



# 4 GENERATIONS

*of commitment to excellence*

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# SUCCESS

*has a story*

## The company

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The Bharat Group is a diversified, Malaysian conglomerate with special focus on tea. The company was founded by an Indian immigrant, Shuparshad Bansal Agarwal, and began life in 1933 in the scenic Cameron Highlands. Its first, carefully tended and lovingly nurtured crop of unprocessed tea leaves was sold to a factory next door.

Through the ebbs and flows of the twentieth century, the company grew in size and scale. Beginning in the age of the British Empire, surviving Japanese occupation in World War II and then expanding rapidly in the exciting era of Malaysian independence, the Bharat Group developed its expertise and extended its supply chain. Today the company is a significant nation-builder, contributing immensely to the national economy and giving back to the local communities.

80 years on, the company's tea plantations stretch over 1600 acres of lush greenery and Bharat Group exports its fine output (products/tea) to over 24 countries. Initially a wholesaler of tea supplying leading Malaysian and international brands, today the company is growing its retail presence, through brands like Cameron Valley.

Guided by strong family values, built by principled entrepreneurs and now driven by youthful innovation, the Group is poised to expand its global footprint.

# DETERMINATION

## *and an entrepreneurial spirit*

### The founders

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Shuparshad Bansal Agarwal, born in 1893, was a pioneer and visionary of great determination. He left his home near Agra, in northern India when he was a young man, and came to Malaysia to assist his uncle in running a provision shop. He soon established his own shop, and then grew his business by initially renting and then buying land.

He was known for his benevolence, kindness and vision. As an Indian immigrant in an alien land, he conducted himself with great dignity and intelligence, and his efforts won him the trust of the local British rulers.

His vision was to create a lasting corporation, with his family. It was a simple wish that his brothers and later his son would fulfill in great style. Dato Sri Brijkishore Agarwal showed the same family traits of determination and perseverance. His father died when he was only nine years old. Brijkishore went to India to study, and then returned in the early 1950s to take the reins of the enterprise his uncles had maintained in his absence. The transition of control was smooth and free from any infighting (conflict). The trust amongst the family members is the cornerstone and bedrock of the company's success, and it continues till this day, amongst the 4th generation of the Agarwals.

Brijkishore's entrepreneurial spirit led him to acquire land from the British, and later, to grow the tea estate in reach and size. He developed the wholesale business of the company, striking various deals and alliances with key brands, both local and international. He supported the foray into the retail space, and his legacy continues not just in the family, but in the Cameron Highlands. The local community remembers him fondly.



1) Tanah Rata town 1950s

2) Bharat Tea Factory

3) Brinchang Town 1970s

4) Bharat tea plantation in the 1970s



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# FROM THEN TO NOW

## The milestones

### AN ENTREPRENEUR ARRIVES

**1893** Shuparshad Bansal Agarwal is born near Agra, in Uttar Pradesh, north India. In 1910, he emigrates to Taiping in Perak, Malaysia to assist his uncle in running a provisions shop. Shuparshad Bansal Agarwal moves to Tapah at the foot of the hills. He buys a rubber factory and sets up a provisions store supplying workers estate building the road into the Cameron Highlands.



### FIRST FLUSH, FIRST SALE

**1933** Shuparshad Bansal Agarwal sets up the Bharat Company. He acquires land from the British Government and starts selling tea leaves from this first estate to a neighbouring factory.

### SURVIVAL IN TOUGH TIMES

**1937** with Shuparshad's death, his brothers Nandkishore and Kailashchand take over the running of the business as his son Brijkishore is merely nine years old. Later, Brijkishore travels to India to study.

### THE WAR YEARS

**1944** The Japanese occupation of WW2 cannot weaken the business. The Bharat Group provides vital provisions like rice and sugar to the entire Cameron Highlands community.

### CHOP RUSA, THE FIRST BRAND

**1952** Brijkishore returns to Malaysia aged 20, and soon takes over the running of the business. He wins a contract to run a factory at the Agricultural Research Centre. The Bharat Group produces its own processed and packaged tea called "CHOP RUSA"

### MERDEKA!

**1957** Brijkishore is joined by his younger brother Mr. Shriniwas. The Bharat Group celebrates Merdeka! Malaysia is free from foreign rule, and while others are just beginning to set up businesses, the well-established Bharat Group is a key contributor to the economy of the Cameron Highlands region.

### NEW HORIZONS

**1963** The Bharat Group acquires the Shalimar Tea Estate, along with its own factory for processing tea leaves. This expands the operations significantly. The company builds its formidable reputation for supplying quality tea to various wholesalers and other brands.

### RESPECT AND HONOUR

**1965** Brijkishore is given the title 'Justice of the Peace' and later is recognized by the Malaysian Sultanate with the honorary title of 'Dato'. Dato Brijkishore will remain the Chairman of the Group, while his sons work hard to grow the business.

### SHUPARSHAD AND SONS

**1972** Brijkishore and Nandkishore develop the business rapidly. Eventually Brijkishore consolidates the various businesses and acquires Nandkishore's shares. Thus from the original "Shuparshad and Bros." the company becomes known as "Shuparshad and Sons", within the Bharat Group.



