



Tea India

July – December 2012

Editorspeak

THIS issue of *Tea India* covers a very busy period. The ITA's interactions with the Tea Board have set the pace for a challenging set of engagements that should move the Tea industry to another gear. The Tea industry Stakeholders also comprehensively reacted to the Parliamentary Committee on Commerce's Report – *Tea India* covers the issues in detail.

The ITA's 129th AGM in Kolkata saw a packed auditorium and the Chairman ITA made an in depth presentation of ITA's areas of work and achievements during the year. Mr. M G V K Bhanu, Chairman Tea Board, responded by lauding ITA for its leadership role and for having continued to identify and execute the developmental and promotional agenda for the Tea sector. Tea Board has pledged to work with and support ITA in several areas of engagement.

ITA continues to actively engage with the State Governments – detailed Reports feature in *Tea India*. The IITC 2012 in Goa was, by all accounts, a resounding success. Feedback from within India and overseas lauded the organisation and content of the event and Goa as a venue offered a great opportunity to network. *Tea India* captures the colour and details of the Sessions. ITA's Branches were also on over drive holding several important Interactive Sessions.

Meeting with Chairman Tea Board

A delegation from ITA comprising A N Singh, Chairman, A K Bhargava, Vice Chairman and M Dasgupta, Secretary General, met M G V K Bhanu, Chairman, Tea Board of India on December 16, 2012. The following issues featured at this meeting:

Resources Development

The Chairman Tea Board said that substantial outlays were expected in the 12th Plan Period for Human Resource Development in the tea industry, particularly for the worker segment. He also suggested that the ITA could consider setting up of an Education Trust and corpus to provide scholarships for meritorious students from among the plantation workers community that could be, in turn, also subscribed to by the Tea Board. He favoured an institutionalised approach through which the broad parameters of such scholarships/stipends could be worked out with appropriate qualification norms.

Tea Promotion

Domestic:

The Chairman Tea Board appreciated the initiatives taken by ITA to launch Road Shows towards engagement with the internal tea trade in various States. He said that Tea Board would be happy to partner ITA for these Road Shows with funding and content support. He requested that plans for the Road Shows for 2013 may be shared by ITA with the Tea Board for a co-ordinated approach. Chairman ITA suggested that promotion of Darjeeling tea could be an important



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component of the Road Shows for increasing its exposure in the internal market.

The Chairman Tea Board, referred to his announcement at IITC 2012 in Goa, regarding a Core Group to look into aspects of Tea Promotion, particularly in India and stated that this Group should meet at the earliest to draw up a plan. In this connection it was noted that a selection process was on for empanelment of advertising agencies to initiate a promotion brief designed and formulated by the Tea Board.

Exports:

The Chairman Tea Board mentioned that the Tea Board was keen to support ITA in furthering the interests of producer led exports. He said that ITA's export promotion plans/events for 2013 could be effectively dovetailed with the Tea Board's own plans relating to the 5x5x5 Programme initiated by the Ministry of Commerce. He said that the focus markets should be: USA, Pakistan, Iran, Russia, Kazakhstan.

M.R.L. Challenge:

Highlighting the fact that one of the key challenges of the industry relates to managing MRLs particularly in relation to export, the Chairman ITA said that this matter would

progressively acquire a domestic dimension, as eventually MRL Standards have to be integrated as one covering both the export and the domestic sectors. A plan of action including both the technical aspects of managing MRLs as well as advocacy and in various regulatory jurisdictions would need to be drawn up. ITA would have to partner Tea Board for this purpose.

E-Auction:

The Chairman Tea Board mentioned that the administration and operation of the E-Auction had stabilised over the last two years and the challenge now would be to examine how the E-Auction would be funded by the users themselves. The Ministry of Commerce has been emphasising that the auction process should now be self determined and funded by the trade with an appropriate revenue model.

Investment by Indian Tea Companies:

The Chairman Tea Board pointed out that several tea growing countries/regions like Vietnam, East Africa, Mozambique, Myanmar were open to FDI in the tea sector and Indian companies should explore opportunities. The Tea Board would facilitate visits to assess such prospects.

Intergovernmental Group (IGG) on Tea Meeting

THE Intersessional Meeting of the FAO IGG on Tea was held in Washington DC, USA on September 17 and 18, 2012. The Indian delegation was led by M G V K Bhanu, Chairman, Tea Board of India. ITA was represented by C S Bedi, Chairman, A K Bhargava, Additional Vice-Chairman and Arijit Raha, Additional Secretary. Fifty participants from ten countries attended the Meeting. The objective was to assess the progress of the Working Groups (WGs) of IGG in the issues assigned to them at the 20th Session of IGG on Tea in Colombo earlier in 2012. The following WGs had executed the brief assigned to them:



- WG on Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) – Finalising the priority list of compounds in different countries and removing anomalies and duplication of work.
- WG on MRLs in Tea Brew – Report on progress made with the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residue (CCPR) regarding use of the tea brew as an alternative to measuring MRLs. Draft action plan outlined in the discussion document had been considered, framework of a policy document required for Codex was defined and agreement

on the strategy to include the tea brew in the dietary risk assessment for tea was reached.

