Sarkar Apnar Pashe' with a toll-free no. 82820-82820 for redressal of citizen's grievances.

White Papers on Darjeeling Tea Industry and Dooars & Terai Tea Industry

The Indian Tea Association (ITA) has prepared two comprehensive White Papers on the Darjeeling Tea Industry and the Dooars & Terai Tea Industry, highlighting the key challenges confronting these iconic tea-growing regions and presenting a roadmap for their revival and sustainable growth.

To facilitate policy engagement, ITA presented the White Papers to the Government of West Bengal through a series of high-level interactions. On 28th July 2026, an ITA delegation called on Shri Tapas Roy, Hon'ble Minister-in-Charge, Department of Industry, Commerce & Enterprises, at Shilpa Sadan, Kolkata, and formally submitted the White Papers.

Subsequently, on 3rd August 2026, another ITA delegation met Dr. Swapan Dasgupta, Hon'ble



ITA Delegation presenting the White Papers to Hon'ble MIC, Finance Department, West Bengal

Finance Minister, Government of West Bengal at Nabanna, and presented the White Papers, seeking the State Government's support for the revival and sustainable development of the Darjeeling and Dooars–Terai tea sectors.

The delegations were led by Mr. Hemant Bangur, Chairman, ITA. The meetings were attended by Mr. S.S. Sikand, Vice Chairman; Mr. Atul Rastogi, Additional Vice Chairman; Ms. Nayantara Palchoudhuri, Past Chairperson and National Committee Member; Mr. Shaibal Dutt, National Committee Member; Mr. Arijit Raha, Secretary General; Mr. Debasish Chakravarti, Secretary; and Mr. Aditya Chakrabarti, Deputy Secretary, as applicable. Further, another delegation from ITA met Dr. Subrata Gupta, IAS (Retd.), Advisor to the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Government of West Bengal on 24th August 2026 and submitted the White Papers to him.

The White Papers present a detailed assessment of the structural and emerging issues affecting the two regions and set out ITA's recommendations, including targeted policy interventions and special support measures aligned with the evolving needs of the tea industry.

The Association believes that the White Papers would serve as valuable reference documents for



ITA Delegation presenting the White Papers to Hon'ble MIC, Dept. of Industry, Commerce & Enterprises, West Bengal

policymakers in formulating effective strategies for the revival of the West Bengal tea industry.

ITA looks forward to working closely with the State Government to strengthen the growth, sustainability, and global competitiveness of this vital sector, which continues to make a significant contribution to the State's economy and employment.

FSSAI Clarifies Standards for the Use of the Term "Tea"

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), through a clarification issued on 24th December 2025, reaffirmed that **only products derived from the *Camellia sinensis* plant may be marketed as "Tea" under the Food Safety and Standards Regulations.**

The clarification states that plant-based infusions, herbal blends and similar products not derived from *Camellia sinensis* cannot be labelled or marketed using the term "Tea", as such usage constitutes misbranding. Food Business Operators, including e-commerce platforms, have been directed to discontinue the use of the term for



non-*Camellia sinensis* products, while State authorities have been instructed to ensure strict compliance and initiate appropriate action in cases of violation.



Innovation in Assam Tea: Traceability, Heritage and Global Market Access

A conference on "Innovation in Assam Tea: Traceability, Heritage and Global Market Access", organised by the Department of Innovation, Incubation & Startups, Government of Assam, was held on 19th November 2025 in Guwahati.

The conference brought together policymakers, industry leaders, technology experts and startups to deliberate on strengthening Assam Tea's global competitiveness through digital traceability, innovation, sustainability and enhanced market access, while preserving its rich heritage.

The conference was attended by Secretary General, Indian Tea Association (ITA), and Secretary, Assam Branch Indian Tea Association (ABITA). Mr. S.S. Sikand, Vice Chairman, Indian Tea Association, participated as a speaker at the conference, sharing the industry's perspective on enhancing the global competitiveness of Assam Tea through innovation and sustainable growth.



Conference on Innovation in Assam Tea: Traceability, Heritage and Global Market Access

Meeting with Hon'ble Labour Minister, Government of West Bengal

The Indian Tea Association participated in a meeting on the status of tea plantations in West Bengal, chaired by Shri Arjun Singh, Hon'ble Minister-in-Charge, Labour Department, Government of West Bengal, on 16 June 2026. The meeting was also attended by the Hon'ble Minister of State, the Secretary, Special Secretary and other senior Government officials.

On behalf of the Association, the Secretary General, Shri Arijit Raha, presented ITA's views on key issues affecting the tea industry and submitted a representation to the Government. The Hon'ble Minister welcomed constructive suggestions for the development of the sector and outlined the State Government's perspective and expectations from the tea industry.



Meeting with the Hon'ble MIC, Labour Department, West Bengal

International Tea Day 2026

On the occasion of **International Tea Day** on 21st May 2026, Chairman, Indian Tea Association, Shri Hemant Bangur, addressed a programme organised by the Tea Board of India and chaired by Shri C. Murugan, Deputy Chairperson, Tea Board.

Emphasising the importance of quality and regulatory compliance, Shri Bangur proposed the development of a science-based, transparent star-rating framework for tea. The proposed framework would integrate measurable quality and food safety parameters, sensory evaluation, sustainability and community welfare indicators, and traceability, through a collaborative effort involving regulators, scientific institutions, industry bodies and consumer stakeholders. The initiative aims to enhance consumer awareness, recognise responsible producers and strengthen confidence in Indian tea in domestic and international markets.



