

FOOD PRO

Monthly E-Newsletter of All India Food Processors' Association

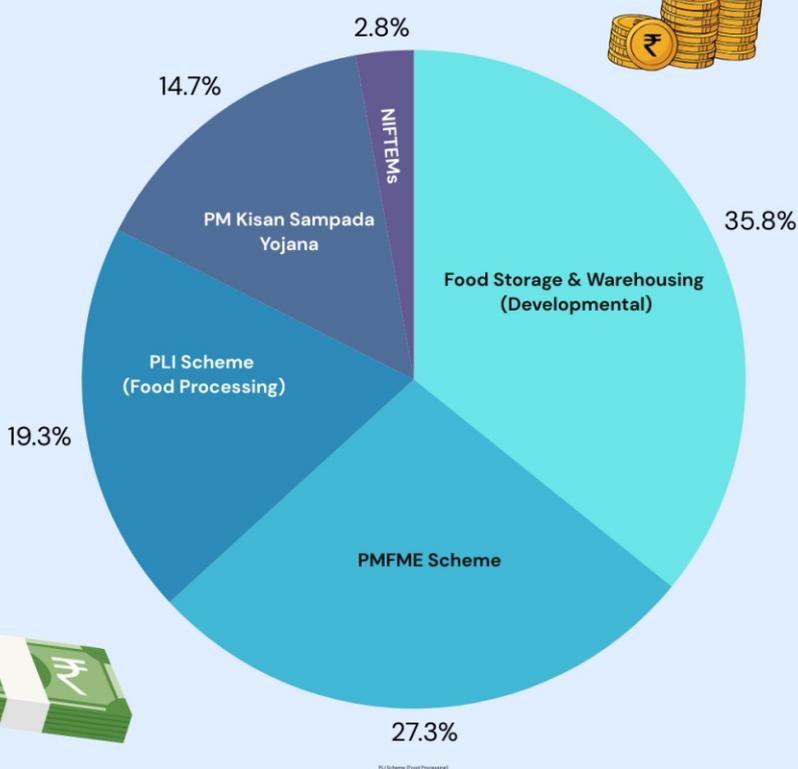
Union Budget 2026-27

Net allocation for MoFPI in 2026-27: ₹4,064.16 crore



Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) Key Interventions

- PMKSY, PLISFPI & PMFME drive pan-India, demand-led expansion of food processing (fruits, vegetables & millets).
- 382 F&V projects supported nationwide: 273 completed, 109 ongoing.
- Millets (Shree Anna) promoted via ODOF in 21 districts and Millet Mahotsavs in 30 districts; ₹197.5 crore loans to 3,866 entrepreneurs.
- ₹800-crore PLI for millet-based products: ₹793.27 crore approved for 29 units (8 large, 21 MSMEs).



Key Focus Areas of Budget Allocation for the Food Processing Industry

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All India Food Processors' Association (AIFPA)



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AIFPA Participation in the Two-Day 'Chintan Shivir' organized by Ministry of Food Processing Industries on 19–20 January 2026, Udaipur, Rajasthan



The Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) organised a Two-Day 'Chintan Shivir' on 19–20 January 2026 at Udaipur, Rajasthan, aimed at developing action-oriented strategies for the long-term growth and global competitiveness of India's food processing sector. The Shivir brought together around 80 senior stakeholders, including industry associations, senior bureaucrats, State Government representatives, exporters, regulators, academicians, and institutional leaders. The Shivir was conceptualized as a focused policy-thinking platform, encouraging candid discussions, practical solutions, and recommendations suitable for direct policy integration and on-ground implementation. The All India Food

Processors' Association (AIFPA) actively participated and contributed to shaping several key outcomes of the deliberations.

On behalf of AIFPA, **Sh. P.L. Kaul**, Former President, AIFPA, **Dr. Prabodh Halde**, Chairman, Western Zone, AIFPA and **Sh. K.K. Joshi**, Chairman, Technical Committee, AIFPA participated in the Shivir.



