

ACMS demands tea ministry in Assam

Rajib Dutta | TNN | Aug 10, 2021, 12:05 IST

DIBRUGARH: The [Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha](#) (ACMS), the largest trade union of tea workers in the country, has demanded a tea ministry in Assam saying that it will help revive the state's tea industry which is passing through a sluggish phase. Participating in the 63rd foundation day of the [ACMS](#) at its headquarters in Dibrugarh on Monday, ACMS president and former union DoNER minister Paban [Singh Ghatowar](#) said that setting up a tea ministry in Assam is a legitimate of the people of Assam as the tea industry has over 195 years of glorious history and provides livelihood to several million people.

"Assam's name is synonymous with tea all over the world. Tea is one of the major contributors to the state's economy and millions of people are involved in the tea industry in the state. When the state can have a ministry for fisheries, why can't we have a ministry of tea. At a time when the tea industry is passing through a sluggish phase due to [Covid](#) and drought-like conditions, setting up a ministry of tea at the state level will provide the necessary thrust for its revival. The government and policy makers should come forward to give shape to the idea. In fact, a tea ministry should have been formed a long time ago considering the importance of the tea industry in the state. It is the largest employment generator industry providing livelihood to lakhs of people," ACMS president Paban Singh Ghatowar said.

With over 800 big tea plantations and thousands of small tea gardens, Assam contributes to nearly 51% of tea produced in the country. However, stagnant prices, lukewarm global demand, deficit rainfall and the Covid-19 pandemic has left the state's tea industry in distress. In 2019, the annual tea production in Assam was 716.49 million kg which came down to 618.20 million kg in 2020, a 14% drop owing largely to the Covid-induced lockdown.