■ WG on Tea Trade and quality – Status of compliance of ISO 3720 as a minimum quality

standard in member countries had been reviewed. A strategy to promote minimum quality and safety assurance of ISO 3720 parameters to the Governments of consumer countries as well as to the tea trade and consumers had been developed.

■ WG on Organic Tea – Development and agreement on technical requirements and certification process for organic tea production. Report was made on progress towards considering organic tea as low energy input for financial gain through carbon trading.

■ WG on Climate Change – Agree on the specification and modus operandi of the coordination and functioning of the WG on Climate Change so that it could meet deadlines established at the 20th Session of the IGG on Tea and develop a plan of action.

■ WG on Smallholders – Agree on the Terms of Reference of the WG on Smallholders and develop a plan of action.

Meeting with Tea Board on Parliamentary Committee Recommendations

A Special meeting of the Tea Board was held on December 1, 2012, in Kolkata, to discuss the Parliamentary Committee Recommendations. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce formed w.e.f August 31, 2011, made an in-depth study of the tea industry by interacting with Stakeholders and also visiting tea growing regions and submitted its full Report. While broadly agreeing with the Standing Committee's recommendations on various issues, the CCPA made certain submissions :

Fertiliser availability at subsidised rates

Parliamentary Committee's views on the need to ensure that Fertiliser Subsidy is available to tea growers and that the Ministry of Commerce/Tea Board should engage with State Governments for timely availability of fertilisers, was encouraging. The supply of fertilisers to the tea sector comes under the purview of allocations made by the Department of Fertilisers, Government of India, to the respective State Governments.

Continuation of Orthodox Subsidy Scheme

The views of the Parliamentary Committee on the need to increase Orthodox tea production and the continuation of the Orthodox Subsidy Scheme was reassuring. The Scheme not only needs to be continued during the 12th Plan Period but should be strengthened through higher rates of subsidy to compensate for rising cost differential of producing Orthodox tea vis-a-vis CTC tea.

The Parliamentary Committee's observations on the need for strict monitoring of quality of tea being exported /imported was valid.

The Tea Board has already taken steps towards constituting Tea Councils for both North and South India.

Performance of the Special Purpose Tea Fund (SPTF)

The Parliamentary Committee while reviewing the progress of the SPTF had commented that some constraints had detracted from

