

**Proceeding of the Meeting of the Executive committee
of ATPA held on 09.05.2017 at 12 p.m. in the office**

Present : -

1. Shri Arun Thekedath	-	Chairman, ATPA
2. Dr. Nazrana Ahmed	-	Vice-Chairman, ATPA
3. Shri D.N. Boruah	-	Member, Executive committee, ATPA
4. Shri P.K. Bezboruah	-	” ” ”
5. Shri O.P. Chokhani	-	” ” ”
6. Shri A.R. Kasera	-	” ” ”
7. Shri Gautam Barooah	-	” ” ”
8. Shri Deboshyam Barua	-	” ” ”
9. Shri Amitabh Barooah	-	” ” ”
10. Shri R.P. Singh	-	” ” ”
11. Shri Bijoy Kr. Beria	-	” ” ”
12. Shri Bikash Agarwalla	-	” ” ”
13. Shri Rajib Barooah	-	” ” ”
14. Shri A. Singh	-	” ” ”
15. Shri D. Bora	-	Secretary, ATPA
16. Shri A. Bhuyan	-	Addl. Secretary, ATPA

Shri Raj Barooah, Shri B.N. Barkakoty, Shri Gautam Beria & Shri R. Bagrodia regretted inability to attend due to unavoidable prior commitment.

By welcoming all members Chairman convened the meeting to order. Before taking up the items of the agenda the following condolence resolution was moved from the chair.

“This meeting of the Executive committee of Assam Tea Planters’ Association held today in the office records its deep sense of sorrow at the passing away of the following members and well wishers of the association and conveys its heartfelt sympathy and condolence to all members of the bereaved families.

1. Shri Abhijit Sarmah Past Chairman Sitting member of the Ex. Committee & Mg. Director, Madhupur Tea Co.	expired on -	22.03.2017
2. Shri Janaki Nath Handique Proprietor of Timonhabi (A) T.E. & Ex. M.L.A.	expired on -	13.03.2017
3. Shri K.P. Bharali Manager, Hautley T.E. & Executive committeemember	expired on -	04.02.2017
4. Shri Arun Sarma Eminent, Playwright, Novelist & Sahitya Sangeet Natun Academy Award	expired on -	27.03.2017

Members present stood for a minute in silent prayer as a mark of respect and for eternal peace of all the departed souls.”

All members unanimously adopted the condolence resolution.

Felicitatation of the new Chairman of the Tea Board

Thereafter, Chairman appraised the meeting that members of our association were happy and honoured that our past chairman and member of the Executive committee Shri Prabhat Kamal Bezboruah was appointed on 04.05.2017 by the Ministry of Commerce, Govt. of India as the first non – IAS Chairman of the Tea Board of India.

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Chairman proposed a vote of congratulations for and on behalf of all members of the association and requested Sr. member Shri D.N. Boruah to felicitate the chairman Tea Board with a "fullam gamusa".

Shri D.N. Boruah accordingly felicitated Shri P.K. Bezboruah with a "fullam gamusa". All members adopted the resolution with hearty acclamations.

In reply to the felicitation Shri P.K. Bezboruah thanked all members and stated that this time the chairman of the Tea Board of India has been appointed with a different status, that is without the executive powers. The previous Chairman of the Tea Board has been appointed as Dy. Chairman with all executive powers. The new Chairman is empowered to preside over all meetings of the board and his primary role will be to put across the views of industry and to bridge the prevailing industry - government gap in policy formulation and implementation.

He requested all members to extend their help and co-operation and to put forward their views so that he can take it up at the appropriate forums.

Thereafter, Chairman took up the Items of the Agenda and decisions were taken as recorded as under : -

Item No. 1: Confirmation of the Proceedings

The proceedings of the last meeting of the Executive committee held on 31.01.2017 were confirmed on a proposal being made by Shri P.K. Bezboruah and seconded by Shri A.R. Kasera.

Item No. 2: Action taken and meetings attended to

Chairman apprised the members that as decided in the last meeting of the Ex. Committee, information was collected under R.T.I. Act from Assam Gas Co., and M/S Oil India Ltd., on supply gas to the tea industry and others. The same reflected, about 9% of the total gas was supplied to the tea industry in 2014-2015. This was increased to 10% in 2015-16 and to 11% in 2016-17.

Shri P.K. Bezboruah observed that it is a small increase. There is no possibility of substantial increase in gas supply to the tea industry. The industry may take up the issue of large supply of gas by the Tripura Govt. to Bangladesh through proper channels. Some of this gas could be diverted to Assam if the grid connectivity issues are sorted out and pressure is exerted through the right forums.

