

**Proceeding of the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Association  
held on 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2023 at 11.30 AM at Hotel Indsurya, Dibrugarh**

**Members present –**

1. Shri Deboshyam Barua - Chairman, ATPA
2. Shri S.P. Baruva - Vice Chairman, ATPA
3. Shri P.K. Bezboruah - Member, Executive Committee, ATPA
4. Shri O.P. Chokhani - Member, Executive Committee, ATPA
5. Shri A.R. Kasera - Member, Executive Committee, ATPA
6. Shri Raj Barooah - Member, Executive Committee, ATPA
7. Dr. Nazrana Ahmed - Member, Executive Committee, ATPA
8. Shri R.K. Barooah - Member, Executive Committee, ATPA
9. Shri Indranil Sarmah - Co-opted Member, Executive Committee, ATPA
10. Shri Bhaskar Jyoti Hazarika - Co-opted Member, Executive Committee, ATPA
11. Shri Siddhartha Chaliha - Zone Chairman, Zone II, ATPA
12. Shri Dharendra Nath Boruah - Special Invitee
13. Shri Manoj Jalan - Special Invitee
14. Shri A. Chakraborty - Asstt. Secretary, ATPA

Shri Gautam Barooah, Shri Arun Thekedath, Mrs. Swapna Sarmah, Shri Atulit Chokhani, Shri Amrik Singh, Shri Bijoy Kr. Beria, Shri Rajkumar Borthakur and Shri. Amitabh Barooah regretted their inability to attend the meeting due to unavoidable reason.

The Chairman conveyed the House and called the meeting to order and also welcomed the members present on the floor of the House and special thanks was also extended to Dr. N Ahmed for all her hospitality and impeccable arrangement made for the said meeting.

Before taking up the items of the agenda the Chairman apprised the House about the sad and sudden demise of A. Bhuyan's (Secretary) mother and a moment of silence was observed by the members in respect of the departed soul and also prayed for her eternal peace.

**Item No 1: Confirmation of the proceedings of the last meeting Executive Committee held on 07/01/2023**

The Chairman briefly reviewed the last meeting of the Executive Committee and apprised the members on the follow up actions which has been taken and the members raised their respective questions to which both the Chairman & Vice Chairman said that the needful would be done in an apt & time bound manner.

Since no other queries were received from any members, on the last proceedings of the meeting held on 07/01/2023 a proposal was made by Shri O.P. Chokhani and it was seconded by Shri A.R. Kasera and all members present unanimously approved the proceedings of the above meeting of the Executive Committee which was duly forwarded to all members concerned vide Memo. G-3/106 dated 4<sup>th</sup> Feb 2023.

**Item No 2: Appraisal of the meeting attended by the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary of the Association**

**(i) GTAC meeting (virtual) Revision of Ware House Rate for 2023-24 held on 13/04/2023**

The Chairman apprised the members present that there was an impasse between the seller representatives and ware house owner representatives for almost 4(four), rounds of talks. To break the impasse, the secretary GTAC moved the matter to the Chairman GTAC, Dr. Lakshmanan S, IAS. The Chairman GTAC after hearing both parties, concluded with a new rate slab.

The Chairman GTAC, in that meeting also mooted an idea to do away with fixed rate for the warehouses attached with the GTAC. He is of the view that the warehouses fix their own rates based on the services provided by them to their clients.

He wants a discussion on this idea sometime in August this year. The seller members wholeheartedly supported the idea and are looking forward to engage on this issue.

We, from ATPA have asked for extending permission to the seller's members to keep the teas ready for offer into Bharat auction in our factory dispatch godowns. Such a facility is being enjoyed by the sellers of the South Indian auction system.

**(ii) Interactive meet with Hon'ble Minister of PHE on Jal Jeevan Mission Meeting held on 21/03/2023 at Guwahati**

The Vice Chairman apprised the members present on the said scheme and stated that the Government will initially implement the Jal Jeevan Mission in the gardens including installation of pile line etc will but from the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) year the garden management will be responsible for the upkeep and its maintenance.

Members present voiced their serious concerns and stated that the same will create a host of problems and much fiasco will happen in the near future and requested the Chair to look into the matter so that suitable provisions can be made.

The Vice Chairman stated that some kind of Billing System has to be made or implemented.

Members also stated that the scheme as its being implemented in villages vis a vis urban areas needs to be prepared for Jal Jeevan Mission as the same is the need of the hour.