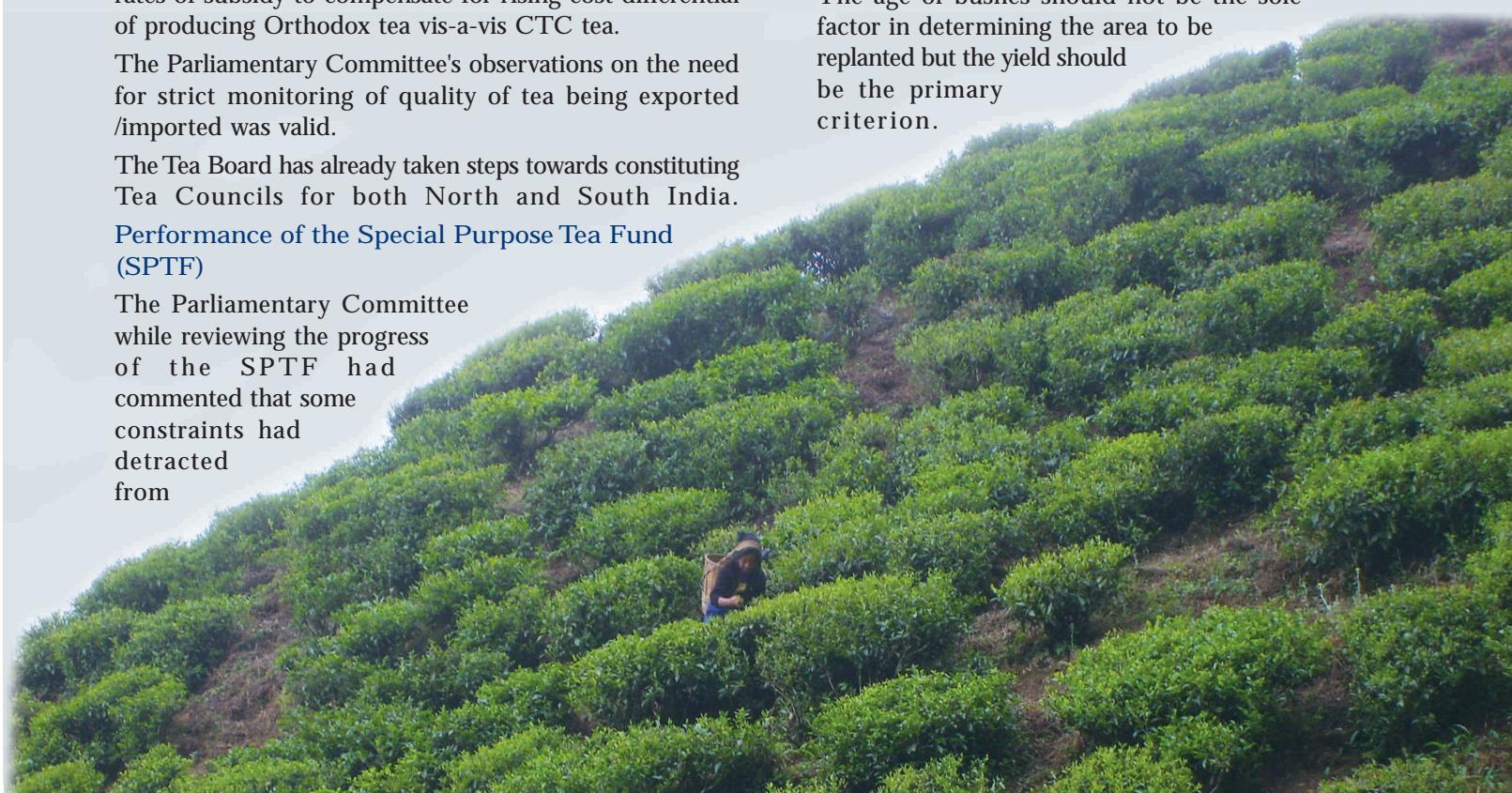


the effectiveness of the SPTF:

- High interest rate on loans
- Inadequate subsidy
- Revenue loss due to long gestation
- Non-cognizance of specific local conditions (terrain, agro-climatic conditions)
- Restriction/ban on usage of excavators, irrigation etc
- Uncertainty of lease tenures

The CCPA had also pointed out that:

- The age of bushes should not be the sole factor in determining the area to be replanted but the yield should be the primary criterion.



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- Rather than taking the criterion of a percentage rate of replanting on an annual basis, the approach should be to adopt a block of five years.
- Companies or Units that have already achieved robust rates of replanting may not have sufficient land for such activity to meet targeted rates.
- The Parliamentary Committee has strongly recommended that 'Rejuvenation pruning to revive health, vigour and yield of tea bushes in addition to the total uprooting of plants be considered under SPTF.
- There should be a time frame for redressal of the identified constraints cited by the Parliamentary Committee for successful implementation of the SPTF.
- There should be a bank/pool from where quality planting material can be readily sourced for successful implementation of SPTF.

Mechanisation

The CCPA supported the recommendations of the Committee for MoC/ Tea Board to collaborate with Institutes/Agricultural Universities to develop a sound

mechanisation base for the industry. Use of mechanical harvesters should be encouraged and promoted through

- Continuing Concessional Customs Duty on import of such harvesters
- Subsidy from the Tea Board to enable wider sections of the industry to procure these machines.

Quality Upgradation and Product Diversification Scheme (QUPDS)

Parliamentary Committee recognised the utility and success of the QUPDS and felt that the Tea Board should continue with the Scheme and strengthen it through inclusion of other machinery and equipment under the eligibility list for the subsidy benefits.

Sharing of Social Cost

The CCPA supported the Parliamentary Committee's observations on the need for carrying forward the recommendations of the inter-ministerial Committee on sharing of the social cost.

National Committee and Office Bearers for 2012 - 2013

The following National Committee of ITA for 2012 -2013 was elected at the 129th Annual General Meeting of the Association, held on December 7, 2012.

Name of Company

Amalgamated Plantations Pvt.Ltd.
Apeejay Surrendra Corporate Services Ltd.
Assam Company India Ltd.
Andrew Yule & Company Ltd.
Bateli Tea Company Ltd.
Bisseswarlall Mannalal & Sons
Darshanlal Anand Prakash & Sons Pvt. Ltd.
Dhunseri Petrochem & Tea Ltd.
Gillanders Arbuthnot & Co. Ltd.
Goodricke Group Ltd.
Jay Shree Tea & Industries Ltd.
Luxmi Tea Company Ltd.
McLeod Russel India Ltd.
Rossell Tea (Division of Rossell India Ltd.)
SPBP Tea Plantation Ltd.
The Bormah Jan Tea Company (1936) Ltd.
The Jorehaut Group Ltd.
The Kalyani Tea Company Ltd.
Warren Tea Ltd.
Washabarie Tea Co., Pvt. Ltd.

Name of Representative

Deepak Atal
Ashok Kumar Bhargava
A K Jajodia
Sunil Munshi
G G Dalmia
Sanjay Kumar Bhuwalka
Sudhir Prakash
P C Dhandhania
Mahesh Sodhani
A N Singh
D P Maheshwari
Tapan Kumar Chowdhury
Azam Monem
Chirinjiv Singh Bedi
Dhirendra Kumar
Bharat Bajoria
Anubhav Poddar
Rakesh Sirohia
Vivek Goenka
Nayantara Palchoudhuri

The following would be ex-officio members of the National Committee for the year 2012-2013:

- C Bora, Chairman, Assam Branch Indian Tea Association
- K A Mahabir, Chairman, Surma Valley Branch Indian Tea Association
- S K Babal, Chairman, Dooars Branch Indian Tea Association
- Ram Chandra Choudhury, Chairman, Terai Branch Indian Tea Association
- J C Pande, Chairman, Darjeeling Indian Tea Association.