Chairman endorsed the view and assured the members to take the matter forward.

As regards arrear subscription dues it was apprised by the Secretary that with all out support from circle chairmen, the zone chairmen, the members and the secretariat from Jan, 2017 till date an amount of about Rs. 3 lakhs has been recovered from the outstanding dues list. There is still a balance of Rs. 17,80,650.00, receivable from 64 member tea estates, out of 174 member tea estates.

Members discussed the matter and decided to organise zone meetings at Dibrugarh, Sonari and Jorhat area on a date and time conveniently fixed by the chairman to apprise members of our mutual problems.

Chairman endorsed the view.

Thereafter, chairman informed the members that a beginning has been made by holding the working committee meetings via conference call. This would make it easier for outstation members to participate without having to physically travel to Jorhat. Members present appreciated the initiative.

Chairman then apprised the members that the Labour Deptt. Govt. of Assam has taken a serious look into the provision of medical facilities to workers and their families in the tea gardens.

Shri Pallab Lochan Das, Hon'ble Minister of State (I/C) for Labour & Employment, Assam in a meeting of the re-convened Standing Labour Committee on 10-04-2017 at Guwahati stated that it is a statutory obligation for employers in the tea plantations to provide medical facilities to the workers and their families upto the standard available in group hospitals. He mentioned that Govt. hospital facilities are an entitlement of all citizens and those cannot be year marked for the tea garden population alone.

Since group hospitals are not being provided at the moment by the tea gardens the Hon'ble Minister stated, it is necessary to refer the patients suffering from critical diseases like cancer, cardiology related, nephrology related, serious orthopaedic related and high risk pregnancy related cases to specialised hospitals as may be notified by the Govt. of Assam.

Chairman further informed the members that the Govt. of Assam is envisaging to build 4/5 speciality hospitals in tea garden areas for use as group hospitals at a cost fixed by the Govt.

Mr. O.P. Chokhani observed that if such a scheme materialised, it may prove to be very costly and inefficient. Alternative like utilisation of existing E.S.I. hospitals, medical insurance, may be taken up for consideration.

Chairman assured the members to examine the matter and discuss the same at the appropriate levels.

Secretary apprised the members that administrative cost payable under the A.T.E.P.F.O. has been increased from 3.5% to 4% from 2017-2018 on the total P.F. contributions. This was inspite of the objection raised by the representative of ATPA and BCP in the meeting of the Board of Trustees held on 11.04.2017. Chairman of the meeting ruled that the increase was necessitated to implement the revised pay scales recommended by the 7th pay commission and so adopted the proposal on support of the majority members.

Shri A.R. Kasera, our sr. member observed that such matters affecting the entire tea industry should be discussed at the CCPA level and a collective decision taken.

Chairman endorsed the view and stated that the Jt. forum of ATPA, BCP & NETA should focus on such issues and present our views jointly on such matters affecting all our members.

Item No. 3: Audited accounts of the Association for the year 2016-17 as submitted by the Auditors and placed on the table

- (i) Report of the Internal Auditors M/S Sharad Bajaj and Associates, C.A., Jorhat for 2016-2017.
- (ii) Report of the Statutory Auditors M/S Roy Atal & Atal, C.A., Jorhat for 2016-2017.

Members perused the above reports and made the following observations.

(I) Internal Auditors Report for 2016-2017

Chairman apprised the members that in the internal audit report for the year 2016-17 in para 1, some minor mistakes and omissions were pointed out.

The concerned dealing clerk has been apprised of the same and he is amending the practice from now onward.

(II) Bank A/c No. 223/1

Members looked into the accounts and advised the Secretariat to close the same with immediate effect.

(III) Annual Subscriptions receivable amount of Rs. 35,01,789 including amount due from service stopped and resigned gardens.

Members discussed this matter and decided to take the following steps for recovery of the amount due to the Association.

(a) Request the circle chairmen / zone chairmen to impress upon the concerned member gardens as per list furnished by the association, to clear the dues standing in their name at the earliest.

(b) Shri A.R. Kasera, past chairman volunteered that he would utilise his good office to take up the matter with the concerned members of Dibrugarh, Tinsukia & Naharkatiya Circle, to clear the same, at the earliest. The Association should send the particulars to Mr Kasera at the earliest.

The Chairman thanked Shri A.R. Kasera and assured him that all relevant particulars will be sent.

