

Press Release on the visit of Hon'ble Union Minister of Commerce and Industry to Sikkim during Apr 9-11, 2016

April 10, Gangtok: Hon'ble Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Commerce and Industry, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, was on a three day visit to the state of Sikkim from 9th to 11th April, 2016. While answering a question on "Tea Research & Development" posed by the Hon'ble Member of Parliament Shri Prem Das Rai, she had assured to visit the state of Sikkim and see its plantation industry, mainly the tea plantations and export potential of tea, spices and other organic products.

Smt. Sitharaman, visited the Temi Tea Estate in South Sikkim on 10th April, 2016. The workers and staff of the Temi Tea Estate and factory welcomed the Union Minister. She observed the tea processing in the Temi Tea factory and appreciated the quality of tea produced in the factory. She also interacted with the workers and officials of the factory. The tea plantation area of Temi Tea Estate is 177 Hectares and about 90,000 kgs of orthodox Organic tea is manufactured in the factory. Apart from that, there are about 200 small tea growers in the state of Sikkim who produce about 25,000 kg of hand-made organic teas. The Temi Tea Estate is planning extension of tea plantation areas in the state with the assistance of the Central Govt and Tea Board. They are also planning for replantation in the existing plantations to a limited extent. The Estate is also contemplating to extend housing facilities to the workers and their families. Tea Board India expressed keenness to extend the benefits of its various Schemes to the State of Sikkim

Sikkim Tea is well appreciated in the international and domestic markets because of its quality. The Minister stressed the need for

branding “Sikkim Teas” as a very niche product. She also emphasized upon setting up Integrated Tea Parks in North and South India, large-scale “Brand India Campaign” in key overseas markets and the importance of having more visibility of branded Indian teas in the export markets, including teas from the state of Sikkim.

Smt. Sitharaman, during her three day visit to Sikkim, called upon HE the Governor of Sikkim, Shri Shriniwas Patil and Hon’ble Chief Minister of Sikkim, Shri Pawan Chamling.

She held a stakeholders’ meeting of Tea, Spices and APEDA on 10th April, 2016. She also laid the foundation stone of Spice Complex in Gangtok. The Hon’ble Chief Minister of Sikkim was also present during the stakeholders’ meetings and the foundation-laying ceremony. Shri R.R. Rashmi, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Shri Santosh Sarangi, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce & Industry & Chairman Tea Board; Dr. A. Jayathilak, Chairman, Spices Board, Shri Arvind Kumar, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industries, Govt of Sikkim, and Shri Krishan Kumar, Chairman, APEDA, accompanied the Minister during her visit.