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PART I—Orders and Notifications by the Governor of West Bengal, the High Court, Government Treasury, etc.

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL

Land & Land Reforms Department
Writers' Buildings, Kolkata-700 001

Memorandum

No. 3362-LP/5M-10/2012

Kolkata, the 17th July, 2013.

Sub : Tea Tourism Policy

A proposal to allow tea gardens in the districts of Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling to promote tourism using land allowed to be retained u/s 6(3) of the West Bengal Estates Acquisition Act, 1953, for tea gardens has been under active consideration of the Government. It was felt that the promotion of tea tourism will promote tourism, allow the tea gardens to diversify, generate local employment and augment local income. The term "tea tourism" will broadly include the overall experience of tourists in the midst of a tea garden or estate, staying in a heritage bungalow, at a home-stay feeling in a tea-village or in a modern resort. Trekking in the natural beauty of a lush tea garden, undertaking a tea-testing session, visiting a modern tea factory and even trying one's hand at plucking tea leaves are all within the idea of "tea tourism". Other activities may include trekking along nature trails, witnessing local culture and patronizing local artisans.

2. Now, the Governor, after careful consideration of the matter, is pleased to make the Tea Tourism Policy as set out in the succeeding paragraphs :
3. Individual tea gardens will be allowed to exploit tourism potential subject to the following conditions:
 - a. The tea garden company must be willing to undertake tea tourism.
 - b. Both in the plains and hills, land meant for tea tourism will be limited to 5 acres. In the plains, civil construction shall be done in an area not exceeding 1.5 acres while in hills it will be limited to only 1.00 acre. The remaining area should be kept open for landscaping and other beautification work.
 - c. If the companies owning tea gardens want to undertake tea tourism themselves in their names, no resumption under sub-section (3) of section 6 of the West Bengal Estates Act, 1953, will be required. But if they want to do it in a new name, resumption will be required and salami and land revenue at commercial rates will have to be paid.
 - d. For a joint venture company i.e. between the existing tea company and another company, resumption will be required along with a fresh lease. Salami and land revenue at commercial rates will have to be paid. Further, the tea garden company should have a majority share in joint venture company.

- e. No outside entity will be allowed.
 - f. No land under actual tea plantation is to be used for tea tourism and under no circumstances area under tea plantation should be reduced.
 - g. Tea gardens can make use of existing guest houses/bungalows with necessary renovations if required for temporary accommodation of tea tourists.
 - h. Any new civil construction will have to be done under the technical guidance and vetting of an Expert Committee of engineers and architects to be selected by the Tourism department in consultation with tea associations and the Tea Board. The civil construction will be eco-friendly and buildings so constructed will be limited to two-storeys. The projects should be self-contained in terms of water and sanitation and should not result in additional loads on the environment.
 - i. The Tourism department will develop the DPR check list for submission of a formal proposal for tea tourism. The DPR of tea tourism projects in the prescribed format is to be submitted to the District Magistrate & Collector who in turn after necessary verification will send it to the convener of the Screening Committee to be constituted by the Government.
4. This Screening Committee will consist of:
- i. LRC & Secy., L & LR Department - Chairperson.
 - ii. Secretary, Tourism Department- Member.
 - iii. Secretary or representative of C & I Department- Member.
 - iv. Secretary or representative of Environment Department- Member.
 - v. Representative of the Tea Board - Member.
 - vi. Representatives of tea associations - Member.
 - vii. Director of Tourism-Convener.
5. The recommendation of the Screening Committee will be placed before the Standing Committee of Cabinet on Industry, Infrastructure and Employment for approval. The Tourism department will be the nodal department for placing the matter before the said Standing Committee. The final sanction order will be issued by the Tourism department.
6. In case the project is not started within 3 years from the date of fresh lease/permission, then the lease/permission will be cancelled.
7. After obtaining requisite clearances from the authorities concerned, the lessee shall complete the tea tourism project as per the DPR.
8. This has the approval of the Standing Committee of Cabinet on Industry, Infrastructure and Employment in its meeting held on 05/07/2013.

By order of the Governor,

SANJAY MITRA

Chief Secretary to the Govt. of West Bengal