

Global tea convention opens in Ooty today

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More than 500 delegates, including some from overseas, have gathered at Ooty to participate in the India International Tea Convention (IITC 2016), which will kick off on Thursday.

The three-day convention, with the theme 'Let's team up for sustainability', will discuss sustainability issues in the tea sector and provide a networking platform between sellers and buyers, both nationally and internationally.

It will be jointly hosted by the United Planters' Association of South India (Upasi), the Tea Board and the Consultative Committee of Plantations with the Indian Tea Exporters Association, South India Tea Export-



ers Association and Federation of All India Tea Traders Association.

The inaugural session will be chaired by Rita Teatia, Union Commerce Secretary. The valedictory function on September 24 will be chaired by Musdhali-fah Machmud, Deputy minister for Food and Agriculture, and Coordinating Minister of Economic Affairs, Indonesia.

N Dharmaraj, Upasi President, said that the credibility of the tea industry, of late, is being questioned despite its

huge commitment to employment, rural infrastructure and product safety issues. All of these have put enormous pressure on the financial sustainability of the industry.

Mixed trend

In India, during the current year, the North reported higher production of 12.9 million kg (mkg), while South Indian production was lower by 22.1 mkg. However, consumption has also been growing at 2.5 per cent, thanks to the increasing awareness on the health benefits of tea.

According to Dharmaraj, the meet is expected to enhance the level of understanding of stakeholders such as producers, brokers, traders, packers and the government on several is-

ssues being faced by the sector. It is expected to facilitate policy formulation both at the industry and governmental levels.

Representatives of certifying bodies working in the tea sector, such as the Rain Forest Alliance, Solidaridad and Trustea will present papers and have discussions on product safety issues.

There are two sessions dealing with export markets and a session on the domestic markets attended by leading tea packers and trade representatives.

The last day will have sessions on 'New Frontiers in Tea Marketing' dealing with new delivery models, tea extracts, tea and health and the impact of climate change on future tea production.

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Tea traders