(IV) Report of the Statutory Auditors M/S Roy Atal & Atal, C.A., Jorhat for the year 2016-2017

Shri A.R. Kasera observed that the C.M. Relief Fund shown in the Assets side at Rs. 4,69,337.00 as on 31st March, 2017 be transferred to the capital side and our accounts be made clean.

Shri O.P. Chokhani observed that the loans and advances as carried forward from a long time in Annexure – C should be difficult to recover and so be written off. Shri D. N. Boruah endorsed the proposals.

With the above amendments the audited accounts for the year ending on 31.03.2017 as submitted by M/S Roy Atal & Atal Co., Jorhat has been adopted unanimously by the members.

(V) Budget Estimate of Receipts and Expenditures for the year 2017-2018

Members perused the budget estimate of receipts and expenditures for the year 2017-2018 as placed on the table.

Shri O.P. Chokhani observed that in the receipt side it would not be fair to consider the receivable subscriptions as the same has already been shown in the liability account. Further, he stated it will be quite inadequate to run the association with the existing rate of annual subscription of 8 paise per kg of average tea made.

He suggested that the rate of Annual Subscription for 2017-2018 should be increased to 10 (ten) paise per kg of made tea on the average tea made for 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17, subject to a minimum of Rs. 6000.00 per garden, irrespective of area or crop under tea.

On the expenditure side members observed that expenditure on post and telegraph as shown in Item No. 7 seemed to be on the higher side since most of the communications are now being carried out through e-mails.

Secretary stated all efforts would be made to reduce those expenditure on postage, telephone and fax and bring it down to bare minimum.

On a proposal made by Shri O.P. Chokhani and seconded by Shri Deboshyam Barua, all members unanimously adopted the Annual Budget of Receipts and Expenditures for 2017-18 as amended above.

Item No. 4: (i) Fund position of the Association

As stated earlier under Item No. 2 from 1st January 17 to 9th of May 2017 the association received an amount of about Rs. 3 lakhs with all efforts made by the Circle Chairmen, Executive committee members and the office of the Association.

But, there is still a balance of Rs. 17,58,383.00 from 64 member tea estates.

The Chairman requested all members to impress upon the defaulting members to clear their dues at the earliest.

(iii) Construction of one R.C.C. Building through a developer

Shri P.K. Bezboruah suggested that as discussed in the last Executive committee meeting the association by tying up with the owner of our neighbouring plot Mr N.Bora can take up the project of constructing one three storied R.C.C. in the combined plot by sharing the floor area constructed with the owner of the land and the builder on a rational basis.

Members discussed the matter and held the view that a blue print of the project with all primary data be prepared by the Sub-Committee, in consultation with the owner of the adjacent vacant land and submitted to the Executive committee for consideration and necessary action.

Item No. 5: Food grains supply to worker and their dependents in tea gardens

The Chairman appraised the members that there was a meeting of food sub-committee in the morning hours at 11:30 a.m. in the office.

Members were appraised that the possibility of receiving food grains allotments from Govt. of Assam was not very high.

The GOA was still holding the view that the allotment of food grains has to come from the Central Govt. and the Govt. of Assam need specific direction from GOI to allot any quantity to the tea industry. So the industry is still managing the food grains requirement of their workers and dependents through market purchases either directly or through their handling agents.

In our case also, we are advising our handling agents to quote their competitive market prices on the first day of every calendar month so that the member tea estates could book their monthly requirement.

The Food Sub-Committee meeting held in the morning hours viewed with a concern that when M/S B.K. Modi, Jorhat was supplying food grains to about 54% of the gardens attached to them, during the year 2016-17 and submitting their monthly returns and due incidental charges to the Association, M/S Kamala Flour Mills, Dibrugarh and M/S Ganapati Traders, Dibrugarh were neither submitting their monthly returns nor paying the due incidental charges from April, 2016 to March, 2017 and thereby causing loss of incidental charges to the association and also violating the terms of the existing food grains handling agency agreement.

Food Sub-Committee meeting discussed this matter in details and recommended that the defaulting handling agents M/S Kamala Flour Mills, Dibrugarh and M/S Ganapati Traders, Dibrugarh be required to pay an amount @ Rs. 15.00 per qtl of rice and atta on their average annual supply in 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17 as incidental charges to the Association within 7 days from the receipt of the notice as the agents had not submitted returns for the period and there was no other basis of arriving at a figure for incidental charges for the said period .

It was also unanimously decided by members if the concerned handling agents M/S Kamala Flour Mills, Dibrugarh and M/S Ganapati Traders, Dibrugarh fail to pay the claims within the stipulated date, the association will take recourse to the existing terms and conditions of handling agency agreement and terminate their services. The Association can then explore the possibility of appointing new handling agents / suppliers for the larger interest of the association.