### RETAIL REVOLUTION

**1994** The Bharat Group goes nationwide in the retail space with the Cameron Valley brand.

### SERVING A REFRESHING CUPPA

**2002** Moving from the plantation to the table, the Bharat Group launches the first Cameron Valley Tea House, near Tanah Rata. The second and third tea house are consecutively opened over the next few years.

### A LEGEND PASSES

**2006** Dato Seri Brijkishore passes away, and his sons Dato Kesav and Dato Vinod continue to run the business together.

### GENERATION NEXT

**2010** The 4th generation continue the family tradition by joining the business and expanding its scale. Cameron Valley Tea Houses are launched in Kuala Lumpur.

# TERROIR

## *Mystical Cameron Highlands*

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A slight nip in the air at night.

Plentiful sunshine days with temperatures not exceeding 30 degrees centigrade.

About 2000mm of rainfall every year.

Tea is an evergreen plant of the Camellia genus and with the right combination of heat and moisture, the plant yields thick, fresh leaves and delicate flowers. The Cameron Highlands with it's cool nights, plentiful sunshine days with temperatures not exceeding 30 C and about 2000 mm of rainfall every year, is one of the best tea growing regions in Malaysia. Some say it's the special alluvial soil of the valley, others regard the fresh air and sunshine, and still others talk about the altitude, 1500 metres above sea level.

Whatever it may be, it is clear that there is something special that gives Bharat's tea its delicacy, sweet aroma and subtle flavours. The tea has been cultivated with special techniques by the family and its loyal band of workers.

This hill settlement was founded by the British in 1885 and over the years, has grown and developed into a bustling community, in some part due to the efforts and initiatives of the Bharat Group and the Agarwal family.



Bharat Tea Factory, Cameron Highlands

# CREATING THE PERFECT BLEND

## *The distinct flavour of single estate tea*

### Tea, the Bharat way

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Each variety of Bharat tea has its own unique taste, smell, and look. The Bharat Group has carefully blended Assamese tea plant variants with Chinese tea strains, thus creating its own varieties and flavours of tea that combines an exquisite taste with a superior, sweet aroma. The perfect blend of sunshine and rain blesses the estate, and this feature, mingled with the soil nutrients and the morning dew, make Bharat's tea completely unlike any other. The manufacturing processes that all tea leaves at the Bharat Group undergo is essentially unchanged from the first teas produced 80 years ago. While many tea factories have modernized their equipment, Bharat has been careful to retain the traditional arts while upgrading only those parts of the process that do not affect the taste of the tea.

### STEP 1: PLUCKING

Tea leaves are hand-plucked to ensure the highest quality. The expert pluckers, some of them with over 40 years of experience at Bharat, move carefully yet rapidly, selecting a terminal bud and two young leaves from *Camellia sinensis* bushes. An example of poetic motion, hand-picking is executed with a snap of the forearm, arm, or even the shoulders. An experienced plucker can pull over 20-30 kgs of choice leaves every day. Only the best leaves are selected and defective leaves do not make it into the manufacturing process. Select Bharat teas are hand-plucked. Others are harvested by shears or by machines, which increases yield to 200kgs per person per day.

### STEP 2: WITHERING/ WILTING

Tea leaves begin to wilt soon after plucking. This marks the beginning of enzymatic oxidation. Withering facilitates removal of excess water and limited oxidation. Withering frees caffeine within the tea leaves and changes its taste. The aim of the withering process is to reduce moisture levels from around 40% to 60%, while simultaneously not over-withering, as that would lead to higher wastage, and off-grades being produced. The Bharat Group withers its tea leaves the traditional way: leaves are spread out on troughs with perforated beds in a cool, temperature controlled room for 12-18hours, and are monitored with great care.

### STEP 3: ROLLING

In this process, the tea leaves are bruised or torn in order to break the cells in the leaves which then cause oxidation to occur. The juices that are left over from withering pour out of the leaves adding to their aroma.

### STEP 4: OXIDATION / FERMENTATION

For teas that require oxidation, the leaves are left on their own in a climate controlled room where they turn progressively darker. This is accompanied by agitation in some cases. In this process the chlorophyll in the leaves is enzymatically broken down, and its tannins are released or transformed. This process is sometimes referred to as "fermentation", and while many companies use machines to aid fermentation, the Bharat Group ferments its products the traditional way, by placing the tea on trays in a temperature-controlled room. This further differentiates our flavours and aromas, making them one-of-a-kind. Bharat Group oxidizes different varieties of tea for different durations and has perfected this fine art to provide subtle nuances to each of its products.

### STEP 5: DRYING / FIRING

Drying is done to "finish" the tea for sale. This process arrests the fermentation at levels that are suitable, in order to prevent excess fermentation. This can be done in a myriad of ways including sunning and air-drying. The dryer is fired up to temperatures of 220-240 degrees Fahrenheit, ensuring all bacteria and germs are killed. The moisture levels at the end of this process would be 2-3%. Flavoured teas are manufactured in this stage by storing them with their flavorant fruits and flavours.