Meeting with Chief Minister, Industries and Commerce Minister and Chief Secretary of Government of Assam



Tarun Gogoi, Chief Minister, Government of Assam

ABITA, met Tarun Gogoi, Chief Minister, Pradyot Bordoloi, Minister for Industries and Commerce, Power (Electricity), Public Enterprise and N K Das, Chief Secretary, Government of Assam, on December 11, 2012 at Guwahati. The issues discussed at the meeting included:

■ Supply of Natural Gas to affected tea estates under the No Development Zone (NDZ) around Kaziranga: A representation was submitted to the Government of Assam to request the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas for allotment of gas on priority to these affected tea estates under the NDZ. The Chief Secretary, Government of Assam, assured that a letter would be addressed to the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India. The Minister of Industries suggested that the tea industry should explore installing equipment that could substantially bring down emission caused by coal usage.



N K Das, Chief Secretary, Government of Assam

A delegation from ITA led by Chairman A N Singh which included Vice Chairman A K B h a r g a v a , Deepak Atal (Amalgamated Plantations Pvt. Ltd), Manoj Varma (Jorehaut Group Ltd), D Guha Sircar (M c L e o d Russell India Ltd), Arijit Raha, A d d i t i o n a l Secretary, ITA and Dhiraj K a k a t i , S e c r e t a r y .

■ Health and Family Welfare: The Chief Secretary conveyed his concern over general demographic parameters like death rate, birth rate, infant mortality rate etc (as per survey made by Department of Health under NRHM) when compared to the State average. The ITA clarified that the figures relating to the ABITA garden membership were being regularly monitored under the health and family welfare initiatives and collated annually by the ABITA. The collated statement of the previous year for the period up to December 2011, were indicative that all the above mentioned health parameters for the population in member tea estates were higher than the State average. The Chairman ITA assured that concerted steps would be initiated to remedy situations whenever required. The Chief Secretary stressed on the need for more interaction at district levels with representatives of the industry and Association for better understanding.

■ Tea garden land usage for oil exploration: The Minister for Industries pointed out that tea companies were providing tea estate land to Oil India/ ONGC for oil exploration in lieu of compensation, without the permission of the District Collector. This was resulting in tension among the tea labour community and causing revenue loss to the State. ITA agreed that it would bring this to the notice of all Constituents and members so that prior to parting with land, permission of the Collector would be taken in all cases.

■ Guwahati Tea Auction: The Minister for Industries expressed his concern on the lack of response by the industry in general to the appeal made by the Government to route teas growing in Assam through the Guwahati Tea Auction.

■ Small Growers: The minister for Industries requested ITA to take the initiative to institutionalise linkages with Small Growers through extension of services and buy back arrangements in the larger interest of price stability for both the Small Growers and Producers. The Chairman ITA welcomed this suggestion.



Pradyot Bordoloi, Industries and Commerce Minister, Government of Assam

Tea India

THE Consultative Committee of Plantation Associations (CCPA) – the apex body of tea producer associations in India – with the support of the Tea Board of India, Ministry of Commerce, Government of India, organised the India International Tea Convention (IITC) 2012, in Goa from November 7 - 9, 2012, at The Lalit Golf and Spa Resort.

Goa, in spite of being outside tea producing regions, was chosen as the venue for this Convention, as being a place of great tourist attraction, it could provide opportunities to showcase Indian tea. Also, the beach ambience was ideal to promote iced tea drinking. Goa provided the delegates – both Indian and overseas – a perfect environment to relax and network.

Around 350 delegates including 100 from overseas markets such as US, Canada, UK, Germany, Austria, Spain, Russia, Kazakhstan, UAE, Iran, Egypt, Pakistan, etc attended the Conference. Delegates from other tea producing nations such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Tanzania, etc were also present. Tea packeters and machinery manufacturers participated in the Tea Exhibition. An innovative Tea Tasting Session was conducted during the Convention by Jane Pattigrew – an internationally renowned tea taster.

IITC 2012 showcased the latest developments encompassing both the back and front ends of the tea sector. The distinct emphasis in IITC 2012 was on projecting India's credentials as a premium tea producer and exporter and an array of thought leaders from the tea industry and trade participated. The Convention had several Business Theme Sessions covering:

- Sustainability challenges before the Indian Tea Industry
- Tea Variants and Innovations; Food Service Sector
- Transition from Grower to Supermarket; Branding/ Advertising Case Studies
- Tea and Health.

Bharat Veer Wanchoo, Governor of Goa, was the Chief Guest at the inaugural session of the Convention and among other dignitaries present at the Convention were N K Das, Chief Secretary, Government of Assam, M G V K Bhanu, Chairman Tea Board of India and G J Ancheril, President, United Planters' Association of Southern India.

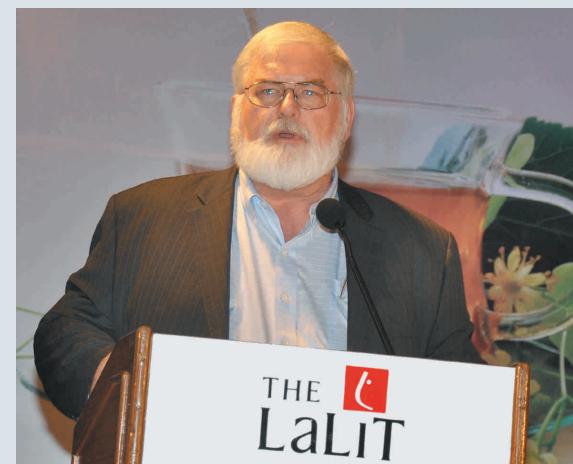
C S Bedi, Chairman, CCPA, in his inaugural address said, "IITC 2012 bears the imprint of partnership and cooperation among the industry and trade both from India and overseas. IITC 2012 has a clear focus on the front-end of our business culminating in engagement with the consumer." He pointed out that it was also the organisers' conscious endeavour to design the Business Theme Sessions and their content to acquaint the tea industry and trade with the latest trends to foster fresh and innovative thinking to drive the tea business to greater heights. "This we must all do and adopt as our collective mission as the fortunes of the tea industry determine the lives of millions who are engaged in the industry." He added that the sustained growth and development of the industry is vital for the socio-economic security of the large work force and the inter-linked stakeholders.