The Hon'ble Minister for Food Processing Industries, **Sh. Chirag Paswan** and **Sh. Devesh Deval**, IAS, Joint Secretary, MoFPI. Their presence reflected strong leadership commitment and urgency towards transforming India's food processing ecosystem. In his inaugural address, the Hon'ble Minister described food processing as a “sunrise industry” capable of enhancing farmer incomes, generating employment, and strengthening India's export footprint. He articulated the ambition of doubling the size of the food processing industry in the coming years and affirmed the Ministry's alignment with this vision. He also addressed the challenge of misinformation and negative narratives surrounding processed foods, urging collaboration on science-based

communication. The Shivir benefited from active participation by senior MoFPI officials including the Secretary and Joint Secretaries, along with academic leadership from NIFTEM institutions. Clear guidance was provided that discussions must be solution-driven with actionable outcomes suitable for policy and implementation.

Participants were divided into five thematic working groups covering food processing expansion, exports, nutrition and innovation, food safety and regulatory systems, and agricultural backward linkages. AIFPA played a pivotal role in discussions on regulatory reform, food safety, export facilitation, and Ease of Doing Business.



AIFPA presented ten major actionable recommendations addressing regulatory streamlining, export bottlenecks, global brand building, countering misinformation, grievance redressal mechanisms, sustainability frameworks, food irradiation awareness, and promotion of residue-safe agricultural inputs. Seven State Governments presented initiatives related to agro-processing clusters, Mega Food Parks, cold chains, FPO linkages, export-oriented value chains, and local food innovation ecosystems, demonstrating strong Centre–State alignment.

The Ministry acknowledged the depth and practicality of stakeholder contributions and assured that several recommendations would be integrated into upcoming policy frameworks. A follow-up mechanism would track implementation progress.

AIFPA's inputs were specifically recognised for their clarity and long-term relevance.

AIFPA delegation expresses sincere gratitude to Dr. Raghav Jadli, President, AIFPA, for guidance and leadership; Dr. Jindal for strategic direction; and the MoFPI leadership and coordination team for organising a meaningful and impactful Chintan Shivir.

AIFPA Commends 8th Global Dairy Innovation Congress MENA, Dubai: Strengthening Cross-Border Collaboration and Sustainable Growth



The All India Food Processors' Association (AIFPA) is pleased to recognize the successful **Global Dairy Innovation Congress (GDIC)** held in **Dubai on 29th and 30th January 2026**, where **Dr. Raghav Jadli**, President of AIFPA, participated as both Moderator and Keynote Speaker.

Addressing a diverse gathering of international delegates from the food industry, **Dr. Raghav Jadli**, President of AIFPA, opened his address by highlighting the prestigious legacy of the “**All India Food Processors' Association (AIFPA)**” as an apex, pan-India body established in 1943—one of the oldest food processors' associations in the country. With its rich experience spanning over eight decades, AIFPA represents members from both the Indian and international food industry, including multinationals, corporates, and predominantly MSMEs, which contribute 85% to India's food production. The association is dedicated to promoting the scientific development of the agro-food and food processing sector and actively engages with government policymakers to address industry challenges and support growth across all food industry segments.



Dr. Jadli's contributions at the Congress received significant appreciation from food industry experts and stakeholders, who acknowledged the tangible value his insights brought to the dairy and processed foods sectors, consumers, and the broader innovation landscape. His participation reinforced AIFPA's commitment to advancing compliant, scalable innovation and strengthening international partnerships within the food processing industry.

Key Highlights from Dr. Jadli's Address

India's Dairy Leadership and Cultural Context:

Dr. Jadli emphasized India's position as the world's largest milk producer and stressed the importance of incorporating cultural values into dairy policy, product labeling, and development strategies. He advocated for the modernization of traditional dairy products through healthier reformulations while maintaining authentic sensory characteristics and consumer trust—a balance essential for preserving heritage while meeting contemporary nutritional expectations.



Indian Fruit Pulp Industry's Global Contribution:

Beyond India's milk production leadership, Dr. Jadli drew attention to the substantial yet often underappreciated contributions of India's fruit pulp industry to the global dairy sector. Indian producers supply high-quality fruit puree, fruit puree concentrate, and IQF (Individually Quick Frozen) fruits that add value to dairy products worldwide, including flavored milk, yogurts, and fruit-based dairy offerings.

