

Govt lines up millet-centric activities as international year of millets kicks in New Delhi

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Millets are important by virtue of its mammoth potential to generate livelihoods, increase farmers' income and ensure food and nutritional security all over the world. (Photo: IE)

The government on Sunday announced it has lined up a series of millet-centric promotional activities across the country as the International Year of Millets (IYM) kicks in, while noting that millets are also an integral part of the G-20 meetings.

The central ministries, state governments and Indian embassies have been allocated a focussed month in 2023 to carry out various activities for the promotion of IYM and increase awareness about benefits of millets, the nodal agriculture ministry said in a statement.

January is the focussed month for the Union Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs as well as state governments of Chhattisgarh, Mizoram and Rajasthan for conducting activities, it said.

The ministry also urged international organizations, academia, hotel industry, media, Indian Diaspora, start-up communities, civil society, and all others in the millets value-chain to come forward and join hands to revive the forgotten glory of 'Miracle Millets' through the grand celebration of IYM.

Millets are also an integral part of the G-20 meetings and delegates will be given a true millet experience through tasting, meeting farmers and interactive sessions with start-ups and FPOs, it added.

Till January 15, the Sports and Youth Affairs Ministry has planned 15 activities which include engaging sports persons, nutritionists and fitness experts through video messages, conducting webinars on millets with leading nutritionists, dieticians and elite athletes, promotion amplification through Fit India App, etc.

The Food Processing Industries ministry too will be organizing millet fair-cum-exhibitions in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, while food safety regulator FSSAI will organize 'Eat Right Melas' in Punjab, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Chhattisgarh, Mizoram and Rajasthan will carry out specific activities for sensitization and promotion of IYM. The states will be conducting millet-centric activities including mahotsava/ melas and food festivals, training of farmers, awareness campaigns, workshops/ seminars, placement of hoardings and distribution of promotional material at various key locations in the state, etc.

Other states that are organizing similar activities in the month of January include Maharashtra, Uttarakhand and Punjab, the statement said.

In the current month, the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) and Agriculture Ministry will be participating in a trade show in Belgium wherein a multi-stakeholder delegation will showcase the diversity of Indian millets.

Moreover, Embassies of India across more than 140 countries will be conducting side events on IYM involving the Indian Diaspora through exhibition, seminars, talks, panel discussions, etc.

In January, the Indian embassy in Azerbaijan and Belarus will be conducting activities such as B2B meetings with the participation of local chambers, food bloggers, importers of food items and local restaurants etc.

Cooked millets dish exhibitions/ contests will be organized with the help of Indian diaspora and millet dishes will be served as part of the Republic Day celebrations.

The High Commission of India in Abuja and Consulate General of India in Lagos, as part of promotion of IYM, have planned a Millets Food Festival and a Millets Food preparation competition in January.

The Millets Food Festival would be held at the High Commission premises and provide stalls for preparation with invitees including both Nigerian dignitaries and Indian community.

The agriculture ministry has taken a proactive multi-stakeholder engagement approach to achieve the aim of IYM 2023 and taking Indian millets globally.

On December 6, 2022, UN body Food and Agriculture Organization had organized an opening ceremony for the IYM at Rome, Italy. The government hosted a special 'Millet Luncheon' for Members of Parliament in the Parliament complex.

Recognising the enormous potential of Millets, which also aligns with several UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), India has prioritized millets. In April 2018, millets were rebranded as “Nutri Cereals”, followed by the year 2018 being declared as the National Year of Millets.

The UN’s declaration as IYM 2023 has been instrumental for India to be at the forefront in celebrating the millet year. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also shared his vision to make IYM 2023 a “people’s movement” alongside positioning India as the “Global hub of millets”.

The global millets market is projected to register a CAGR of 4.5 per cent between 2021-2026.

Millets’ were among the first crops to be domesticated in India with several evidence of its consumption during the Indus valley civilization. Being grown in more than 130 countries at present, millets are considered traditional food for more than half a billion people across Asia and Africa.

In India, millets are primarily a kharif crop, requiring less water and agricultural inputs than other similar staples. Millets are important by virtue of its mammoth potential to generate livelihoods, increase farmers’ income and ensure food and nutritional security all over the world.

Source: <https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/govt-lines-up-millet-centric-activities-as-international-year-of-millets-kicks-in-new-delhi/2933307/>