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Mega Oil Palm Plantation drive

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Why is in news? Mega Oil Palm Plantation drive organized in 49 districts of 11 states

Under the **National Mission on Edible Oils – Oil Palm**, the State Governments along with Oil Palm processing companies initiated a 'Mega Oil Palm Plantation Drive' that commenced on 25th July 2023 to further **promote and increase oil palm cultivation**, making the country and its farmers 'Atma-Nirbhar' in edible oils production.

This will further assist in achieving the **target of bringing an additional area of 6.5 lakh ha. under oil palm production by 2025-26**.

Major oil palm growing states where the plantation drive was organized are Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Goa, Karnataka, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Tripura.

Through this drive, the states and the companies were able to reach out to more than 7000 farmers in 77 villages of 49 districts in 11 states, covering approximately 3500 ha. of the area and planting more than 5.00 lakh planting material.

As part of the mega plantation drive, the companies also organized unique and intensive large-scale technical training seminars on oil palm cultivation for farmers along with the department staff.

The aim of the seminars conducted was to make the farmers and the staff more aware of the management packages which will help to ensure the plants' health, thereby enhancing productivity and creating sustainable income sources.

Under the scheme, farmers are also provided various incentives, including quality planting material, financial assistance for the maintenance of the crop and intercropping. Additionally, the farmers are also provided an assured market with guaranteed prices for their produce.

Palm Oil:

Palm oil is an **edible vegetable oil derived from the mesocarp** (reddish pulp) of the fruit of the oil palms.

Along with coconut oil, palm oil is one of the **few highly saturated vegetable fats** and is semisolid at room temperature.

It is resistant to oxidation and so can give products a **longer shelf-life**; it's stable at high temperatures

Hence, the oil is used in food manufacturing, in beauty products, and as biofuel.

Its **use in the commercial food industry** in other parts of the world is widespread because of its lower cost.

Indonesia is the **largest producer of palm oil, followed by Malaysia** - both countries **account for 84% of the world's palm production**. The largest producers of palm oil are Thailand, Colombia and Nigeria.

Globally, palm oil supplies 35% of the world's vegetable oil demand on just 10% of the land.

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The **largest consumer** of palm oil are **India** (9.4 million tonnes) and **Indonesia** (6 million tonnes) – countries in which palm oil is traditionally used for cooking.

The largest importer of palm oil is India (19 per cent), followed by the European Union (15 per cent, 7.3 million tonnes) and China (14 per cent) (Index Mundi, 2020).

In India, **oil palm is being cultivated in 13 states**. Potential states are Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Bihar.

Andhra Pradesh (83.5 percent) along **with Telangana** accounts for about 97 percent of India's 278,000 tonnes of crude palm oil production.