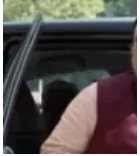


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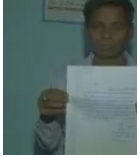
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## Tasa targets Centre's 'indifference' to tea



Jorhat BJP MP Kamakhya Prasad Tasa today lashed out at the Centre for its "indifference" to tea industry in Assam.

Tasa speaks at the seminar in Tocklai on Saturday. Picture courtesy: TRA

Jorhat, March 25: Jorhat BJP MP Kamakhya Prasad Tasa today lashed out at the Centre for its "indifference" towards the tea industry in Assam.

Tasa launched the attack during a seminar on Impact of Climate Change on Tea and Ameliorative Measures at the Tea Research auditorium at Tocklai in Jorhat district. The seminar was attended by Union commerce secretary Rita Teotia, senior officials of the commerce ministry, Tea Board officials and stakeholders from the tea industry.

Tasa said the administration in Delhi has not shown much interest in the tea industry as there is a feeling that the tea industry is not as big as the other sectors. The turnover of the tea industry is Rs 15,000 crore and Assam produces more than half the tea in the country. "In the tea world, the Centre's intervention is required," he said.

Tasa said he will soon write to the Centre as the situation is becoming serious and if urgent steps are not taken, the future of the tea industry might be bleak.

Tasa said the Tea Board should be made more powerful and not be treated as a "foster child" as the board has been without a permanent chairman for over three years. Tasa also spoke about the financial crisis of the Tea Research Association.

Assam commissioner of industries and commerce K.K. Dwivedi said the concerns expressed were genuine and that the Tea Board should be reoriented and refocused to help small tea growers. Dwivedi said a new survey is being conducted to find out the number of small tea growers and the steps that are being taken to ease their problems.

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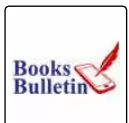
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Centre's schemes have to be tailored accordingly. "A lot of importance has to be given on the transfer of knowledge to the small tea growers," she added.

Teotia admitted that the Tea Board needs to be strengthened and will have to be sharply focused part of a plan. "All schemes of the Centre are also meant for the tea workers," she said.

Joint director of Tea Research Association R. Bhagat said climate change is a reality and a long-term crisis and that we need to adapt to the changing climate.

"We must act before something unlikely happens in the ecosystem. There is no need to press the panic button, but one has to be alert and adopt the adaptation processes," he said.

Assam is one of the most important tea-producing regions in the world, contributing 17 per cent to global tea production and more than 50 per cent to the Indian market annually.

Tea, being a rain-fed crop, requires a certain type of soil, air temperature and moisture for its growth, and any deviation poses a threat to the sustainability of the tea crop.

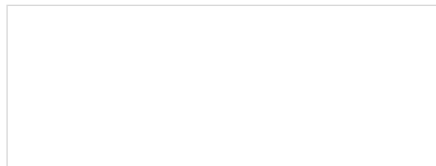
A study, "Impact of future Climate on tea growing regions of Assam," by Tea Research Association part of the Tata Global Beverages-Ethical Tea Partnership, has warned that climate change will make many tea growing areas in Assam unsuitable for tea by 2050.

Director of tea development, Tea Board of India, S. Soundarajan, spoke on the different interventions by the government on climate change adaptation.

Chairman of Tea Research Association, P.K. Bezboruah, spoke on the importance of irrigated tea gardens in the present day scenario and urged the government to incentivise creation of irrigation and water conservation facilities. "The Tea Board needs to be more responsive to the requirements of the industry and the focus of intervention needs to be well defined," he said.

Dailyhunt

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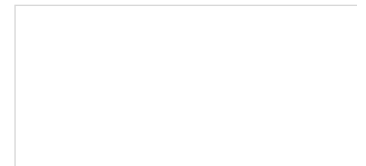


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