

Declaration of tea as the national drink can in no way be termed as at the cost of coffee: NETA



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Ritupallab Saikia 18 May 2012 49250 views

Reacting over the Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Jyotiraditya M. Scindia's statement on Rajya Sabha yesterday regarding the issue of declaring Tea as National Drink of India, Bidyananda Barkakoty, Chairman, North Eastern Tea Association today stated in a press release that declaration of tea as the national drink can in no way be termed as "at the cost of coffee". Was the declaration of mango as the national fruit at the cost of apple or other fruits? Was the declaration of tiger as the national animal at the cost of bear or other animals? Did declaration of hockey as the national sport in any way affect cricket, football and other sports? Declaring tea as the national drink of our country will in no way affect coffee or other beverages and they will always have their own respective market shares.

Further justifying the demand of declaring Tea as National Drink, he said that as per the ORG India Tea Consumption Study 2008 83% of households in India consume tea. Moreover, as per the same study, the penetration of tea in the Indian household is in the range of 96% - 99% in both urban & rural areas of India. Denying Scindia's apprehension of a possible conflict of preference between tea and coffee Bidyananda Borkatoky has drawn up a comparative assessment based on the data collected from tea board and coffee board of India. As per the assessment the yearly Coffee production in India is 302 million kgs whereas Tea production is 988 million kgs. The annual Coffee consumption in India is 108 million kgs whereas Tea consumption is 815 million kgs. The per capita consumption of coffee in India is 75 gms whereas per capita consumption of tea is 730 gms.

When the production of coffee is mainly concentrated in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamilnadu tea is grown in different regions of India - from North to South – in Assam and other Northeastern States, West Bengal, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh including Karnataka, Kerala and Tamilnadu. Even the tea industry of Karnataka, Kerala and Tamilnadu are in no way smaller in size than the coffee industry. 60% of Indian exports of tea are from Karnataka, Kerala and Tamilnadu. Some discussion might have took place in 2006 between the Central Ministries/Departments concerned and the States/UTs, but the Joint Forum of ATPA, NETA and BCP’s memorandum elaborates for the first time the justification in detail as to why tea should be declared as national drink of India. “Tea can be called the common man’s drink because a majority of the population in India begins their day with a cup of tea. Tea is not just a product or commodity in India; it's a part of our culture. Tea is consumed across all religions, castes and creeds along the length and breadth of the country. Hence, we are very much optimistic that Govt. of India will soon declare tea as the national drink. ” said Bidyananda Barkakoty.

Ritupallab Saikia

BY RITUPALLAB SAIKIA

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