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Technical snag delays tea auction by more than 2 hours in Coonoor

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Udhagamandalam: The e-auction of tea was delayed by two hours at the Coonoor centre in the Nilgiris on Friday because of technical snag. The auction was scheduled to commence at 9am, but began only at 11.30am, causing disappoint to the bought-leaf factories, who were ready to sell the tea.

Dhananjayan, president, Nilgiris Bought-Leaf Tea Manufacturers Association, said they had been facing the same issue at the Coonoor tea e-auction centre for more than a year. "Whenever the buyer's schedule gets totally changed because of the delay, the seller is at the receiving end." He said the Tea Board had changed the server provider for the five auction centres, including Coonoor, Coimbatore and Cochin, in the country last year. "Since then, there has been frequent disruption in the auction timing. We had made several representations to the Tea Board, but in vain."

Tea auction is conducted twice a week – on Thursdays and Fridays – in the Coonoor auction centre. "Two weeks ago, auction had to be cancelled. At the end of the day, suppliers are the most affected and they cannot make payment to the small tea farmers," Dhananjayan said.

Vairavan, chairman, Coonoor Tea Traders' Association, said the Tea Board had upgraded the server for the five auction centres in the country. "The frequency of server breakdown has increased after that. Because of this, tea is unsold and stocks are piling up in the warehouse. We have written to the deputy chairman of the Tea Board to resolve the issue soon."

M Balaji, executive director, Tea Board (south) said, "It is a new system introduced last year. Maybe, load factor is one of the reasons for the disruption in the e-auction centre. There might also be other technical factors, which have to be identified. A new platform will be ready soon."

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