"IITC 2012, would help build strong bridges with importers and the tea trade within India. The Sessions were structured with considerable care so as to provide connectivity between the back and front-end of the tea business. IITC 2012 is one more event to put India and her teas in a more regular footing in the global tea calendar," Mr. Bedi said.

India International T



Tea Convention 2012



Top : M G V K Bhanu, Chairman, Tea Board of India, C S Bedi, Chairman, CCPA and Bharat Veer Wanchoo, Governor of Goa at the inauguration of IITC 2012
 Middle (left) : Jane Pettigrew conducting the Tea Tasting Session; (right) Don Bolton of World Tea News USA, conducting a Business Session
 Bottom : Delegates tasting tea

Some of the Business Sessions and the topics discussed:

■ **Indian Tea — a Snapshot and Emerging Sustainability Challenges**
 a) C S Bedi, Chairman, CCPA spoke on the Indian Perspective b) Ian Midgley, Chairman, Ethical Tea Partnership UK, spoke on the Global Perspective

■ **Tea, Variants and Derivatives — Innovations and Market Learnings**
 a) Vikram Grover, VP Marketing Tata Global Beverages Ltd. spoke on the Indian Perspective b) Richard Darlington, A V Thomas UK (RTD/Specialised Tea Experience), spoke on the Global Perspective

■ **Food Service Experience**

(a) B Balaji, Head - Branding Function, Café Coffee Day, spoke on the Indian Perspective (b) Dan Bolton, World Tea News USA, spoke on the Global Perspective

■ **Tea Tasting Experience**

Jane Pettigrew conducted this Session

■ **Transition from Grocer to Super Market — Retail Challenges Ahead**

(a) Marcus Banfield, Advisor, Camellia Plc UK spoke on the Global Perspective (b) Parag Desai, Executive Director, Sales and Marketing, Gujarat Tea Processors & Packers Ltd and Sanjiv Chatterji, GM, Beverages Excellence Centre (South Asia), Hindustan Unilever Ltd, spoke on the Indian Perspective.

■ **Branding and Advertising : Beverage Case Studies**

Vikram Satyanath, Executive Director, Lowe Lintas & Partners, Debabrata Mukherjee, Head – Strategy and Innovation India and South West Asia, Coca Cola Company and Hirol Gandhi, Senior Vice President, Account Management, Ogilvy & Mather, were the speakers

■ **Branding and Imagery of Indian Tea**

The speakers were Prem Narayan, Senior Vice President Planning, Ogilvy & Mather and Dheeraj Sinha, Chief Strategy Officer, South and South East Asia, Grey Group

■ **Tea and Health**

The speaker was Lenore Arab, Professor, David Geffen School of Medicine, UCLA.

■ **Jaya Row, Vedanta Vision, Mumbai, gave a Motivational Talk on Inspired Living.**

The Business Sessions covered sustainability challenges of the Indian tea sector, reviewed the tea variants and derivatives market and facilitated sharing of the food service experience, transition from the grocer to supermarkets and the retail challenges, as also branding and advertising case studies that provided important lessons as to how tea has been successfully promoted and marketed. A Session illustrated how brand and imagery of Indian tea could shape the future to strengthen the Generic Promotion initiatives in the years to come. The Session on Tea and Health provided some key facts on the positives of tea drinking. Linking all of this was the innovative Tea Tasting Session conducted by Jane Pettigrew that showcased a range of Indian teas from across North and South India and highlighted their distinctive characteristics.

Darjeeling Tea and Tourism Festival

THE Darjeeling Tea and Tourism Festival took place from December 20, 2012 to January 5, 2013, in the Queen of the Himalayas – Darjeeling. The Festival showcased Darjeeling tea and various cultural programmes presenting the ethnic diversity and richness of the region were presented. The Darjeeling Branch of Indian Tea Association (DITA) organised a Charity Auction on December 20, 2012, as part of the Festival. The auction took place at the amphitheatre at the Darjeeling Mall.