Supporting Farmers Through Sustainable Practices:

A particularly noteworthy aspect highlighted during the Congress was the fruit pulp industry's vital support to dairy farmers. Processing plants across India provide fruit and vegetable fodder—largely free of charge—to farmers, directly contributing to high-quality milk production. This practice strengthens the entire dairy value chain while advancing environmental sustainability and resource efficiency.

Jadli Foods, operating facilities in both North and South India, serves as a prime example of this commitment, demonstrating how integrated operations can benefit multiple stakeholders simultaneously.

Advocating for Innovation and Fair Trade:

Dr. Jadli underscored the essential role of cross-border collaboration and industry associations in driving compliant, scalable innovation. He called for smart and fair trade policies that safeguard product authenticity and maintain consumer confidence in an increasingly interconnected global marketplace.

Looking Ahead:

AIFPA remains committed to fostering ongoing dialogue with GDIC and various international association partners. Through continued cross-border collaboration, the organization aims to build a resilient, innovative, and consumer-centric food processing industry that benefits all stakeholders—from farmers to consumers—while upholding the highest standards of quality, sustainability, and authenticity.

The insights and connections established at the Global Dairy Innovation Congress represent an important step forward in strengthening India's role in the global food processing landscape and advancing shared goals of innovation, sustainability, and fair trade.



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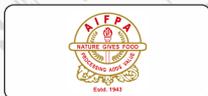


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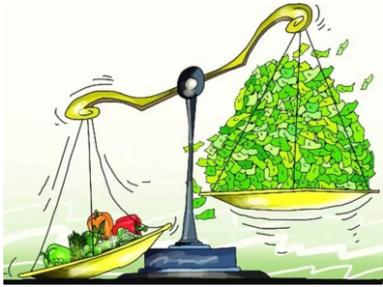
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For stall booking, kindly contact:

Mr. Rameshwar Maurya, Manager-Projects, All India Food Processors' Association

Tel.: 011-41550860 (D) ; Mobile: +91-8744088116 ; E-mail: maurya@aifpa.net

Ministry to expand scope of food fortification; forms panel



The Union Ministry of Health is planning to expand the scope of food fortification and is actively deliberating on the same. It is learnt that the ministry through FSSAI has held several meetings and even constituted a committee for evaluating the course of action.

Currently, FSSAI allows fortification of two food products - edible oil and milk with Vitamin D and even made regulations regarding F+ logo to support the fortification drive, along with establishment of Food Fortification Resource Centre, which helps in technical assistance, guidance, and capacity building support for the adoption and scaling of food fortification efforts.

In spite of these initiatives, there are some gaps in food fortification, such as only edible oil and milk are permitted to be fortified with Vitamin D, fortification is voluntary in nature and only plant-based sources of Vitamin D are allowed. These limit the impact of food fortification in addressing Vitamin D deficiency, said Dr. Arpita Mukherjee, Professor, ICRIER.

Dr. Mukherjee suggests that permitting a wider range of products to be fortified with Vitamin D from both plant-based and animal-based sources, mandating fortification in select healthy products, strengthening research and innovation in fortification, defining high fat sugar and salt (HFSS) foods, raising awareness & building consumer trust, improving effective monitoring to enhance fortification impact, integrating fortified food into dietary guidelines, and providing capacity-building and training to MSMEs on fortification, are some of the key actions which FSSAI may undertake to support food fortification projects.

Meanwhile, a UNICEF (2023) report has identified suitable food vehicles for fortification which include wheat flour, maize flour, salt, oil and milk wherein apart from vitamin D other vitamins and minerals fortification can be done. However, there is a confusion among the consumers about fortified foods.

Dr. Mukherjee says that there are two FSSAI Regulations, one on fortification [Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Food) Regulation, 2018] and other on claims [Food Safety and Standards (Advertising and Claims) Regulation 2018].