**(iii) State Standing Labour Committee Meeting held on 01/03/2023 at Guwahati**

The Chairman briefed the Executive Committee members present on the floor of the house about the meeting of the State Level Committee on Education of Plantation Workers. The Chairman said that minutes of the meeting will be forwarded as soon as received at our end.

**(iv) Meeting on Minimum Wage Advisory Committee for Plantation workers held on 09/03/203 at Guwahati**

The Chairman and the Vice Chairman apprised the members about the said issue and also stated that the needful would be done and proper co-ordination for status updation would be followed.

The Secretary attended the meeting on enhancement of retirement age from 58 to 60 and his absence the Vice Chairman apprised the Executive Committee members that the said proposal may be taken into consideration.

The Chairman also apprised the house on Minimum Wages Advisory Committee that ration supply through Fair Price Shops be implemented along with NFSA and also stated explicitly that the licences for such Fair Price Shops would be allotted / given and the same has been promised by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam.

The Vice Chairman also reiterated that absentism, productivity matter etc. in the garden is a poignant cause of concern and he advocated for linking Productivity Plus Wages. Shri O.P. Chokhani also opined that the said issue may be tackled by fixing Hourly Wages.

**(v) Board of Trustees (ATEPFO) meeting on 27/04/2023 at Guwahati**

(a) The Vice Chairman apprised the members on the said issue and in crystal clear manner stated that deduction of PF would be capped at Rs. 15,000/- and notification to the same effect would be shortly published by the concerned authority.

(b) The Chairman apprised the Executive Committee members that the said matter has been kept in abeyance and would be taken up as we walk across the bridge of time.

(c) The Chairman apprised the Executive Committee members that necessary amendment has been made by the Govt. of Assam in the Assam Gratuity Act, 1993 wherein 240 days has now been incorporated once again for calculation of continuous service.

(d) The Chairman apprised the house about the PF matter and stated the Official Notification is now being awaited to be published by the concerned authority.

(vi) **Talk on Global Scenario of tea by Shri Mohit Agarwal, Exporter, Buyer & Producer on 11/04/2023 at T.T.R.I., Jorhat**

The Vice Chairman appraised the esteemed Executive Committee members present on the floor of the house that an interactive meet was organised by NETA wherein Shri Mohit Agarwal, Exported, Buyer and Producer was the speaker and he suggested the following things to be done for the betterment of tea industry as enumerated herein below.

- (a) He suggested 100 million tea kgs be removed from the market which are below the standard teas as prevalent in the market.
- (b) He also suggested 100% of teas be sold via Auction thereby eliminating sub standard teas which are not adhering to MRL.
- (c) The last suggestion made by Shri Mohit Agarwal was that all tea waste to be purchased only by exporters thereby curbing recirculation of tea waste back into the industry.

**Item No. 3: 57<sup>th</sup> ATPA's Football Shield Tournament 2023 commenced from 30/03/2023**

The Chairman appraised the members about the 57<sup>th</sup> ATPA's Football Shield Tournament and also stated that the same was conducted in a splendid and glorious manner and the opening ceremony was the attended by the Chairman and the Secretary and the closing ceremony was attended by Shri Raj Barooah and the Secretary.

The members in one unison stated that the said tournament is very old and prestigious as it is associated and conducted by the Association and all members should keep on supporting the same.

**Item No. 4: Provincialize of tea garden schools**

The Vice Chairman appraised the members about the Provincialization of tea garden schools and stated that the concerned department of Assam Govt. (Joint Secretary to the Govt. of Assam) has already issued a circular in which schools which are to be provincialized has been circulated and the members were requested to check the same.

Members also stated that since Provincialization of tea garden schools is going to take place the teachers who are not qualified need to pass an assessment test and if they failed to do so then such teachers may be shifted to garden works as per their scales. It was also opined that the teachers need to clear the TET test.

**Item No. 5: ATPA's Hand Book is made updated which require approval for its finalisation**

The Chairman appraised the members that the Hand Book has been updated and a hard copy of the same was shown to the Executive Committee members present and it was decided that the same would be mailed in soft copy to all the Executive Committee members and thereafter upon receiving due approval the said hand book would be uploaded in the ATPA's official website.

**Item No. 6: ATISIS (Assam Tea Industry Special Incentive Scheme)**

The Vice Chairman apprised the members that the said matter has already been taken up and the letter for Condonation of delay has already been written and follow up on the same would be taken up by the Augustine Chair.

