

## Stress laid on improving tea industry, role of small tea growers lauded

From a Correspondent

JORHAT, March 26: "What we saw was terrific inside the experimental labs of Tocklai Tea Research Institute. Farmers need to take the advantage of the work that has been done at TRA," said Rita Teotia, Commerce Secretary, Government of India, at a seminar organized by Tea Board of India at Tocklai Tea Research Institute on Saturday evening. Teotia, who attended as the chief guest, while addressing the scientists, said, "The work you do is not scientific research in isolation, your work translates the real economy impact on the ground for the farmers who are in the tea sector." She added, "Knowledge transfer to farmers is an uphill task which has become a reality. But there is a perception in India that the output that comes from the small growers is inferior in quality and therefore may not commemorate the prices. This is something we understood and this is something we need to challenge. I put it to the technical community and the Tea Board that predominantly in Sri Lanka and Kenya the growers are small and that tea which has a global market, except for our Darjeeling tea, gets a premium price. So if those farmers are able to do it, there is no reason that the small farmers here do not get good price."

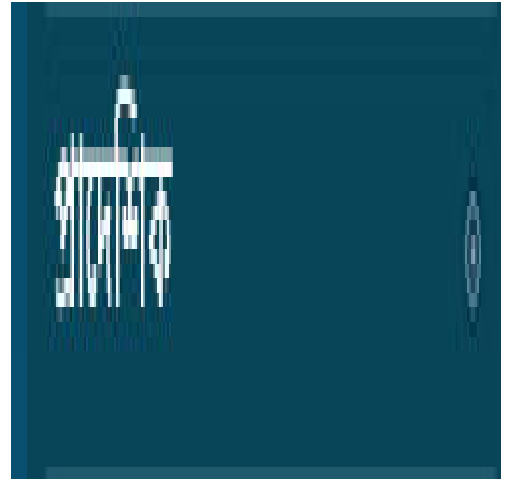
Teotia said that schemes and progress needed to be geared up to look at the quality of the tea industry and she further appreciated the role of the small growers who had been playing a pivotal role in contributing at least 25 per cent of bought tea leaves. "A large number of good quality clones are coming out from TRA which have been scattered throughout the north-eastern region," she said.

She added that the work done by the Tea Board so far was not enough. "It does not understand the requirement of the industry. But we need to see to it that what we are doing sharply focuses as part of our plan. We can use the Tea Board in order to do integrated area based planning. It is only the way to integrate and start looking farmer by farmer." "We have written to the State governments that all schemes of the Government of India should be made available to the tea workers and the Government of Assam has made many efforts in this direction, whether it is education, health, sanitation or housing. Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sanshayan Yojana has been made available and other schemes generated for small farmers will also be available to the tea gardens," said Teotia.

Alok Chaturvedi, Additional Secretary of Ministry of Commerce, Government of India, spoke about various schemes of the Central Government for small and big farmers from the tea industry.

Earlier, Santosh Kumar Sarangi, chairman of Tea Board of India, delivered the welcome address, while presentation on the topic 'Climatic Change - its impact on tea ecosystem, trends and future projection' was presented by Dr. R Bhagat of TRA, Sounda Rarajan of DTD, Tea Board, PK Bezbarooah, chairman TRA, Professor Arup Kr. Sharma, IIT Guwahati, Bijoy Gopal Chakraborty, president CISTA, West Bengal, and Gopal Krishna Khound, AASTGA, Assam, while Jorhat MP Kamakhya Prasad Tasa and Sanjo Kumar, executive director, Tea Board of India, NE-zone spoke about the scenario of tea industry and the role of Tea Board of India.

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### Yesterday's Weather

	Maximum	Minimum
•	°C	°C
•	°C	°C
•	°C	°C
•	°C	°C
•	°C	°C
•	°C	°C

### Today's forecast for Guwahati City

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### Meghalaya News

### Northeast News

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- State has alarming proportion of

- Manipur territorial integrity will be protected, says CM
- ONGC's exploration mission

- Garbage is not a waste but a resource: C Srinivasan
- Primates face struggle for

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begins in Northeast: Official

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survival in Cachar

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- Hyderabad police foil protest over 'dharna chowk'
- Indians regard nature as mother: Rajnath
- Allow us to build Ram temple, Swamy tells Muslims

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## International News

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- KSA seeks early solution to Assam-Meghalaya border dispute
- Stress laid on improving tea industry, role of small tea growers lauded
- ATASU to organize Mukoli Bihu

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## State-2

- Peace and unity among different tribal communities underscored
- 'Low back pain is a major health problem in all developed countries'
- Puthimari Bapubheti farmers set an example in organic farming
- Workers in Gohpur tea gardens demand wages in cash

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- Time to work on publicity and better transport facilities: Yarza
- Barpeta, Dhemaji win titles
- Neelabh causes major upset

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## Sports

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- Lyon revels at extracting bounce at Dharamsala pitch
- Pandey's 104 helps India 'Red' beat Tamil Nadu by 32 runs
- Indian eves play 2-2 draw against Chile

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## Op-Ed (Sunday)

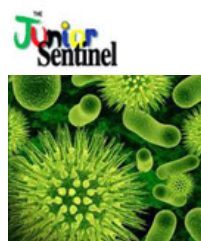
- Of kebabs, slaughterhouses and crocodile meat
- Ownership: A Sinking Ship
- Religion and Humanity

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of this land, for its people



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