As regards future supply of food grains from 1st June, 2017 M/S B.K. Modi stated that they would continue at the present prices of Rs. 2250 for rice and Rs. 2120 for atta for the current month of May, 2017. But, from June, 2017 onward they will have to increase the prices and the same will be informed to the secretariat on 1st June, 2017 for the period of one month based on the prevailing market prices.

On being asked whether it will be possible on their part to extend their supply to other districts of the state M/S B.K. Modi stated that they could comfortably expand their services upto Sonari area if required.

As regards to the supply of food grains to other circles of Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Naharkatiya, members kept the option of reviewing existing agreements with handling agents pending till the questions raised to M/S Kamala Flour Mills and M/S Ganapati Traders are answered and the matter settled by the association.

Dr. Nazrana Ahmed stated that the supply of food grains in other districts of Dibrugarh and Tinsukia may be offered to new suppliers on new terms and conditions.

Chairman endorsed the view and kept the matter pending for the next meeting till the issue with the existing agents for the region is sorted out.

All members unanimously adopted the discussions and the recommendations of the Food Sub-Committee.

Item No. 6: Migration of GST regime.

The Chairman informed the members that as per current information available Govt. of India will roll GST from 1st July, 2017.

As many as 10 (ten) states including Assam have already enacted the state GST act paving the way for smooth rollout of GST.

The Govts. are clamming that the new regime will create a common market across the country and all indirect taxes will be subsumed into CGST, SGST and IGST. The details of the scheme will be more clear within the next 1 month when the empowered committee next meets.

Members should identify their problems and seek clarification from appropriate authorities.

Item No. 7: Any other subject raised with the permission of the chair.

(a) Holding of next 80th AGM of the Association.

Members considered the matter and tentatively decided to hold the 80th AGM of the Association on **7th & 8th July, 2017 at TTRA Complex** or any other date after 9th July, 2017 to suit the convenience of the Chief Guest and the Guest of Honour as under :

On 1 st day	-- 7 P.M. to 10 P.M.	-- Reception and Cocktail at Guest House premises of the TRA.
On 2 nd day	-- 10 A.M. to 10:20 A.M.	-- Registration of members and Guest at TRA Auditorium.

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On 2nd day -- 10:20 A.M. to 10:45 A.M. -- Business session to transact the statutory business under Rule 32 of Rules of the association.

TEA BREAK

On 3rd day -- 11 A.M. -- Open session.
 -- 1 P.M. -- Reception.
 -- 6:30 A.M. -- ATPA Golf Tournament at Jorhat Gymkhana Club.

Panel of Chief Guest --

1. Smti Nirmala Sitharaman
Minister of State (I.C.) for Commence & Industry
Govt. of India
11, Safdarjunf Road,
New Delhi
2. Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma
Minister of Health & Education, Assam
House no-15,
Uday Path, R.G. Baruah Road,
Guwahati -781024

Guest of Honour --

1. Shri Nalin Satyakam Kohli & others
2.
3.

It was decided that the good offices of the Chairman and the Vice Chairman along with Sr. Members will take necessary action to invite and decide the Chief Guest and the Guest of Honour for the 80th AGM.

(b) Funding of the event – It was decided that as done during the past few years the AGM function will have to generate its own resources through exhibition stalls and advertisements in the AGM souvenir scheduled for release during the function.

(c) Bilateral Discussion held with the ACMS on 08.05.2017 at Dibrugarh

Mr. A. Bhuyan, Addl. Secretary who attended the Bilateral Discussion held with the ACMS informed the members that the meeting discussed mainly the revision of L.T.A. to sub-staff and the revision of housing allowance to the non resident permanent workers.

This time also the ACMS did not come with any specific demand but indicated that they are expecting a substantial increase in both L.T.A. to sub-staff and housing allowance to non resident permanent workers.

When the ACMS will come with specific demand on the issues the industry will take up their offer for discussion. The Association may consider this matter and give the mandate as and when the same will come up for discussion in the AVBCCPA next.

(d) Standing Committee of the State Legislative Assembly visiting BOP and tea gardens of border areas of Sibsagar, Jorhat and Golaghat on 25th & 26th April, 2017 – a brief appraisal

On being asked by the chairman the addl. secretary, Mr. A. Bhuyan apprised the members that an assembly team under chairmanship of Shri Majandra Narzary visited BOP (Border Out Post) of Nagaland boundary of Sonari, Jorhat and Golaghat districts. On their way they also visited a few tea gardens viz Modi T.E., Tipook T.E. Galeky T.E., Amguri T.E.o, Gabroo Parbat T.E. & Gilladhary T.E. and observed the provision of medical facilities in those gardens.