Claim regulation allows enrichment, and many food products are now enriched with Vitamin D. Enrichment and fortification are two different processes, but there is a need for fortification of healthy foods and foods in our daily diet. A recent policy brief by ICRIER-ANVKA Foundation provided a roadmap for fortification targeted to reduce Vitamin D deficiency. It also suggested that FSSAI can revive its industry partnership initiatives like “Eat Right India” to create awareness and promote food fortification. MSME may be supported through capacity building and incentive to fortify, said Dr. Mukherjee.

FDA targets added sugar in processed foods as part of 'Make America Healthy Again' plan

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is putting sugar reduction at the forefront of its 2026 food policy agenda as part of the broader Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) initiative led by health and human services secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. The strategy seeks to push the food industry toward lowering added sugars in products, a move officials say could help address chronic health issues tied to high sugar intake.



According to Food Dive, the FDA's plan includes developing a strategy to encourage manufacturers to reduce added sugar levels in processed foods and beverages throughout the year. This may involve establishing guidelines for when products can be labeled 'low added sugar', and examining ways to inform consumers about sugar alternatives that do not spike blood glucose. The effort is part of the agency's human foods program policy agenda for 2026.

The sugar-focused policy aligns with new federal dietary guidelines and MAHA's broader push to shift American diets toward healthier patterns by discouraging high sugar consumption. Kennedy has openly criticized added sugars- including high-fructose corn syrup- linking them to obesity, diabetes and other chronic diseases, and describing them as harmful to public health.

While industry stakeholders are expected to play a role in voluntary reformulations, the FDA's approach stops short of mandating strict sugar limits. Instead, it emphasizes voluntary change, consumer education and clearer ingredient labeling to help shoppers make healthier choices. This is similar to past administration efforts on synthetic food dyes, where voluntary phase-outs prompted reformulations by major brands.

The sugar reduction strategy is part of a wider set of 2026 policy goals that include defining ultra-processed foods, expanding voluntary “healthy” food labels and reassessing ingredient approval processes. Advocates argue these measures could help curb diet-related diseases, while critics caution about potential industry pushback and the balance between regulation and consumer choice.

FAO for harmonised approach for regulatory framework for EIs



The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has produced a report aiming at helping policy makers in evaluating possible agrifood system based food safety risks.

The report titled 'environmental inhibitors in agrifood systems-considerations for food safety risk assessment', notes that the potential transfer of 'environmental inhibitors' residues into the food chain requires careful evaluation and food safety risk assessment to minimise possible negative implications for human health and trade disruptions.

FAO, in a statement, said, currently, the regulatory frameworks for EIs are fragmented, with data requirements and evaluation schemes differing across regions, highlighting the need for a harmonised approach.

The statement added that FAO supports this approach through the scientific advice provided by international expert committees (the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives and the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues) that serves as the foundation for the standards of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

The report observed that Nitrogen, which is a crucial nutrient for plant growth and often the most limiting factor in crop productivity, when applied as a fertiliser, much of it is lost to the environment through volatilisation, leaching, runoff and other processes.

As per FAO, the minimum data requirements to establish food safety begin with assessing the presence or absence of residues detected in foods.

India–EU trade deal unsettles Kashmir apple growers

Proposed tariff concessions under the India–European Union trade agreement have triggered concerns among apple growers in Jammu and Kashmir, who fear a surge in cheaper imports could hurt domestic prices and farm incomes.



Grower associations said that reduced import duties on apples from the EU, particularly from major producers such as Poland and Italy, could intensify competition in the Indian market during the peak domestic marketing season. Kashmir accounts for the bulk of India's apple production, and any pressure on prices could have significant implications for livelihoods across the Valley.

Farmers argue that Indian apples already face challenges such as high logistics costs, rising input prices and post-harvest losses due to limited cold-chain infrastructure. An influx of imported apples at lower tariffs, they said, could further erode their competitiveness, especially in urban markets where imported varieties often command shelf space due to uniform quality and better packaging.

Industry sources, however, said the contours of the trade deal are still under discussion and that sensitive agricultural products are likely to receive protection through phased tariff reductions or safeguard clauses. Officials pointed out that India has traditionally been cautious in opening up its farm sector in trade negotiations.