Programme on International Tea Day –Tea Board India

Stakeholders' Meeting of the Tea Industry - Kurseong, Darjeeling

The Secretary General, Indian Tea Association, attended the Stakeholders' Meeting of the Tea Industry convened by the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, at Kurseong, Darjeeling, on 26th June 2026. The meeting was chaired by Shri Rajesh Agrawal, Secretary, Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

The deliberations focused on key issues affecting the tea industry, with stakeholders exchanging views on policy

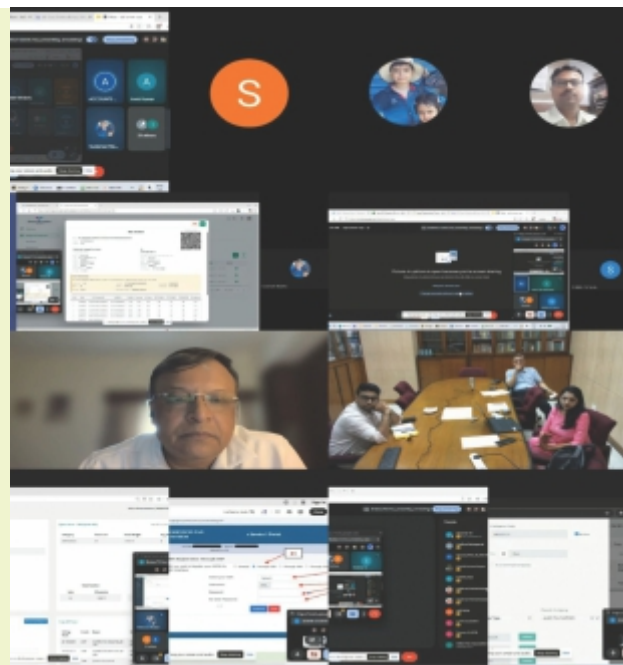
measures and initiatives to enhance the sustainability, competitiveness and long-term growth of the sector. The Secretary General, highlighted the key policy and operational issues affecting the Indian tea industry and urged timely interventions to enhance the sector's sustainability and competitiveness.



Mock Session on New Tea Auction Platform

The Indian Tea Association, in collaboration with Tradeforge Technologies Pvt. Ltd., organised a virtual mock auction session for its members on 25th July 2026 to familiarise stakeholders with the new web-based Tea Auction Platform being developed for the Tea Board of India.

The session was attended by members of the Association's Regional Committees and the Export Promotion & Marketing Sub-Committee. Participants were introduced to the platform's key features and auction workflow, providing an opportunity to gain hands-on experience and share feedback ahead of its implementation.



Exploring New Horizons - AI-Based Research Initiative for Sustainable Tea Cultivation

The Indian Tea Association (ITA) has extended its in principle support to a research initiative of Adamas University aimed at developing an indigenous AI and robotics-based precision agriculture platform for sustainable tea disease management. The proposed project seeks to leverage artificial intelligence and robotics for automated disease diagnosis, precision crop protection and severity-based treatment selection, with the objective of enhancing productivity and sustainability in the Indian tea sector.

As part of the proposed collaboration, ITA has agreed to facilitate industry engagement by connecting the project investigators with interested tea estates and companies for field trials, technology validation and demonstration activities, subject to the willingness of participating stakeholders. The Association has also proposed examining the feasibility of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Adamas University to promote academia-industry collaboration and foster innovation for the modernisation of the Indian tea industry.



Meeting with the Managing Director, Tripura Tea Development Corporation

The Additional Vice Chairman, Secretary General and Secretary, Indian Tea Association attended a meeting convened by the Managing Director, Tripura Tea Development Corporation Ltd. at Tripura Bhawan, Kolkata, on 2nd July 2026. The meeting explored

investment opportunities in Tripura's tea sector, including tea estate operations, value addition, blending and packaging, and public-private partnership initiatives, ahead of the Destination Tripura: Business Conclave 2026.



Stakeholder Consultation on Resumption of Jorhat Tea Auction Centre



Tea Board India organised a stakeholders consultation on resumption of Jorhat Tea Auction Centre. chaired by Shri C. Murugan, Deputy Chairman, Tea Board, at Jorhat on 10.06.2026.

The Tea Board of India organised a stakeholder consultation on the resumption of the Jorhat Tea Auction Centre at Jorhat on 10th June 2026. The meeting was chaired by Shri C. Murugan, Deputy Chairman, Tea Board, and attended by Smt. Arunita Phukan Yadav, Executive Director, North East Zonal Office, Tea Board.

The Indian Tea Association was represented by the Vice Chairman, ITA, and the Secretary, ABITA. The deliberations focused on the modalities for the revival of the Jorhat Tea Auction Centre and the measures required for its smooth and effective functioning.

Interaction with Joint Secretary, Department of Commerce, Govt. of India

The Tea Board of India organised an interaction with industry stakeholders during the visit of Shri Amit Kumar, IAS, Joint Secretary, Department of Commerce, Government of India, to the Tea Board Head Office on 9th June 2026.

The Indian Tea Association was represented by the Vice Chairman and the Secretary General. The interaction provided a platform to discuss key issues concerning the tea sector, with stakeholders sharing their perspectives and recommendations for strengthening the competitiveness and sustainable growth of the Indian tea industry.





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