Krishan Katyal, Managing Director, J. Thomas & Co Pvt Ltd, conducted the Auction in presence of Bimal Gurung, Chief Executive, Gorkha Territorial Administration, Gautam Deb, Minister-in-Charge, North Bengal Development, Government of West Bengal and Trilok Dewan, MLA. From DITA, Jeevan Pande, Chairman, Abhishek Dev,



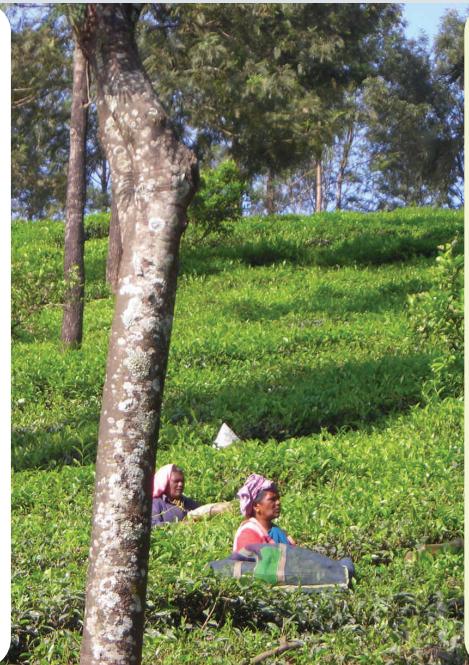
Charity Auction at the Darjeeling Tea and Tourism Festival

Vice-Chairman and other members along with the Advisor and Secretary, DITA attended the Auction. Prakash, Chairman, Darjeeling Regional Committee, ITA, welcomed all and addressed the gathering mentioning the role of DITA. He said that the proceeds of the Charity Auction would be donated towards the welfare of the people of Darjeeling. Bimal Gurung inaugurated the event

with a knock of the hammer. Animated bidding from the buyers present including an overseas buyer participating via mobile phone and dignitaries knocking down individual lots made it an enjoyable and interactive session. The Mall teeming with tourists and locals provided a colourful ambience. A total of Rs 3.77 lakh was generated from the Auction.

Registration of Small Growers in The Darjeeling GI Area

MANUFACTURERS sourcing green leaves from unregistered Small Growers situated within the notified geographical area of Darjeeling GI have been directed by the Tea Board of India to get such Small Growers registered with the Tea Board with immediate effect. The onus of getting such unregistered Small Growers registered as per Tea Board's norms lie with the manufacturers sourcing such green leaves.



Tea Waste Disposal

TEA BOARD of India has developed an electronic platform of 'Tea Waste Auction' with technical assistance from NSE.IT Mumbai. This has been done with a view to ensure transparency in the manner of disposal of tea waste including sale or holding stock of any tea waste by Licensed Sellers as well as to provide a common platform for e-trading.

Continuation of Tea Board Scheme

THE Tea Board has continued the Scheme to assist tea exporters towards meeting additional transport and handling charges for teas exported through ICD Amingaon, for the financial year 2012 - 2013. The above mentioned charges would be defrayed for teas exported through ICD Amingaon at the rate of Rs 1.50 per kg.

Meeting With Labour Minister Government of West Bengal

A delegation comprising A N Singh, Vice-Chairman, ITA, Tapan Kumar Chowdhury, Chairman, West Bengal Regional Committee, ITA, Arijit Raha, Additional Secretary, ITA and Suresh Bansal, representing Tea Association of India called on Purnendu Basu, Labour Minister, Government of West Bengal, at Writers' Buildings, Kolkata on August 7, 2012. A representation was submitted to the Minister, which contained an overview of the tea industry. The latest statistics on the number of gardens and tea growing area in West Bengal, the current tea scenario in terms of production and prices, the cost of production and cost of employment etc were presented.

Through the representation, the delegation sought the West Bengal Government's immediate intervention in certain areas like:

- Industrial Relations and Labour issues
- Productivity issues
- Working hours
- Unpaid holidays
- Absenteeism
- Employment
- Mechanisation

The State Government had earlier in 2011 committed to take up the issues regarding Social Cost Mitigation raised by the Employers with the Government of India for implementation of Central Government Schemes in tea plantations in North Bengal. In keeping with this, the following action areas were suggested:

Housing – The State Government was requested to take up with the Central Government for restoration of the Housing Subsidy Scheme for tea garden workers.

Medical facilities – The Government of West Bengal was requested to examine the possibility of implementing the NRHM Scheme in tea gardens as has been done by the Government of Assam.

Sanitation and water supply – The State Government has been requested to notify UNICEF type latrines as the prescribed model under the Plantation Labour Rules, West Bengal, as has been done in Assam and cover provision of latrines under existing Government schemes.

Rural electrification – It was requested that extension of Rural Electrification Schemes like the Rajiv Gandhi, Lokdeep Scheme be made applicable to tea workers. Also,



Purnendu Basu, Labour Minister, Govt. of West Bengal

the Government of West Bengal might consider whether the Panchayat Department could be assigned the task of extending Rural Electrification Schemes to cover tea estate labour quarters.

Concessional foodgrains – The cost of procurement of foodgrains for tea estates was increasing due to shortfall in supply and allotment of rice and wheat is requiring tea estate managements to buy foodgrains from the open market to make up the deficit. The State Government was requested that the shortfall might be allotted in the form of wheat or rice as per availability/ state's quota of rice and wheat.

The State Government was also requested to facilitate 100% allotment of rice and wheat through FCI to mitigate the cost being incurred in this regard.

The State Government was also requested to allow tea estates to utilise land within the estates grant not suitable for tea, for tourism or diversification to horticultural crops, rubber, medicinal plants under the present lease.