Experts suggested that instead of outright protectionism, the focus should be on improving productivity, quality grading, storage and branding of Indian apples to compete effectively with imports. Strengthening market linkages, expanding controlled-atmosphere storage and promoting exports to new destinations could help mitigate the impact of higher imports.

The government, meanwhile, has stepped up efforts to modernise the horticulture sector in Jammu and Kashmir through subsidies for pack houses, cold storage facilities and improved planting material. Whether these measures will be sufficient to offset fears arising from the trade talks remains a key concern for growers.

As negotiations with the EU progress, apple growers in Kashmir are urging policymakers to safeguard their interests while balancing broader trade and strategic considerations.

New Launches

Hocco launches seasonal ice cream flavours



Winter may be synonymous with warm clothes and hot beverages, but Hocco ice creams is redefining seasonal indulgence with the launch of its winter special range of ice cream flavours. Staying true to its belief that ice cream has no season, the homegrown brand has introduced a curated selection inspired by winter ingredients and comforting flavour profiles.

Designed to blend nostalgia, comfort and a sense of playful experimentation, Hocco's winter offerings deliver a refreshing contrast to the cooler weather. The limited seasonal range showcases how ice cream can evolve with the rhythm of the seasons by incorporating ingredients and flavours typically associated with winter, while still delivering the joy of a chilled dessert.

Leading the winter lineup is Chikoo, a creamy and comforting flavour crafted from the natural sweetness of the popular seasonal fruit, evoking familiar, homely memories. Adding a bold twist is Guava Chilli, which combines the fruity freshness of guava with a subtle chilli kick, offering a surprising and lingering flavour experience. Completing the trio is Choco Orange Peel, a rich and indulgent variant that pairs deep chocolate notes with the citrusy brightness of orange peel, making it especially appealing for winter cravings.

The winter special range is available in both single-serve cups and party packs, catering to individual indulgence as well as shared moments with family and friends at home.

With this seasonal launch, Hocco invites consumers to embrace the unexpected joy of ice cream during winter, reinforcing its philosophy that great ice cream needs no weather approval. Hocco Ice Creams are available across leading e-commerce platforms as well as general trade outlets.

WellBe Foods expands healthy snacking portfolio with millet-based snack launch

WellBe Foods, a leading direct-to-consumer (D2C) brand from the Nimida Group known for its clean-label snack offerings, has announced the launch of a new category of millet-based snacks, reinforcing its commitment to making traditional Indian foods healthier and more accessible for today's consumers. WellBe's millet-based portfolio launches with four traditional snack favorites: Millet Nippatu, Millet Kodbale, Millet Chakli, and Millet Tengolu along with Millet Chivda. Each product blends familiar flavors and textures with the goodness of millets, staying true to the brand's philosophy of delivering snacks that are Deliciously Good, Honestly Made, with No Nasties Ever.



The new category reimagines much-loved Indian snacks by replacing refined flour and conventional bases with a blend of rice flour and millets, making them more approachable for mainstream consumption. Central to this range is kodo millet, an ancient, naturally gluten-free grain known for its nutritional value and digestibility.

Mr. Gaurav Manchanda, Founder & Director, WellBe Foods said, Millets are deeply rooted in India's food culture, but their everyday adoption has been limited by the way they are traditionally cooked. At WellBe, our intent is to make millets accessible by bringing them into formats people already love. By giving familiar snacks a millet twist, we are helping consumers embrace healthier grains without compromising on taste, texture or tradition.

Millets have long been recognized as nutrient-dense, climate-resilient grains in India, but one of the biggest barriers to their wider adoption has been the complexity of cooking them in everyday kitchens. WellBe's latest innovation addresses this challenge by bringing millets into a familiar and convenient snacking format allowing consumers to enjoy their benefits without changing eating habits.

On this launch, WellBe Foods plans to further expand its millet-led innovation pipeline. The brand is actively exploring millet-based beverages, including millet milk, as the next step in making millets a more integral part of daily diets.

The new millet-based snack range will be available across WellBe's existing distribution channels online via its website and major e-commerce platforms, as well as through general trade and modern retail outlets. The brand also aims to expand availability across Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities, in line with its mission to make clean, healthier snacking more inclusive.