### STEP 6: SORTING / GRADING

Unsorted made tea is put through a vibrating electrolysis machine which allows the tea of different sizes to fall through its matching mesh sizes, thus dictating its grade. The unsorted/left over tea is rejected as stalks and fibres.



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# DELIGHTING

*over 10 million customers*

## The retail foray

Traditionally, the Bharat Group has not been in the retail environment. The Cameron Valley brand, launched in 1994, was an experiment. The immense equity that the brand enjoys with consumers has encouraged the Bharat Group to make a significant foray into the retail arena.



## Cameron Valley Tea Houses

The first Cameron Valley Tea House opened its doors and brewed a soothing cup of tea in 2002. After the runaway success of the first outlet, two more were opened in the Highlands.

15 years on, and after delighting over 10 million customers, the Bharat Group is keen to leverage its learnings and the significant brand equity the teahouses have created by launching Cameron Valley Tea Houses across Malaysia.

The first teahouse in Kuala Lumpur was opened in October 2011 at Jalan Telawi, Bangsar. Spacious, modern and invigorating, it features a signature menu and showcases the entire range of teas from the Bharat Tea estates. The kitchen serves up a scintillating array of appetizers, mains and desserts to accompany your favourite tea, while you catch up with friends and family or simply relax and recharge your batteries.



# GIVING BACK

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## **Sustainable agriculture**

The Bharat Group takes its responsibilities as a corporate citizen extremely seriously. Sustainable agricultural practices are firmly established, and there is a continuous effort to reduce the consumption of precious natural resources. Soil nutrients are retained through efficient irrigation practices. The use of pesticides and fertilizers is minimized, and the factory itself strives to reduce its carbon footprint.

## **The Dato Sri Brijkishore Agarwal Education Foundation**

Set up in 2008 by Dato Kesav and Dato Vinod Agarwal, to honour the memory of their father, the foundation offers non-binding scholarships to students in the Cameron Highlands. The awards are based on merit and need. The aim of the foundation is to ensure that financial means do not deprive a deserving student of tertiary education.

Scholars are selected on the basis of their academic performance, family background, extra-curricular activities and other factors. Till date over 50 scholars have been awarded, who have gone on to graduate in subject areas of their own interest.

## **Community Development**

The Bharat Group has constructed much-needed community centres and funded religious events for the people of the Cameron Highlands. These fulfill a dire need for a place and occasion where the local community can gather to educate, interact and celebrate.



# DIVERSIFIED

*global business*

**Beyond tea**

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The Bharat Group is a multi-business conglomerate. Some of the other businesses range from oil palm cultivation to logistics, and have been operating for several decades.

**Oil palm cultivation**

The Bharat Group has been cultivating over 500 acres of oil palm since the 1970s. The estates are in Selama, Bidor and Kuala Lipis.

**Real Estate**

As part of its diversification strategy, the Bharat Group owns property, both commercial as well as residential, across Malaysia.

**Logistics**

Beginning its operations in the 1930s, with the transport of essential commodities for the British rulers, the Bharat Group has a proud heritage in logistics. A fleet of 10-ton trucks, suitable for long-haulage transport commodities between the Cameron Highlands and major world ports like Singapore and Port Klang.



# BY THE NUMBERS

1600acres  
70,000kgs of green tea leaves plucked per week  
24countries  
3143cups of tea served per day  
252employees  
29200days of continuous operation

# ADDRESSES

*and contacts*

**Group of Companies**

Shuparshad & Sons Holdings Sdn Bhd (99830-X)  
Bharat Tea Plantation Sdn Bhd (64411-T)  
Brijkishore & Sons Sdn Bhd (138545-X)  
Shuparshad & Sons Transport Sdn Bhd (823304-H)  
Cameron Bharat Plantation Sdn Bhd (285109-W)  
Dato Sri Brijkishore Agarwal Foundation (823928-A)  
KK Argawal Sdn Bhd (726438-P)  
Vinod Agarwal Sdn Bhd (726439-P)  
Bharat Tea Trading Sdn Bhd (823672-P)  
Agarwal Oil Palm Plantations Sdn Bhd (37493-U)  
Bharat Chalets Sdn Bhd (898056-K)  
Shuparshad & Sond Trading Sdn Bhd (823304-H)  
Bharat Oil Palm Plantation Sdn Bhd (823305-T)  
Shalimar Teahouse Sdn Bhd (936705-T)  
Bharat Tea House Sdn Bhd (803253-K)  
Bharat Tea Gallery Sdn Bhd (939575-K)

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**Plant/Factory:**

Batu 34, Jalan Besar, Cameron Highlands, Pahang Darul  
Makmur, Malaysia

**Retail F&B Outlets:**

Cameron Valley Tea House, No 28 Jalan Telawi 5,  
Bangsar Baru, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Cameron Valley Tea House 1, Batu 34, Jalan Besar,  
Cameron Highlands, Pahang Darul Makmur, Malaysia

Cameron Valley Tea House 2, Batu 34, Jalan Besar,  
Cameron Highlands, Pahang Darul Makmur, Malaysia

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