

THE UNITED PLANTERS' ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN INDIA

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THE GOLDEN LEAF INDIA AWARDS: SOUTHERN TEA COMPETITION-2026 – RULES AND PROCEDURES

1) REGION-WISE CATEGORY

The competition will be based on teas from specific agro-climatic regions of South India such as:

- (a) Nilgiris
- (b) Wayanad (Nilgiri-Wayanad & Wayanad)
- (c) Anamallais
- (d) Travancore
- (e) High Ranges
- (f) Karnataka & other minor districts (Thiruvananthapuram/ Kanyakumari/Quilon/Madurai/Singampatti and Nelliampathies)
- (g) Bought-Leaf Factories can participate in the Bought Leaf Factory category only

The competition will be among the groups indicated from (a) to (g) except for special categories viz. Organic Tea and Green Tea.

2) PERIOD OF PRODUCTION

The unblended tea manufactured up to **18th February 2026** under the estate/factory mark will be eligible for the competition. The competition will be for Black Tea (both CTC and Orthodox) and Special Categories for Organic Tea and Green Tea.

3) GRADES

(a) General Category

There is no restriction on the number of entries (grades). However, the entries (grades) should conform to the mesh sizes specified, which are just a guideline and the grades may be regular pure grades. Kindly note that the grades must be in line with Standardization of Grades approved by Tea Board of India.

CTC Category	Mesh Size
Leaf	Through 12 over 18
Fanning	Through 18 over 24
Dust	Through 24 over 50
Orthodox Category	Mesh Size
Whole Leaf	Through 6 over 10
Brokenes	Through 10 over 16
Fannings	Through 16 over 24

(b) Specialty categories

(i) Certified Organic Teas

Organic- CTC	Mesh Size
Leaf	Through 12 over 18
Fanning	Through 18 over 24
Organic- Orthodox	Mesh Size
Whole Leaf	Through 6 over 10
Fannings	Through 16 over 24

(ii) Green Tea


Green Tea	Mesh Size
Whole Leaf	Through 6 over 10
Fannings	Through 16 over 24

4) MINIMUM ACCEPTABLE STANDARD

There will be certain benchmarking for the minimum acceptable standard of the teas that enter the competition. Technical analysis will be confined to the qualifying entries only and in case the qualifying entry does not pass the technical analysis, the second-best entry will be declared winner subject to passing the technical analysis for pesticide residues (EU MRLs), heavy metal (Lead) and iron filing.

5) ENTRY FEE

Entry fee will be **Rs.3,000+ 18%(GST) = 3,540** per entry (grade). Payments should be made by D.D. drawn in favour of “UPASI”, payable at Coonoor, along with the application form and sent to UPASI, Glenview, Post Box No.11, COONOOOR-643 101 (or) by NEFT as given below (or) by using the QR code.

Name of the Account	UPASI	
Name of the Bank	State Bank of India	
Branch	Bedford, Coonoor	
Type of account	Savings Bank	
Account No.	57012887836	
IFSC code	SBIN0070389	

6) LOT SIZE

For the competition, the minimum lot size fixed is 1,000 kg for all categories. However, for Orthodox Whole Leaf, Orthodox Broken and Green Tea grades, the lot size will be 500 kg and for Organic category, it will be 250 kg for leaf grades and 500 kg for fannings grade. Apart from fulfilling the lot size specification for the competition, an overall volume criterion (back up quantity) is also stipulated which is minimum 5 ton for CTC tea, 3 tons for Orthodox tea and 2 ton for Organic Tea and Green Tea respectively. For example, if an estate is participating in two categories of CTC and one category of Orthodox, back up quantity of 5 tons and 3 tons respectively should be available with them, not necessarily the grades which are put up for the competition. In other words, all the grades that are manufactured while making the teas for the competition should add up to volume specified.

Teas should be packed and be made available for inspection and sampling **from 19th February to 3rd March 2026**. The teas should be kept at the producer's godown/factory or at the approved warehouses of the Tea Trade Associations till the collection of the samples is over. The details of the Special Auction of TGLIA Teas will be communicated in due course.

7) SAMPLE SIZE

- a) 250 gms. : to be retained with the producers.
- b) 250 gms. : to be kept at the respective UPASI-TRF Regional Centres.
- c) 250 gms. : for first level screening.
- d) 500 gms. : for pesticide residue and heavy metal analysis.
- e) 250 gms. : for final level screening
- f) 500 gms. : for display at Fairs/Exhibitions (This will be collected subject to the entry winning the competition).

- 1) Sample size for the competition will be **2.000 kgs.** as per (a) to (f).
- 2) Sample size for the back-up quantity for auction is 750 gms. [(a) to (c) as above.], which applies to other than competition entries.

Director, UPASI-TRF will be the custodian for all the samples collected.

8) COLLECTION OF SAMPLES

Officers of UPASI Tea Research Foundation, Regional Centres stationed at different tea planting regions will personally inspect and draw the samples from the producers **from 19th February to 3rd March 2026** as indicated in S.No.7. The samples will be drawn in the presence of the producer or his representative.

9) **SCREENING PROCEDURE**

The first level of screening would be done to shortlist the samples collected from the different agro-climatic regions. The final level of screening comprising of renowned jury would be done to identify the winners in each category, details of which would be communicated. Technical analysis would be confined to the qualifying entries only, and in case the qualifying entry does not pass the technical analysis, the second-best entry will be declared winner subject to passing the technical analysis for pesticide residues (EU MRLs), heavy metal (Lead) and iron filing.

The dates for the different levels of screening and the venues are tentatively as under:

Level	Venue	Date
First level of screening	UPASI	7th March 2026
Technical Analysis	TRF Labs	9th to 21st March 2026
Final Level of Screening	To be announced	To be announced

10) **APPLICATION FORM**

The Application Form is enclosed at **Annexure 1**. The duly filled in application form along with DD / NEFT details towards entry fee may be sent to UPASI, Glenview, Post Box No.11, COONOOR – 643 101 not later than **31st December 2024**.

11) **DECLARATION**

A declaration should be signed by the producer in the application form **[Annexure 2]** stating that the sample tea is the property of UPASI and that the analytical results of UPASI-TRF on pesticide residues/heavy metal/iron filing and the decision of the Panel/Jury are final.
