

Midas touch for Assam tea

FLAVOUR OF THE DAY

Variety: Gold Special grade tea

Seller: Manohari Tea Estate of Assam

Best price: Rs 39001/kg



Guwahati: The Gold Special grade tea from Manohari Tea Estate of Assam has fetched Rs 39,001 a kilogram at the Guwahati auction on Tuesday. This is the highest price for tea at the auctions in the country so far.

Around 8.54am, Mangilal Maheshwari of Sourabh Tea Trading made the highest bid of Rs 39,001 a kg from his computer, setting a new benchmark for Assam tea. The previous best was Rs 18,801 by Donyi Polo of Arunachal Pradesh.

Two kilograms of the orthodox tea, which is made only from buds and boasts of a golden hue, was sold by Contemporary Brokers at the Guwahati Tea Auction Centre in Sale 30.

"A lot of effort and dedication went into manufacturing such a world class tea which looks like crystals of pure 24 carat gold," Rajan Lohia of Suntok Tea Company, which owns Manohari and Suntok gardens, told **The Telegraph**. Special clones of tea bushes are used and the delicate buds are hand-rolled to make Gold Special, he said.

"This phenomenal price shows there is no limit to quality and tea lovers are ready to pay any price for innovative and boutique quality tea. This will help Assam tea regain its lost glory. We will continue to produce special tea varieties. The credit also goes to Swashat Dutta of Contemporary Brokers for marketing the tea," Lohia said.

Maheshwari, giving the credit to the producer, said, "I request all tea producers to produce excellent tea, then price would not be a problem."

The tea has been sold to three persons - in Ahmedabad, Jaipur and Calcutta. The person in Ahmedabad has a tea boutique, while the other two are associated with corporate gifts.

This price was made possible after the Tea Board of India revised the permissible bid limit for orthodox tea leaf from Rs 20,000 to Rs 40,000.

The tea is the brainchild of C.K. Parasher, 84, visiting agent at Manohari Tea Estate in Dibrugarh district. "I am a tea man and my endeavour is to make good tea," Parasher said.

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