

Commerce Secretary Shri Sunil Barthwal Launches NCVET-Approved Skill Courses on Tea Sommeliers and Tea Tasting

Tea Board India Constitutes Expert Committee to Develop NCVET-Approved Tea Tasting Curriculum

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National Council of Vocational Education and Training (NCVET)-approved skill courses on Tea Sommeliers and Tea Tasting were launched by Secretary, Department of Commerce, Shri Sunil Barthwal, IAS, today on the occasion of International Tea Day. Announcing the initiative, Shri Barthwal said the specialised courses by Tea Board India are aimed at skilling the youth and promoting tea literacy, with the programmes proposed to be conducted at the Darjeeling Tea Research and Development Centre, Tea Board India, Kurseong.

Tea Board India constituted a Committee comprising Joint Secretary (Plantations), Department of Commerce, Director, NCVET, Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, IIPM, and domain experts in Tea Tasting and NEP 2020. The Committee was tasked with exploring existing courses in India and abroad, and developing a comprehensive curriculum aligned with international standards, Indian tea industry requirements, and the National Education Policy 2020.

Based on the recommendations, two new courses have been developed with the assistance of the Agriculture Skill Council of India (ASCI), an awarding body recognised by the NCVET, Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship.

The two courses are:

1. **Essentials of Tea Sommeliers (60 hours)** – covering fundamentals of tea and tea appreciation, professional tea tasting techniques, development of innovative tea blends, and adoption of artisanal and future-forward tea practices.
2. **Fundamentals of Tea Tasting (210 hours)** – covering factory-level tea tasting operations, conducting and managing tea tasting sessions, tea blending based on tasting outcomes, and implementing future-ready tea manufacturing and tasting practices.

On successful completion, trained professionals will contribute to sensory evaluation, grading, and the promotion of tea literacy—factors critical to enhancing market competitiveness and consumer satisfaction.

The two NCVET-approved skill courses were formally launched by Shri Sunil Barthwal today. These are the first-of-their-kind courses in tea tasting, designed in alignment with NEP 2020, and mark a significant step in strengthening India's tea value chain through a skilled workforce.

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