Cornitos introduces Korean spice to Indian shelves with new nacho flavor



Cornitos, India's leading brand in nachos and healthy snacking, has launched its latest flavor innovation- Korean Chilli Nachos. Inspired by the bold and vibrant flavors of Korean cuisine, this new addition celebrates Cornitos' commitment to bringing global taste experiences to Indian consumers.

As Indian consumers increasingly explore global taste experiences, Cornitos continues to lead the snacking evolution with products that bring world flavors to Indian shelves.

The new Korean Chilli Nachos combine bold spice, authentic Korean notes, and the signature Cornitos crunch, delivering a fiery, flavorful, and irresistibly crunchy experience in every bite.

At Cornitos, our customers continue to inspire every innovation we create. Over the years from Nachos to Nuts, Crusties to Tortillas, Tacos to Dips, we have built a diverse snacking portfolio

that's loved across India.

Taking inspiration from the global K-trend that India has enthusiastically embraced, we're now adding a bold twist to our signature Nacho Crisps with the launch of Korean Chilli Nachos.

Fiery, flavorful, and irresistibly crunchy, it delivers a world-class snacking experience in every bite. This is our spiciest and most exciting creation yet crafted to delight the adventurous Indian snacker, said Mr. Vikram Agarwal, Managing Director, Greendot Health Foods.

With this launch, Cornitos once again reinforces its commitment to innovation, health, and global flavor leadership in the snacking category. The Korean Chilli Nachos will be available in major retail outlets, modern trade stores, and leading e-commerce platforms across India.

DAAWAT Enters Premium Organic Segment with QR-Enabled Traceability

LT Foods Ltd, a billion-dollar global FMCG player in the consumer food space, has launched a new premium organic range under its flagship DAAWAT brand, titled **DAAWAT I'm Organic**, strengthening its focus on transparency, authenticity and responsible sourcing.

Aimed at increasingly conscious consumers, the new range places traceability at the centre of the product experience, allowing buyers to access detailed information about the origin and journey of their food with a simple QR code scan.



The DAAWAT I'm Organic portfolio debuts with two variants-**Organic Basmati Rice** and **Organic Sona Masoori Rice** catering to two of India's most widely consumed rice segments. The range is anchored in the brand's promise of true, tested, traceable, and goes beyond conventional organic labelling by offering end-to-end visibility from farm to fork.

For the first time, DAAWAT has introduced an immersive QR-based traceability feature, with the code placed prominently on the front of the pack. Scanning the code provides consumers access to geo-tagged cultivation locations, land testing data, batch-wise certifications, processing methods, storage conditions and final packaging details, offering a high level of transparency in the organic food category.

The rice is vacuum-packed to preserve freshness, purity and shelf life, ensuring product quality remains intact until consumption. The range is backed by a comprehensive set of Indian and global organic certifications, including USDA Organic, India Organic, OneCert, Jaivik Bharat and ADITI, reinforcing its credibility and trust quotient.

Mr. Ritesh Arora, CEO-India Business & Far East, LT Foods Ltd, said, organic food at LT Foods is about integrity across the entire value chain rather than being driven by trends. He noted that organic products currently contribute around 11 per cent of the company's global revenue, and that DAAWAT is playing a key role in expanding the category in India through premium rice offerings with verifiable claims and transparent sourcing.

Cadbury Bournville expands dark chocolate portfolio with two new orange variants in India



Mondelez India, the makers of some of India's most loved snacking brands, announced the expansion of its Cadbury Bournville portfolio with the launch of two new variants: Bournville 50% Dark Chocolate with Orange and Bournville 70% Dark Chocolate with Orange.

This strategic portfolio expansion reflects India's growing taste for premium dark chocolate, offering consumers an indulgent experience that balances cocoa intensity with the zestful notes of orange.

Combining the timeless pairing of citrus and cocoa, the new Cadbury Bournville Orange variants have been crafted to deliver a refined multi-sensory experience. The deep, rich character of premium cocoa harmonizes with bright orange undertones, creating a sophisticated treat for both emerging and seasoned dark chocolate enthusiasts. This launch underscores Mondelez India's continued commitment to leading the premium snacking segment through meaningful innovation and consumer-centric offerings.

