



THE TIMES OF INDIA

Crackdown on spurious tea in Assam, 16,000 kg seized in 2 days

Dated: - 10th November 2018 (Saturday)

E-paper

The Tea Board of India (TBI) seized about 16,000 kg of spurious tea from different places of upper Assam in last two days. These seized spurious tea, mostly waste products of manufactured tea, were otherwise set for release in the market.

On Friday 12,000 kg of spurious tea were seized from a godown in Golaghat district alone, while the remaining quantity were seized from different parts of upper Assam including Tinsukia district, during the two-day operations.

TBI is tightlipped about the operation, but indicated that crackdown on spurious or poor quality tea would continue. However, officials on the condition of anonymity said that during the crackdown it was found that the low grade teas were packed for selling in the market. Once released, these could hamper the overall quality of tea produced in the state. During the crackdown, they said that marketing channels from factory to retailer for these low grade teas also came to the surface.



“Assam’s tea is known for its quality. Such low grade and spurious teas, which are mostly waste materials, once released in the market would definitely bring bad name for Assam tea,” an official said. He said that these waste materials were spuriously made into marketable grade and being sold in the market.

Last year about 19,000 kg of spurious tea were seized from different parts of upper Assam. Assam’s annual tea production is 670 million kg, which is little over 50% of India’s total production. Quality improvement of Assam’s tea for promotion in the international market was one of the thrusts of state government-constituted committee headed by additional chief secretary (industry) Ravi Capoor in August this year. Officials said that the samples of the seized spurious teas would be sent for Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) test. Based on the results of the test, action would be taken under the Tea Marketing Control Order.

As a part of quality control exercise, the TBI has stipulated December 10 as the last date for plucking and receiving green leaves and December 11 as the last date for processing green leaf in factories in Northeast. TBI’s order issued on October 31, has also fixed December 12 as the date for all tea factory units to inform the board about closure of manufacturing. The order is for tea manufacturing units in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Manipur.