

Rejoinder for press

It has come to the notice of the Board through various print media there is a demand that Tea Board set up a COVID-19 testing laboratory in North Bengal.

While Tea Board will take all steps to prevent the spread of the pandemic in tea growing areas of North Bengal, it needs to be clarified here that in order to fight the epidemic the Central and the State Government have taken concerted actions to prevent the spread of the outbreak of the disease through various action at district level under the Disaster Management Act 2005 and the Epidemic Diseases Act 1897. Tea Board on its own cannot take any unilateral action.

It is however clarified that the Quality Control Laboratory(QCL), Tea Board, Siliguri is an NABL accredited & FSSAI notified Food Testing Laboratory, meant for testing chemical parameters of tea and related/allied food items. The said laboratory is not equipped in terms of infrastructure and trained manpower and is not a BSL-2 certified laboratory which is the minimum requirement for testing of human infectious disease including COVID-19.

In view of the above it is intimated to all stakeholders that QCL, Tea Board, Siliguri is not equipped or certified to take up COVID-19 testing.

Tea Board has issued an exhaustive Standard Operating Procedure (SoP) for ensuring safe working conditions and to adopt the Health Ministry's guideline in containment and spread of COVID-19. The Board would once again call upon the stakeholders to work unitedly with the district administration to defeat the pandemic.