

Tea bodies loud CM's budget speech



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Ritupallab Saikia 14 March 2012 7730 views

The joint forum of Assam Tea Planters Association (ATPA), North Eastern Tea Association (NETA) and Bharatiya Cha Parishad (BCP) welcomes the budget speech of Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi and appreciated the CM's resolve during the ongoing budget session where he announced that the central government has been requested to declare 'tea' as the national drink and this would be vigorously followed up. This was stated in a joint statement issued by A.R. Kasera Chairman ATPA, Bidyananda Barkakoty Chairman NETA and Manoj Jalan Chairman BCP. Tea, which has been giving Assam a special identity, will give the state more prestige if it becomes the National Drink of the country and with the National Drink status to the beverage, its domestic consumption will increase and this will in turn give more confidence to the small tea growers, who are first generation entrepreneurs they added. The declaration of tea as the state Drink of Assam by Tarun Gogoi at the World Tea science congress at the Tocklai centenary celebration will remain as a red letter day for the Assam tea industry in particular and for the people of Assam in general and we hope a formal notification to this effect will follow very soon, they further added.

The forum also welcomed CM's announcement in the budget to decrease the tax from 1% to 0.5% for sale of teas through Guwahati Tea Auction centre (GTAC) which will help in increasing the quantum of sale through GTAC. It is worth mentioning that Assam is the largest tea producing state of the country and it is also the place from where the march of the Indian tea industry started. Assam tea was one of India's first offerings to the world. Way back on May 8, 1838, 350 pounds of Assam tea was dispatched to London and sold at India House, London, on January 10, 1839. Since then, over the last 172 years, it is perhaps the only industry where India has retained its leadership. Tea industry is also one of the largest employers in the organized sector in India and significantly 50% of workers are women. India is the largest producer and largest consumer of black tea in the world. Symbolism apart the declaration of tea as the National Drink will be a good idea for bolstering the marketing of Indian tea.

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BY RITUPALLAB SAIKIA

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