

INDIAN TEA ASSOCIATION



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PRESS RELEASE

SEVERE DROUGHT AFFECTS TEA PRODUCTION IN NORTH INDIA

- Since the beginning of 2014 adverse weather conditions have been playing havoc on tea crops in both Assam and North Bengal. **Of considerable concern is the dry and drought conditions continuing through April --- with no immediate prospect of rain --- thereby depressing current & future crop outlook.**
- Rainfall has been significantly lower during the January to March period of 2014 and some district-wise rainfall data will show :

Districts	Rainfall (% +/-)
UPPER ASSAM (Margherita, Doom Dooma, Naharkatia, Tingri, Panitola, Dibrugarh, Moran)	(-) 49%
LOWER ASSAM (Sonari, Jorhat, Golaghat)	(-) 25%
DOOARS (Dam Dim, Nagrakata, Chala)	(-) 35%
TERAI (Siliguri Sub-division of Darjeeling district)	(-) 40%
DARJEELING	(-) 37%

- The situation in the North Bank of the Assam Valley (comprising districts of Nagaon, North Lakhimpur, Bishnauth, Tezpur, Borsola, Mangaldai) is reported to have deteriorated further in April 2014 and as reflected by the rainfall data captured by the Tea Research Association's Meteorological Station at Thakurbari. **Total rainfall from January 2014 till 20th April 2014 has been 71 mm against the crop water requirement of 310 mm for this period under typical North Bank conditions.**
- The drought conditions are reflecting in :
 - Poor recovery of tea bushes after pruning / skiffing operations and wilting/debilitation of maintenance foliage and leaf scorching are being widely observed. This would adversely impact April & May crop.
 - Delayed application of fertilizers and other growth promoting agents in the absence of adequate rainfall.
 - Leaf defoliation and scorching raising the spectre of pest attacks.

Due to poor availability of leaf it has not been possible to sustain manufacturing operations in a number of individual tea estates requiring transfer of leaf for centralized / group manufacture in certain areas.

Severe drought prevailing in tea regions will result in sharp escalation in the cost of irrigation and any rise in pest infestation could lead to significant crop losses, further pushing up the cost of production. Tea estates remain concern over the prospect of mounting distress particularly in the back drop of the impending wage revision which has fallen due in the West Bengal tea industry.

Kolkata

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