Mr. Nitin Saini, Vice President-Marketing, Mondelez India, said, since introducing dark chocolate to India in 2009, Bournville has shaped the category's journey, witnessing remarkable growth in recent years. As dark chocolate continues to premiumize in India, we're expanding the Bournville range with distinct cocoa intensities and flavor pairings that elevate indulgence. The new orange variants bring together our signature richness with the vibrancy of citrus, offering Indian consumers more sophisticated ways to experience dark chocolate.

The New Range:

- **Bournville 50% Dark Chocolate with Orange:** An inviting introduction to dark chocolate, this variant blend smooth 50% cocoa with a refreshing hint of orange, perfect for those exploring the category.
- **Bournville 70% Dark Chocolate with Orange:** The first of its kind in Bournville's 70% cocoa range, this variant offers an intense dark chocolate experience balanced by subtle orange notes, crafted for a more evolved palate.

The new Cadbury Bournville Orange variants are now available across key retail outlets and e-commerce platforms in India.

Ghodawat Consumer launches STAR Soya Chunks

Ghodawat Consumer Limited (GCL), the FMCG arm of Sanjay Ghodawat Group, has announced the launch of soya chunks under its STAR brand, marking a strategic expansion into the fastgrowing plant-based protein segment. The launch comes at a time when Indian consumers from gym-goers to vegetarian families, are actively seeking affordable ways to boost their daily protein intake.

The soya chunks launch diversifies STAR's staples portfolio with a high-protein, affordable, and health-focused product, complementing the company forays into vacuum-fried 100% fruits and veggies and non-alcoholic beverages.

This launch aligns with shifting lifestyle trends, supporting sustainability and affordability by offering nutritious alternatives to meat for both rural and urban consumers. It builds a foundation for future expansion into protein-rich and functional foods, reinforcing STAR's leadership in health and wellness.

Ms. Salloni Ghodawat, Chief Executive Officer, Ghodawat Consumer, said, we are seeing a fundamental shift in how Indian families think about nutrition. The demand for protein is no longer niche, it cuts across millennials tracking macronutrients, professionals seeking quick nutrition, value-conscious families, and consumers in tier-2 and tier-3 towns where awareness of plant-based protein is rising rapidly.

Soya chunks offer a compelling solution-they are affordable, rich in protein, and extremely versatile. With STAR Soya Chunks, we are addressing a clear consumer need while staying true to our promise of quality and accessibility.

A key differentiator of STAR Soya Chunks is their clean-label formulation. The product contains zero preservatives, no additives, and no artificial flavouring, addressing increasing consumer demand for transparency and minimally processed foods. Made from defatted soy flour, a nutrient-dense by-product of soybean oil extraction, the chunks offer high protein content with a complete amino acid profile.

Their porous structure allows them to absorb spices and marinades effectively, delivering a fibrous, meat-like texture once rehydrated-appealing to flexitarians and consumers transitioning toward plant-based diets.



HP to strengthen food testing infrastructure with new labs & major funding



The Himachal Pradesh government has announced a significant push to strengthen food testing infrastructure in the state, with Rs 25 crore earmarked for setting up a new food testing laboratory in Kangra district and an additional Rs 8.50 crore allocated to upgrade the existing Composite Testing Laboratory at Kandaghat in Solan district. The move is part of a broader initiative to improve nutrition monitoring and food safety ahead of the state's planned first-ever Nutrition Policy, aimed at ensuring better access to nutritious and safe food for all sections of society.

Chairing a high-level meeting of the Health Department, Chief Minister, Sh. Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu emphasized the importance of bolstering basic infrastructure for food and nutrition testing before finalising the state's comprehensive nutrition strategy. The new Kangra facility will serve as a dedicated food testing laboratory, while the strengthened Kandaghat lab is expected to be equipped with advanced analytical capabilities to support more precise and reliable assessments of food quality parameters.

