

Safal to open shop in City today



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Dillip Rath, NDDB Chairman

New facility in offing

Bhubaneswar: Mother Dairy Fruit and Vegetable Limited (MDFVL) has planned to set up a central distribution facility on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar. The state-of-the-art facility will be used for grading and distribution of vegetables and fruits. NDDB Chairman Dillip Rath said the State Government has been approached for a piece of land for the proposed facility. But its establishment depends on the success of the fruit and vegetable outlets to be opened in the city, he said. "We will study the business of the two outlets for six months and make a plan for the expansion. Initially, our focus will be on Bhubaneswar and Cuttack," he said.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

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MOTHER Dairy Fruit and Vegetable Limited (MDFVL), a subsidiary of National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), is all set to enter the fresh vegetable and fruit market in the State.

In collaboration with oil marketing companies, the fruit and vegetable arm of Mother Dairy - Safal - is going to open two outlets in Bhubaneswar on pilot basis in a bid to provide fresh, quality and safe fruits and vegetables to consumers at affordable prices.

Talking to mediapersons here on Sunday, NDDB Chairman Dillip Rath said the initiative will provide market linkage to the fruit and vegetable growers of the State besides giving them a fair and remunerative prices for their produce.

"We are planning to establish a viable, sustainable and replicable business model of sourcing and retailing fresh fruits and vegetables here for benefit of both consumers and farmers. If the pilot becomes successful, such outlets will be opened in other cities in a phased manner," Rath said.

Safal is a leading fresh fruit and vegetable player in Delhi NCR with around 380 outlets. It has also its presence in Bengaluru with around 20 outlets. As part of its Eastern India focus, it has recently commissioned a first-of-its-kind integrated fruit and vegetable processing plant in Ranchi.

Even as Odisha is the fourth largest State in terms of vegetable production and has a huge potential in the fruit and vegetable sector, 85 per cent vegetables are procured from neighbouring States.

"This is because of the missing linkage between the market and farmers. While farmers are forced to sell their produce in a throwaway price in the absence of cold storage, consumers are made to purchase toxic fruits and vegetables. The initiative of Safal will provide a market linkage to local growers giving them remunerative price and make the State self-reliant in this sector," Rath said.

Safal is already procuring leading varieties of mangoes such as Amrapali, Dasherri, Malika and Langra from Phulbani, Dhenkanal and Mayurbhanj districts through farmers' associations. It has so far procured 75 tonne of mangoes which is three times of the last year's procurement.

The NDDB Chairman said they will promote organisations of farmers and producers to streamline quality procurement. The areas to be covered under the agronomic interventions would include vegetable growing clusters in the districts.

Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan will inaugurate the first two Safal outlets at BPCL petrol pumps - Rajdhani Service Station (Unit-II) and in front of Governor's house on Monday.