**Item No. 7: Construction of Jagannath Community & Skill Centre**

The Chairman apprised the members of the Executive Committee that under the said scheme each garden would be required to allot 2 bighas of land for construction of Jagannath Community and Skill Centre and also asked the members to identify such plot of land for the said scheme's implementation.

**Item No. 8: Any other subject**

**(i) Payment of Green Tax for Trailer**

The Chairman apprised the house that the Green Tax would be levied at the rate of 25% i.e. Rs. 8,000/- under the Green Tax and the Association has already submitted a letter to the Secretary to the Govt. of Assam on the said matter.

**(ii) ACKS request for financial assistance for their Diamond Jubilee Celebration to be held on 20<sup>th</sup> May to 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2023 at Duliajan**

The Chairman duly conveyed to the Executive Committee members present that ACKS has requested for financial assistance / support for their Diamond Jubilee celebration and the members present on the floor of the house vehemently rejected the proposal.

**(iii) Request made by Gillapukhuri Tea Estate for waiver of past liabilities towards Annual Subscription of ATPA**

The Vice Chairman raised the topic of outstanding subscription of Gillapukhuri Tea Estate and also stated that the former has requested for waiver of subscription fees which has become overdue and Gillanpuhuri T.E are ready to pay the present subscription for the current accounting year and in this regard the members present opined that the Outstanding subscription for the fiscal years 2020-21, 2021-22 & 2022-23 needs to be paid and the present year subscription i.e. 2022-23 needs to be paid immediately and the remaining two outstanding subscriptions i.e. for the years 2020-21, 2021-22 can be paid in instalments in consultation with the Secretary.

Waiver would be given for the fiscal years 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20.

Dr. Nazrana Ahmed was of the opinion that the entire tea fraternity is passing through a very difficult phase and under such circumstances it would be both wise and noble to wave of preceding 3 (three) years dues (subscription fees) i.e, for the fiscal years 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20 can be waived and also suggested that the subscription amount for the last 3 (three) i.e for fiscal years 2020-21, 2021-22 & 2022-23 needs to be collected from the members concerned who have defaulted in payment.

**(iv) Retracement of staff of ATPA**

The Chairman and the Vice Chairman in unambiguous terms stated that the need of the hour is to go in for retracement of staff. As few number of staff has become redundant given the fact that most of the work can now be done on a digital basis and sought permission from the Executive Committee members who unanimously gave free hand to the coveted Chair to deal with the issue in a befitting manner.

**(v) Auction**

The Chairman and the Vice Chairman spoke elaborately on the present auction system christened "Bharat auction" which seems good from the earlier "English auction".

To mitigate some of our member's apprehensions on the present system, we requested Mr. Manoj Jallan, Ex-chairman BCP to get on via google meet professor Dr. B. Mahadevan and Dr.Shreelata from IIM, Bangalore operations. They were the architect and proposed the same to tea board this new auction system way back in 2003 for better price realisation.

They engaged with our executive members extensively and we came to the understanding that the Tea Board has left away few of the undernoted suggestions;

- a) The number of bidders should not be shown to the buyer.
- b) The seller should be enabled to download the "Bidding history". Presently the system seems not to have this facility.

Members of the Executive Committee after a threadbare discussion suggested that our secretariat should circulate consumer packet prices of national and local brands after collating the same from the market in Jorhat on a monthly basis.

**(vi) NOC**

The Chairman expressed his deepest concern that at present some of the other associations are taking in new members without obtaining NOC from the previous association which is completely against the best practices, ethos and principles of our association.

Mr. O.P. Chokhani was of the view that the said matter be taken up with the CCPA and a strong letter be written by the association apprising the former about the same.

**(vii) Discussion on Amalgamated**

The Chairman and the Vice Chairman stated on the well of the house that very recently Amalgamated has resigned from ITA and has approached the association. Mr. P.K. Bezboruah opined that they are ready to join but a certain individual needs to be given employment by our association to which the members and the chair most vehemently denied to agree or to cow down to such unwarranted request / solicitation.

Having no other points of discussion the meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the chair.

Sd/-  
(Deboshyam Barua)  
Chairman, ATPA

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Memo No. G-3/13 Dated Jorhat the 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2023

Copy is forwarded to:-

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The Chairman, ATPA</li><li>2. The Vice Chairman, ATPA</li><li>3. All Members, Executive Committee, ATPA</li><li>4. All Member Tea Estates, ATPA</li></ol> | } | For information. |
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Sd/- (A.Bhuyan)  
Secretary, ATPA