

Golden Needles tea from Arunachal sets world record, auctions at Rs 40,000 a kilo

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Tea gardens of the North East are on a roll. In less than a month two world records have been broken at the Guwahati Tea Auction Centre. This time it's a brew from Arunachal Pradesh which has bettered the record set by an Assam tea garden.

On Thursday, Golden Needles tea, a specialty orthodox tea variety from the Donyi Polo Tea Estate in Arunachal Pradesh fetched a whopping Rs 40,000 a kilogram when Assam Tea Traders, one of the oldest tea traders in Guwahati, bought 1.1 kilos.

On July 24, a kilo of Golden Tips tea from Manohari Tea Estate in Dibrugarh in Upper Assam sold for Rs 39,001 a kilo, setting a world record for fetching the highest price in an auction.

“Golden Tips have curls. Golden Needles require more skills,” explained Manoj Kumar, senior manager at Donyi Polo Tea Estate, the largest tea estate in Arunachal Pradesh which was set up in 1987. This specialty tea gets its name for the leaves look like gold needles after fermentation and processing. When brewed, the tea is mild bodied, sweet and has an aroma of sugar cane pulp.

Donyi Polo Tea Estate is the only tea garden in India which is making golden needles, a variety which originated in Yunnan province of China, Kumar said. It was only last year that a portion of the 421-hectare tea estate was set aside for this variety even as the rest of the tea estate deals in CTC and the regular orthodox.

“Only buds are plucked from the special clone early in the morning by trained workers,” Kumar said adding how utmost care is taken to ensure their natural look is maintained. In a day, only 80 grams of the golden needles tea is produced. Workers involved in plucking, however, get the routine wages.

“The estate in East Siang is by the glacial fed Siang river. That makes it more conducive for special varieties,” Kumar said.

In 2017, a kilo of Golden Needles variety from Donyi Polo had fetched a little over Rs 18,000 a kilo. “Last year GTAC had a limit of Rs 20,000 a kilo for specialty tea auctions. This year they increased the limit to Rs 40,000,” Kumar said.

Read more at: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/golden-needles-tea-from-arunachal-sets-world-record-auctions-at-rs-40-000-a-kilo/story-Man5m8A9rSnX9XpKEvGfmI.html>