



The Telegraph

calcutta, india



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Big step for small tea growers

Abhranila Das

FRESH FLAVOUR

Total tea production in 2015-16:
1,233.14 million kg

- Small tea growers contributed 417.43 million kg
- Bengal small growers produced 140 million kg, Assam 180 million kg

Total small tea growers in India:
Over 2.5 lakh

- Bengal has 40,000 small growers
- Assam has nearly a lakh

Calcutta, Sept. 8: Small tea growers from India for the first time will participate in the world food exhibition in Moscow this month.

Three self-help groups comprising small growers from Panbari, Jai Jalpesh and Nabajaganan of Jalpaiguri district in Bengal will showcase CTC tea at the international exhibition, while green tea will be offered by three small producers of Assam.

The four-day exhibition is scheduled to begin on September 12.

"This is the first time small tea growers from India will showcase their CTC tea at any international trade fair and we are hopeful that it will have a positive impact on our industry," Bijoy Gopal Chakraborty, president of the Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers Associations, told **The Telegraph**.

Around 1,522 exhibitors from 62 countries will participate in the Moscow exhibition. The trade fair expects nearly 31,000 visitors from 96 nations.

A six-member delegation representing the small growers will carry 10 kg of black CTCs from Dooars and 2 kg of green tea from Assam.

"All teas have been manufactured in the processing units that were set up this year with the help of the Tea Board," said Chakraborty.

"Although we are visiting the international expo at our own expense, the Tea Board has motivated us a lot to go ahead with this," Chakraborty said.

"Small tea growers have the potential to make quality tea of all varieties, including the speciality tea, and with the help of these exhibitions they can directly reach out to buyers, which will boost the country's overall tea export," Santosh Sarangi, chairman of the Tea Board, said.

Black tea is the most popular variety in Russia as it claims 86 per cent of the total market pie. Green tea has a 9 per cent share. Herbal varieties are not very popular in Russia. In fact, only 1 per cent Russians regularly consume herbal tea.

In the fiscal ended March 2016, India had exported 232.92 million kg of tea, valued at Rs 4,493.10 crore. Of this, 48.23 million kg was sent to Russia alone at a valuation of Rs 670.57 crore.

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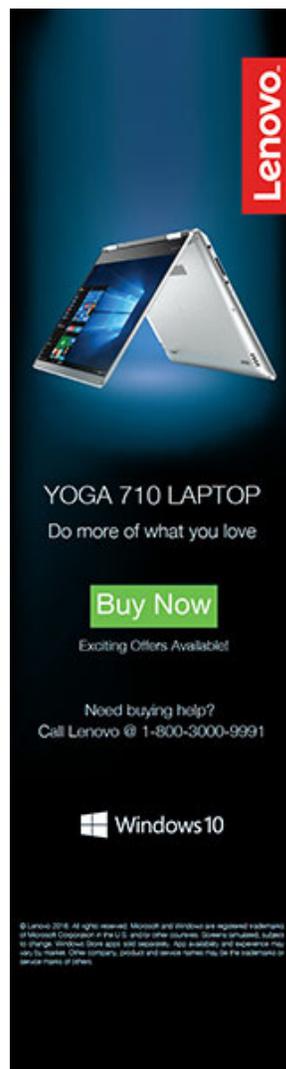
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