Regarding Electricity, the Government was requested to consider:

- Making power for irrigation available to tea gardens at the Agricultural Irrigation rate
- Abolishing State Electricity Duty on self-generated power
- The tea industry as a seasonal industry meriting separate lower rate of tariff
- Dedicated line for tea estate clusters to make available quality power at prescribed voltage
- Exemption of demand charge during non-producing period and proportionate reduction during season, for periods of load-shedding and low voltage supply
- Power supply through dedicated HT line for irrigation to tea gardens and also water supply for labour lines.

Other issues like the Salami issue, fiscal issues and flood control measures were also discussed.



Meeting with Minister of State, Ministry of Development of Northeast Region (DONER)

A delegation from ITA comprising A N Singh, Vice-Chairman, A K Bhargava, Additional Vice-Chairman, Arijit Raha, Additional Secretary and Dhiraj Kakati, Secretary, ABITA, met Paban Singh Ghatowar, Minister of State, Independent Charge, Ministry of Development of



Paban Singh Ghatowar, Minister of State, Independent Charge, Ministry of Development of Northeast Region (DONER)

Northeast Region (DONER), in August 2012 in New Delhi. The delegation handed over a representation to the Minister that included the following issues:

- Current tea scenario
- Export Data
- North East specific schemes
- Social cost issues
- 12th Five Year Plan Proposals
- NREGS: Shortage of workers
- 33AB Provisions in the Direct Tax Code
- Infrastructure issues
- Power situation
- Fertiliser: Availability



Iron Filings In Tea

THE issue of iron filings in tea has always been a matter of concern. ITA has vigorously pursued the matter with the Tea Board, Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Health. In 2010, the Ministry of Commerce constituted a Core Committee involving Ministries of Commerce and Health, Export Inspection Council of India, Tea Board and NTRF, to examine the issue in detail. ITA representatives had interactions with the Core Committee, which later submitted its report to the Ministry of Commerce, who thereafter submitted its recommendations to the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).

On November 23, 2012, FSSAI issued an Advisory to all Food Safety Commissioners of States/Union Territories advising that pending completion of the detailed study presently undertaken by the National Institution of Nutrition and assessment by the Food Authority's relevant panel, the maximum permissible limit of iron particles in tea will be 150mg/kg.

National Seminar on Organic Tea

DARJEELING Tea Research and Development Centre, Tea Board of India, Kurseong, organised a one-day National Seminar on Organic Tea in Darjeeling on October 3, 2012. The Seminar was organised with the objective of sharing and disseminating scientific information on organic tea with the planters of the Darjeeling tea industry. Scientists from tea research institutes like DTRDC, UPASI and TRA, representatives of CFC Project Model Farms and experts from reputed organisations presented scientific papers at the seminar. Various relevant topics like use of biofertilisers, biopesticides, development of package of practices for organic tea, organic certification and marketing etc were covered. M G V K Bhanu, Chairman Tea Board of India, G Boriah, Director Tea Development, Tea Board of India, Dr. T C Chaudhuri, Coordinator CFC-TBI Organic Tea Project, B Bera, Director (Research), Tea Board of India, V S Parmar, Planter, Darjeeling tea industry, Dr. N Muraleedharan, Dr. P Mohan Kumar, Dr. Sushanta Kundu, Dr. Paritosh Bhattacharya, Dr. K K Krishnamurty, Dr. S K Pathak etc participated in the seminar.

Tea Museum In Darjeeling

THE Tourism Department, Government of West Bengal had set up a Tea Museum in Darjeeling and has been looking for assistance towards its upgradation and maintenance so that it could be promoted as a 'must visit' destination for tourists. The Tea Board had suggested that a Detailed Project Report (DPR) should be prepared by the ITA in collaboration with the Darjeeling Tea Association as the other stakeholder. The probable funding could be on cost sharing basis between the Government of West Bengal, Tea Board and the Darjeeling tea industry on a 50:35:25 ratio.

The ITA expressed willingness to take a lead role and work on the DPR as the first step. ITA had also identified a consultant in this field for the purpose and proposed to the Department of Tourism, Government of West Bengal to formally commission the consultancy firm.

Investment Opportunities in Tea in Mozambique

AT the request of the Mozambique High Commission in India, the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce and Industry had arranged an interaction between a Mozambique delegation and interested investors in tea and other sectors, on September 3, 2012. The six-member delegation was headed by Jose Pacheco, Minister of Agriculture, Republic of Mozambique. ITA was represented by A K Bhargava, D P Chakravarti, D P Maheshwari, Saneer Gurung, Sunil Munshi, D M Kapur, Vijay Kumar, M K Verma, P C Dhandania, M Dasgupta and Sujit Patra.

The delegation made a presentation on the 'Investment Opportunities in the Tea Sub-sector in Mozambique', covering attractive incentives and support being offered to investors.