The state cabinet has also approved plans to establish additional regional food testing laboratories in other key districts such as Mandi, Shimla and Baddi, which will broaden the geographical coverage of food safety monitoring across Himachal Pradesh. Officials have been directed to ensure adequate staffing and operational readiness of these facilities to ensure their effective functioning.

These steps are linked with existing nutrition and food security programmes such as the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Mid-Day Meal Scheme and Public Distribution System (PDS), with food sample testing playing a crucial role in nutritional profiling, calorific analysis and monitoring fortification standards. Experts note that enhanced testing capacity will help in identifying nutrient deficiencies, pesticide residues and other quality issues, strengthening food safety and public health outcomes.

By prioritising food testing infrastructure and rolling out regional labs, Himachal Pradesh aims to build a robust ecosystem for nutritional surveillance, safeguard consumer interests and support policy implementation that promotes healthier and safer food for all.

Milma & NDDDB team up to open NABL-accredited food testing hub in Kochi

In a major boost to food safety infrastructure in Kerala, the Kerala Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd (Milma) and the National Dairy Development Board (NDDDB) have jointly launched a new NABL-accredited food testing laboratory at Kochi's Ernakulam Regional Co-operative Milk Producers' Union (ERCMPU) campus in Edappally. The facility was inaugurated recently in the presence of Union Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying George Kurian, along with state dignitaries and industry representatives.

Set up under the NDDDB's Centre for Analysis and Learning in Livestock and Food (NDDDB CALF) Limited, the Kochi laboratory has received accreditation from the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL), New Delhi a testament to its compliance with stringent national quality standards.

Initially, the facility will focus on comprehensive quality and safety testing of milk and dairy products produced in Kerala and neighbouring regions, helping to reinforce consumer confidence in these essential commodities. According to officials, this local testing capacity will significantly reduce turnaround times compared with sending samples to distant labs, benefiting producers and regulators alike.

Milma and NDDDB officials have also outlined plans for phased expansion of the lab's testing capabilities, which are expected to soon cover a wider range of food and agricultural items including spices, fruits and vegetables, bakery products, ready-to-eat foods, fish, and allied products. This broader scope will further strengthen food safety monitoring across diverse sectors.

Equipped with modern instrumentation and advanced analytical tools, the new NABL-accredited laboratory will also support state government departments and food safety authorities, providing scientific insights to mitigate food safety risks more effectively. Experts say this initiative aligns with broader national efforts to improve food quality assurance, enhance compliance with regulatory norms, and protect public health.

Industry observers note that local access to accredited testing services could help smaller food producers meet quality expectations and expand market access, particularly in export-oriented segments where certification and traceability are critical.

After Nestle, Danone and Lactalis recall infant formula products



After Nestle, the French dairy giant Danone has issued a note recalling its infant milk formula after contamination scare. This came after reports surfaced about contamination of an ingredient used in production of infant formulas.

Reports from across various countries have confirmed the issue of contamination and subsequent recall. It is being reported that the Singapore Food Agency has ordered a precautionary recall of a batch of Danone's Thai origin Dumex Dulac 1 and Nestle's Swiss origin Nan Ha1 SupremePro after detecting cereulide.

Another French company Lactalis has also reportedly recalled its infant formula from 18 countries due to the presence of cereulide in an ingredient sourced from a supplier.

Cereulide is a substance of bacterial origin that may cause diarrhoea and vomiting. The contamination scare with respect to the ingredient used in infant formula production has affected operations of many companies across Europe.

As per reports, Nestle has recalled its infant formula from over 60 countries due to toxin traced to ARA oil. Nestle was the first company in early 2026 which initiated a recall of its infant formula worldwide. And with Danone & Lactalis, three major companies have now recalled their various batches.



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AIFPA brings out a Monthly E-Newsletter 'Food Pro' to provide information about current industry happenings, Govt. policy & schemes, events, new technology/product developments, regulatory matters, exports, global news, expositions, company news etc. in the food processing sector. The Newsletter is widely circulated free of cost to all related segments throughout the country, as well as to Foreign Embassies, Indian Missions Abroad, International Chambers and Institutions. **Your advertisement in the Newsletter will give you very high wide-angle visibility. All advertisements are in color as per details below.**

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