

## **The Hitavada**

### **Patanjali Food Park has potential to generate over 50,000 jobs: CM**

- The 230-acre Patanjali Food Park to start production within five months
- More than 5,000 tonnes of fruits to be processed
- Additional 275 acres of land available for food park in non-SEZ area

IT WAS a historic moment for the farmers of Vidarbha as Devendra Fadnavis, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, and Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Road Transport, Highways and Shipping, laid the foundation stone of Patanjali Food and Herbal Park in MIHAN-SEZ area on Saturday.

Fadnavis was confident that the project would change the fortunes of farmers in Vidarbha region. “This project will provide a boost to agriculture-based processing industry in the region, and this will benefit not only Vidarbha but also entire Maharashtra,” said Fadnavis after unveiling the foundation stone of Patanjali Food and Herbal Park.

Yoga guru Swami Ramdev presided over the programme while Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Road Transport, Highways, and Shipping; and Hansraj Ahir, Union Minister of State for Home; Chandrashekhar Bawankule, Guardian Minister of Nagpur district, were the guests on the occasion.

The mega food park would procure raw materials directly from the farmers eliminating the role of agents and middlemen. This would help farmers get better remuneration for their produce, said Chief Minister. The investors who acquire land for food park would have to start the industry within three years. Besides, they should also provide training and employment opportunities to children and widow of farmers who committed suicide.

Clearing the air over allotment of land to Patanjali, Chief Minister said that norms of Central Vigilance Commission were followed strictly. The land was allotted at Rs 25 lakh per acre in a transparent manner. For the said land, Maharashtra Airport Development Company Limited (MADC) had floated three open tenders in which Patanjali was the sole bidder and hence it was eventually given the land. More than 50,000 persons in Vidarbha will get direct or indirect employment with the said project, he added.

Stating that Maharashtra Government was making efforts to prevent farmers' suicides. He advocated forming clusters of farmers, introduction of newer technologies, and micro-irrigation. To encourage industrialisation in Vidarbha and Marathwada, the Government has decided to supply power at Rs 4.40/- per unit, for which the Government will give Rs 750 crore to Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (MSEDCL). Also, the Government is providing 12-hour power supply for agriculture for three months that are crucial for crops.

Fadnavis lauded Patanjali for setting up food park in Special Economic Zone (SEZ) area in Multimodal International Hub and Airport at Nagpur (MIHAN). "I am sure that the products from this food park will go to other countries as well," he said. Further, he informed the gathering that an additional 275 acres of land was available for food park in non-SEZ area. The investor willing to procure raw material worth Rs 100 crore from Vidarbha region, provide training to 2,000 farmers, and make investment within a year are welcome.

A committee of four Secretaries will look after land allotment procedure so that it is transparent, Fadnavis said. "The food park will take oranges and agricultural produce from this region to the international market. I am happy and thankful to Patanjali Ayurved for not insisting on any kind of concessions during this investment. This is beginning of a revolution of taking our Indian culture, science, and knowledge to the world," Fadnavis concluded.

Earlier, Acharya Balkrishna made introductory remarks. He said that the food and herbal park, that would be set up on 230 acres of land, would provide direct employment to 10,000 persons and indirect employment to more than 50,000 persons. The project is expected to be set up in six months. There will be a processing unit and training centre for farmers. The processing unit will process 5,000 tonnes of raw materials per day, he added.

The guests released a booklet of Patanjali Food and Herbal Park and Corn Silage animal food, during the programme. A cheque of Rs 10 crore in favour of MADC was handed over to Shyam Goyal, Joint Secretary and Dr Vishwas Patil, Vice-Chairman and Managing Director of MADC, for setting up an export unit in SEZ.

Krupal Tumane, Dr Vikas Mahatme, and Ajay Sancheti, all Rajya Sabha Members; Praveen Datke, Mayor; Sudhakar Deshmukh, Krishna Khopde, Vikas Kumbhare, Sudhakar Kohale, Ravi Rana, and Sameer Meghe all MLAs; Prof Anil Sole, MLC; Sachin Kurve, District Collector; Shравan Hardikar, Municipal Commissioner; Yashpal Arya, Dr Jaydeep Arya, and thousands of

farmers were present on the occasion. The venue of the programme was jam-packed. Swami Ramdev also performed some Yogasanas and the people joined him.

### **Golden moment for Vidarbha: Gadkari**

Nitin Gadkari said that Patanjali's Food and Herbal Park would be the biggest food park in the world. The food park would help farmers of Vidarbha. Patanjali would be able to export its products, he said, while terming the occasion as golden moment for the region. Gadkari also said that Sudhir Mungantiwar, State Forest Minister, and Hansraj Ahir, Union Minister of State for Home, had assured help in procurement of medicinal herbs from Chandrapur and Gadchiroli forests.

He informed the gathering how there was huge demand for land in Gadchiroli district for agro-processing industries. Agreements are being signed with Information Technology companies for setting up their units in MIHAN area. A factory to produce urea from coal will soon come up in Bhadravati in Chandrapur district. once the factory comes up, it will result in farmers getting urea at half the rate, Gadkari said

### **'Food park to revolutionise agriculture scene in Vidarbha'**

YOGA guru Swami Ramdev said that the food and herbal park would bring about a revolution and change the agriculture scenario in Vidarbha and Maharashtra. Patanjali's entire range of products would be manufactured at the unit.

The food and herbal park would procure medicinal plants, herbs, oranges, jowar, bajra, etc. in huge quantities directly from farmers for its raw materials. The food and herbal park will also help farmers by giving loans. The barren land, on which nothing grew, could be used to plant aloe vera in a big way.

He emphasised that people should use domestically manufactured ayurved products in a big way to stay healthy. The mega food park had been envisaged to help in creation of infrastructure for food processing and supply chain system.

The primary objective of setting up the park was to provide a source of income and revenue generation for farmers by creating demand for their produce. Patanjali was giving the multi-nationals a stiff competition in the market. "The multinational companies are fooling the people and looting the country," he said.