

PRESS RELEASE – COLOMBO TEA TRADERS’ ASSOCIATION

A RESILIENT TEA INDUSTRY—READY TO MEET THE CHALLENGE

The Colombo Tea Traders’ Association is the private sector apex body of the tea industry. The Committee of the association encompasses a broad spectrum of industry stakeholders that includes representatives from The Planters’ Association of Ceylon, Sri Lanka Tea Factory Owners’ Association, Colombo Brokers Association, Tea Exporters’ Association, Sri Lanka Federation of Tea Smallholdings Development Societies and Tea Small Holding Development Authority.

The tea industry has, time and again, demonstrated its remarkable capacity to overcome adversity, with all stakeholders uniting collectively to address and resolve challenges.

In the recent past, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the industry ensured continuity by successfully digitalising the tea auction process, transitioning from the traditional outcry system to a fully virtual platform, thereby maintaining uninterrupted weekly auctions. Similarly, during the period of severe economic crisis, despite numerous constraints, production, sales, and exports continued without disturbance.

The Cyclone Ditwah, which recently affected Sri Lanka, presents yet another challenge for the tea industry. However, it is by no means insurmountable. The well-established and highly coordinated industry network is fully geared to confront these issues head-on. While some tea-growing areas in the Uva and the Central Province experienced some impact, there has been no loss of manufacturing capacity. The damage was largely confined to specific roads, resulting in temporary disruptions to transportation. Some of the key routes connecting plantations to the city have now been reopened, and transport services are resuming normal operations. The harvesting operations are gradually returning to normal, with access roads being reopened and temporary access roads being constructed to facilitate transport of green leaf and produce.

The majority of plantations and smallholder lands in the South of the Island along with the main road network have been spared from cyclone damage. As a result, harvesting, manufacturing and transportation activities are continuing as usual.

The trading activities at the Colombo Tea Auctions continue to be held albeit with a revised calendar. The Tea Auction previously set for the 1st week of December has been rescheduled to the last week of December. This adjustment ensures uninterrupted financial flows to the Producers, including Smallholders, maintaining the momentum of the industry.

The rise of the Kelani River and the resulting floods affected a limited number of exporters’ offices and warehouses. The floods have now receded and on an initial assessment it has been observed that some of the machinery such as tea bagging machines are damaged. The industry is working

tirelessly to restore the damaged machinery and are fully equipped to serve the overseas clients without interruptions and assure timely delivery as usual.

Sri Lanka tea production from January to October 2025 is 220,972,295 Kgs recording an increase of 3,318,755 Kgs compared to same period of last year [2024]. The production in 2025 also surpasses the production of 2023 in a similar period.

Sri Lankan tea industry has consistently demonstrated its resilience in the face of adversities and are confident that with the collective efforts of all in the value chain, shall navigate these challenging times. The Colombo Tea Traders' Association shall continue to work with the officials of the Government to speedily resolve any issues in a collaborative approach.

Together we are all united in our commitment to supply "Ceylon Tea" globally and remain optimistic about the future.

END

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