Thereafter, the team met the representatives of the tea gardens and tea associations in a short meeting on 25th April, 2017 at Jorhat and on 26th April, 2017 at Golaghat.

In the meetings the team expressed their happiness in the medical facilities provided by the tea gardens and we brought the following points to their attention :

1. Reintroduction of loan and subsidy under the Subsidised Housing Scheme for Plantation workers for construction of labour quarters.
2. Supply of food grains for tea garden workers and their dependents as before by the Govt. of Assam.
3. Poor infra-structure facilities for digital operations in tea garden areas.
4. Deplorable condition of the N.H. – 37 particularly from Kakadonga River to Dibrugarh town.

We are happy that the team noted down our points and assured us of taking up the same at appropriate levels.

(e) Circulation of Hand Book of ATPA

The Chairman informed the members that under advice and guidance of our past chairman Shri A.R. Kasera the hand book of ATPA has been updated. A copy of the same will be forwarded to all members of the Executive committee by email for perusal and advice as may be considered necessary.

(f) Maternity Benefit Act, 2017

It appears by notification No. SO.1026(e) dated 31.03.2017, the Govt. of India has enforced maternity benefit act, 2017 with effect from 1st April, 2017.

Dr. Nazrana Ahmed, Vice-Chairman informed the house that the Act will provide maternity benefit to women workers having not more than two children for a period of twenty six weeks (8 weeks before delivery and 18 weeks after delivery) at the rate of her wages.

In case of Assam the provision will be enforceable under the Assam Maternity Benefit Rules after amendment of the same by Govt. of Assam.

(g) Workshop of Mobile Medical Unit (MMU) held on 03.05.2017 at Guwahati

On being asked Addl. Secretary Shri A. Bhuyan apprised the house that the Govt. has introduced MMU (Mobile Medical Unit) under NHM for 488 identified gardens. Initially they have decided to cover 320 gardens selected on the basis of the need of the gardens.

The MMU with all medical infrastructure and a medical team including doctors, pharmacist, nurse, laboratory technician will be stationed in the garden for a period 5-6 days on a rotation basis to provide medical facilities at the door steps of the garden.

The above program will be launched initially at Dibrugarh District from June 2017 on arrival of MMU vehicles.

The Govt. has requested all selected gardens to extend all help and co-operation for success of the scheme.

(h) Electricity to staff quarters

Mr. O.P. Chokhani informed the members that in the case of a member of ABITA the High Court of Guwahati has recently passed an order on provision of electricity to the staff quarters of the tea gardens. Our Association should look into the same and issue recommendations to the members on the same line.

Chairman assured the members to look into the matter and take appropriate action.

(i) Co-option of members from Darrang –cum-North Lakhimpur

Shri A.R. Kasera stated, after the passing away of Mr. Abhijit Sarmah on 22.03.2017 who was Mg. Director of Madhupur Tea Co., Jorhat and the sole representative of Darrang cum-North Lakhimpur circle, there is now no member to represent the said circle in the Ex. Committee.

He proposed that in place of Late Abhijit Sarmah his wife Mrs. Swapna Sarmah present Mg. Director of M/S Madhupur Tea Co. be co-opted as a member of the Executive committee to represent the interest of the above circle.

On being seconded by Shri Rajib Barooah all members unanimously approved and adopted the resolution.

(j) Pollution Control Board's notifications No. WB/G-1283/16-17/245 dated 11.04.2017 for installing Effluent Treatment Plant

Shri Bikash Agarwalla submitted a copy of the above notification issued by the Member Secretary of the Pollution Control Board for our advice.

It appears many gardens have already installed the plant and those are in operation.

The Secretariat will look into the matter and necessary advice will be given to our members at the earliest.

There being no other subject. Chairman terminated the meeting with a vote of thanks to members and vice versa.

Sd/-(Arun Thekedath)
Chairman, ATPA

Memo No. G-2/18 Dated Jorhat the 26th May, 2017

Copy is forwarded to –

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Chairman, ATPA 2. The Vice-Chairman, ATPA 3. The Zone Chairman, All Zones, ATPA 4. The Circle Chairman, All Circles, ATPA 5. All Members, Executive committee, ATPA 6. All Member Tea Estates, ATPA | } | for consideration
and approval please. |
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Sd/-(D.Bora)
Secretary, ATPA