Darjeeling Tea Delegation Meets European Tea Committee

A delegation of the Darjeeling tea industry led by M G V K Bhanu, Chairman Tea Board of India, met members of the European Tea Committee (ETC) in



Hamburg on September 21, 2012. The Indian Tea Association was represented by Sudhir Prakash, Chairman, Darjeeling Regional Committee, ITA and Arijit Raha, Additional Secretary, ITA. Following

the meeting, a joint communiqué was issued by William Gorman, President, European Tea Committee and M G V K Bhanu, Chairman Tea Board of India. The Communiqué contained the following points:

- Both ETC and Tea Board of India jointly support the PGI registration granted in respect of Darjeeling tea within the European Union (EU)

- ETC and Tea Board of India jointly agreed to co-operate and work together in disseminating information about PGI registration and its implications in the local language in Germany and other tea consuming countries within the EU

- Tea Board of India and ETC would jointly approach EU for any financial assistance to take necessary steps towards informing EU consumers and citizens about Darjeeling PGI and its implications

- If there is any information with Tea Board of India about infringement or violation of the PGI registration in the EU, the same would be shared with ETC for any remedial action

- Both ETC and Tea Board of India would evolve a joint working relationship to implement the PGI registration for Darjeeling in letter and spirit.



BRANCH BUZZ

Interactive Session with Container Corporation of India Ltd.

AN interactive session between the members of Terai Branch Indian Tea Association (TBITA) and Container Corporation of India Ltd (CONCOR), was arranged at the TBITA office at Bengdubi on August 17, 2012. Present at the session were Sharad Verma, Chief General Manager, CONCOR, S N Sharma, Senior Manager, CONCOR, R Choudhury, Chairman, TBITA, P K Sharma, Vice-

Chairman, TBITA, J C Pande, Chairman, Darjeeling Circle, N Palchoudhuri, Director, Mohurgong and Gulma Tea Estates, R Banerjee, Director, Makaibari Tea Estate, S Patra, Joint Secretary, Indian Tea Association, P K Bhattacharya, Secretary, DBITA, B P Chaliha, Secretary, TBITA. CONCOR had recently approached TBITA with a request to assess the prospective tea traffic through the dry port,

which would be coming up shortly at NJP near the Tea Park. CONCOR met the members to explain the working of the dry port and give an idea about the traffic prospects. Sharad Verma, Chief General Manager, CONCOR, said that the dry port was 60% complete in physical terms. The facility was meant for export cargo as well as domestic container movement. In both cases, CONCOR would be providing door to door services like pick-up and stuffing at tea estates and delivery and de-stuffing at consignees premises subject to availability of roads. The rates of handling domestic and international cargo would be worked out.

Interface with Tea Board and IIM, Kolkata

An interactive session between officials of the Tea Board of India, Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Kolkata and Planters was arranged at the Central Dooars Club, Binnaguri, on September 3, 2012. The meeting was attended by K K Bhattacharya, Deputy Director and Rakesh Kumar, Assistant Director, Tea Board, Uttam Sarkar, S Chattopadhyay, R Chattopadhyay and S Bhattacharya from



IIM, Kolkata. The meeting was conducted by A K Sengupta, Additional Vice-Chairman, DBITA.

The interactive session was held in pursuance to the Tea Board Committee Meeting held on June 26, 2010 in Kerala, for eliciting members' views and suggestions towards modification of structural changes of the Tea Board. Various suggestions were placed by members before the Committee. In conclusion, the Branch Secretary highlighted some of the following issues that need to be addressed:

- Labour and welfare issues (other than those provided in the Plantations Labour Act)
- Positive intervention in matters of labour productivity by resorting to scientific methods
- SPTF to enhance land productivity.

CONCOR would function as logistic provider and rates and services would be competitive in terms to other modes of transport.

Members gave their views and raised questions. CONCOR agreed to send personnel for a visit to Darjeeling gardens to have an on the spot assessment on geographical and logistics aspects. Most of the participants opined that the cost aspect (including the cost break-up) would be a critical issue.

The Association representatives visited the dry port site on August 18, 2012.

Seminar on Service Tax

ON request by the Central Excise Collectorate, Jalpaiguri, a Seminar on Service Tax was arranged at Central Dooars Club, Binnaguri on December 20, 2012.

In view of certain changes that have been introduced in the Service Tax Rules, the Central Excise Collectorate, Jalpaiguri met planters at the seminar to apprise them of the changes. Besides 65 planters from member gardens of DBITA, Md. Ikhtiar Halim, Assistant Commissioner, Central Excise, Santanu Chattopadhyay, Superintendent (Technical and Service Tax), Hariram Rai, Inspector and Dular Sinha Roy, Inspector, Central Excise attended the Seminar. A K Sengupta, Additional Vice-Chairman, DBITA conducted the meeting.



Workshop on Food Safety and Standards

A Workshop on Food Safety and Standards Act 2006 was arranged by Tea Board of India in collaboration with CII on July 20, 2012 at the Central Dooars Club, Binnaguri. S K Babal, Chairman DBITA inaugurated and conducted the Workshop attended by a large number of participants from member gardens.

The aim of the Workshop was to prepare the organisations to face upcoming challenges as well as regulatory issues on Food Safety and Standards Act and Food Safety and Standards Regulations 2011, related to tea estates in North Bengal. Dr. A Basu Mazumdar, Research Officer, Tea Board, S N Mitra, Senior Inspecting Officer (F&VP), Food Safety & Standards Authority of India, Pratyasha Chakravarty, Counsellor, CII etc attended the Workshop.



The Chairman, DBITA outlined the importance of implementation of the FSS Act for the tea industry at both the international and domestic markets in view of the increasing consciousness of consumers.