

TEA EXPORTS – ECONOMY

NEWS: According to the **Indian Tea Board**, India has become the **second-largest tea exporter in the world** in 2024 surpassing Srilanka.

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

About Tea and Its Origins

- **Definition:**
Tea is a widely consumed beverage made from the leaves of the **Camellia sinensis** plant. It is processed and brewed in different forms depending on regional and cultural preferences.
- **Place of Origin:**
Tea is believed to have originated in **ancient China**, with early evidence also pointing to **northeastern India** and **northern Myanmar** as potential regions of origin.
- **International Tea Day:**
May 21 is celebrated annually as **International Tea Day**, following a 2019 declaration by the **United Nations General Assembly** to promote sustainable production and consumption of tea.

Favourable Growth Conditions for Tea Cultivation

- **Climate Requirements:**
Tea thrives best in **tropical and subtropical climates**, which provide the right combination of heat and moisture.
- **Ideal Temperature Range:**
The most suitable temperature for tea cultivation lies between **20°C and 30°C**. Temperatures **below 10°C** or **above 35°C** can harm the tea bushes, affecting both quality and yield.
- **Rainfall Needs:**
Tea plants require **150 to 300 cm** of **well-distributed annual rainfall** for optimal growth. Prolonged dry spells or erratic rainfall patterns can negatively affect productivity.
- **Soil Conditions:**
 - Slightly **acidic soils** with **no calcium deposits** are best suited.
 - The soil should be **well-drained and porous**, allowing for **free percolation of water**.
 - Loamy soils rich in organic matter are considered ideal.
- **Humidity Levels:**
The relative humidity should ideally remain around **80%**.

A drop below **40%** is considered unsuitable for tea growth, especially during the leaf-flush period.

- **Resistance to Frost:**

Tea cultivation areas must be **free from frost** conditions, as frost damages the delicate



young leaves and buds.

Geographical Indication (GI) Tag for Tea

- **Darjeeling Tea:**

Often referred to as the “**Champagne of Teas**” due to its unique **muscatel aroma and floral flavour**, Darjeeling Tea holds the distinction of being **the first Indian product** to receive a **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**.

- **Other GI-Tagged Darjeeling Variants:**

- **Darjeeling Green Tea**

- **Darjeeling White Tea**

Both variants are recognized under GI for their unique origin and characteristics.

Tea Production in India

- **Global Standing:**
India is the **second-largest producer of tea** globally, after China.
It holds the position of being the **largest producer of black tea** in the world.
- **Major Tea-Producing Regions in India:**
 1. **Assam:**
 - Contributes about **55%** of India's total tea production.
 - Key production zones: **Assam Valley** and **Cachar** regions.
 2. **West Bengal:**
 - Another major producer with tea estates in **Darjeeling, Dooars, and Terai** regions.
 - Darjeeling tea is globally renowned for its premium quality.
 3. **Southern India:**
 - Accounts for around **17%** of national tea output.
 - Important producing states include **Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka**.

Tea Board of India

- **Establishment:**
Formed in **1954** as a **statutory body** under the **Tea Act, 1953**, succeeding earlier bodies like the Central Tea Board (1949) and the Indian Tea Licensing Committee (1938).
- **Nodal Ministry:**
Functions under the jurisdiction of the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**, Government of India.
- **Mandate and Functions:**
 - **Regulates** all aspects of the tea industry in India.
 - **Protects the interests of tea producers** and promotes Indian tea domestically and internationally.
 - Supports **research, development, export promotion**, and quality assurance.
- **Organizational Structure:**
 - Comprises **32 members**, including a **Chairman and Deputy Chairman** appointed by the Government.
 - The Board is **reconstituted every three years** and represents diverse sectors of the tea industry.

- **Headquarters:**
Located in **Kolkata, West Bengal**.
- **Overseas Offices:**
Maintains international presence through offices in **Dubai (UAE)** and **Moscow (Russia)** to facilitate trade and promotion.

Tea Consumption and Export in India

- **Domestic Consumption:**
India ranks among the **top tea-consuming nations globally**.
Around **80% of the tea produced** within the country is **consumed domestically**.
- **Tea Export Milestone (2024):**
 - India exported **255 million kilograms** of tea in 2024.
 - This volume **surpassed Sri Lanka**, placing India as the **second-largest exporter** of tea globally after Kenya.
 - This was also the **highest export volume in the last decade**.
- **Types of Tea Exported:**
 - **Black tea** dominates the export basket, accounting for **96%** of total tea exports.
 - Other exported variants include:
 - **Green Tea**
 - **Herbal Tea**
 - **Masala Tea**
 - **Lemon Tea**
- **India's Share in Global Exports:**
India contributes approximately **10% of the global tea export volume**.
- **Key Growth Drivers:**
 - Significant **rise in exports to West Asian countries**, especially **Iraq**, which now accounts for **20% of India's tea exports**.
- **Major Export Destinations:**
Indian tea is exported to over **25 countries**, with key markets including:
 - **UAE**
 - **Iraq**
 - **Iran**

- **Russia**
- **United States**
- **United Kingdom**

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/india-surpasses-sri-lanka-to-become-second-largest-tea-exporter/articleshow/119556536.cms>