

Minutes of Meeting with Small Tea Grower's Associations and Managers of Bought Leaf Factories, Udalguri District in connection with matter pertaining to purchase of green tea leaf by Bought Leaf Factories and TCPL etc.

Date: 16/10/2024

Time: 11:00 AM

Venue: Conference Hall, D.C.'s Office, Udalguri

Members Present: Listed in Annexure-A

The meeting chaired by Shri Pulak Patgiri, ACS, District Commissioner, Udalguri, was convened to discuss key issues related to the purchase of green tea leaves by Bought Leaf Factories (BLFs) and TCPL, with a focus on price fluctuations and other challenges faced by the stakeholders.

At the outset, the District Commissioner, Udalguri cum Chairman welcomed all the members present in the meeting. Shri Sarfraz Haque, ACS, Additional District Commissioner, Udalguri, outlined the purpose of the meeting highlighting the price fluctuations of tea leaves in recent times.

The stakeholders acknowledged that price fluctuations during Durga Puja occurs every year, primarily due to the drop in leaf quality when workers are on leave for 3-4 days. It was recognized that this is a recurring issue during the festive season, resulting in temporary price volatility.

Representatives from the Small Tea Growers' Associations and BLF Managers informed the house that the price situation in 2024 is significantly better compared to 2023. In 2023, the average price of green tea leaves was ₹16-18 per kg, while in 2024, the average has increased to ₹30 per kg. This improvement was welcomed by all stakeholders as a positive development despite the ongoing fluctuations.

BLF Managers reported the house that the war-like situation in the Middle East has negatively impacted the price of orthodox tea, indirectly influencing the prices of green tea leaves. This has contributed to the volatility observed in the market.

The Small Tea Growers' Associations reiterated that the issue of price fluctuation is an annual occurrence, but noted that proper coordination with BLFs is maintained to manage it. The Chairman urged all stakeholders to continue fostering strong communication and effective collaboration to address these issues promptly.

The Small Tea Growers' Associations requested that BLFs to ensure payments for green leaf purchases are made within a week. This will prevent tea growers from selling their leaves at lower prices to agents or intermediaries.

After the detailed discussion on purchase of green tea leaves from the small tea growers by Bought Leaf Factories, there is no such fluctuation of price during normal days and the decrease of price of green tea leaves during puja holidays is a normal phenomenon. Moreover, the small tea growers are accustomed with such situation and they have nothing to complain it.

The Chairman emphasized the strict prohibition of child labor in Bought Leaf Factories. He also urged stakeholders to raise awareness about government schemes like PMJJBY (Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana) and other welfare programs for laborers in small tea plantations.

The Chairman requested the Tea Board to convene training programme for small tea growers for imparting training with regard to plantation and maintenance of tea quality all the time so as to ensure appropriate price on selling of tea leaves by small team growers.

The chairman encouraged continued cooperation among all parties to ensure smooth operations and address recurring issues related to price fluctuations and labor management.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks from the Chair.

District Commissioner
Udalguri

Memo No. 119448/ADM-64/49/2024/22-A

Copy to:

1. The Secretary Coordination to Chief Secretary to Govt. Of Assam for favour of kind information.
2. The Asstt. Director, Tea Board, Tezpur for information and necessary action.
3. The Labour inspector, Mazbat/Khoirabari for information and necessary action.
4. The Inspector of Factories, Zonal Factory Office, Bongaigaon for information and necessary action.
5. The President and Secretary, Small Tea Grower's Associations, Udalguri for information and necessary action.
6. All Managers, Bought Leaf Factories, Udalguri formation and necessary action.
7. All other members present.
8. Office file.

(e-signed)

District Commissioner,
Udalguri