

# WORLD NEWS

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## INDIA

### India set for bountiful litchi harvest

Expectations are high for a bumper Indian litchi crop this year, but higher than normal temperatures may have an effect on orchards for the last weeks of harvest. According to National Research Centre for Litchi (NRCL) director Dr Vishal Nath, recent temperatures have been around 107°F (41.66°C), meaning farmers will need to closely monitor

water management systems to ensure crops do not spoil at the last juncture of the season. In 2011, the last time the country enjoyed a plentiful harvest, litchis were exported to Europe and the Middle East. In contrast, the 2012/13 season was less successful due to a spate of bad weather and a high level of pests, which affected fruit quality

and its suitability for the export market.

"Usually the domestic market for litchis is extremely good because the people really enjoy this fruit in the summer time and the farmers get some good returns in the domestic market which is a good scenario for them," Nath said.

The NRCL has set up a programme designed to educate the country's litchi producers on the latest technologies and methods to ensure high yields of good quality fruit. Two of the main techniques that are critical at this point are a bagging system that covers trees with netting preventing them from being sun scorched. The second is making sure fruits are harvested at the proper maturity and during the early part of the day to improve shelf life and quality. <sup>ST</sup>

SOURCE: [http://www.freshfruitportal.com/2014/05/21/india-set-for-bountiful-litchi-harvest/?country=south africa](http://www.freshfruitportal.com/2014/05/21/india-set-for-bountiful-litchi-harvest/?country=south%20africa); published 21 May 2014; shortened



### Litchi scare makes prices tumble 40%

Rumours of a litchi virus, which is being associated with the death of 13 children in West Bengal, have hit sales in Mumbai, making prices drop by nearly 40%. This is the second fruit to witness a price fall in the city after the recent ban by the EU on Alphonso import from India. On Thursday, the retail price of litchi had dropped to Rs 100 a kg from Rs 160, and the wholesale price from Rs 110 to Rs 60 (1 RS= \$0.017 USD).

"Even after such a fall in prices, there is not much of a demand. Litchis are absolutely healthy to eat. We are eating them everyday," said traders at the APMC. APMC traders said there

was no local demand from retailers, who were reacting to sudden consumer indifference. Seeking to allay people's fears, the Fruit & Vegetable Merchants' Association's Hareesh Vasandani, who's also a wholesaler at the APMC, said the litchi rumours probably originated after children ate rotten fruits that had fallen off trees.

The litchi season is May 15-July 15. India and China account for over 90% of the world's litchi produce. "Farmers may have to bear the brunt of the current situation," Vasandani said. "For many, litchis are the only source of income in the current season. Their livelihoods will be affected."

Source: <http://www.freshplaza.com/article/121929/India-Litchi-scare-makes-prices-tumble-40-percent>; published 17 June 2014; shortened

Scientists have officially stated that the recent deaths of several Indian children are not connected with eating litchis, according to Indian local press. Over the last few days various India media outlets have carried a series of news articles concerning the deaths of young children in regions of West Bengal.

There had been suggestions that the deaths were linked to litchis. However, The Times of India reported comments made by the director of a national



## THAILAND

### Lychee fairs planned in several provinces to absorb production surplus

Mr Yukol Limlaemthong, acting Deputy Prime Minister and Agriculture and Cooperatives Minister, has laid down plans to deal with the surplus of lychee as about 60 000 tons of the produce is expected to flood the market. The minister said that this year Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Phayao and Nan provinces, the main lychee production areas, are likely to produce 59 000 tons of lychees, an increase of 28.13% year-on-year. Mr Yukol said that the nation's lychee season falls from now to June 10th, adding that, with such a short period and such a massive supply, a careful distribution plan is needed. The acting Deputy Prime Minister said the Marketing Organisation for Farmers, the Department of Agricultural Extension and the

subcommittee on prevention of northern fruit problems are jointly organising road shows to promote northern lychees in Udon Thani and Khon Kaen in the Northeast, and Samut Prakan, Ayutthaya and Bangkok in the central region.

Meanwhile, the Department of Agricultural Extension also planned to readjust the lychee production strategy in order to make sure that next year's output would accurately respond to the demand in the market. It is also coordinating with related units in distributing the fruit to various markets in the country. **ST**

Source: <http://www.freshplaza.com/article/121151/Lychee-fairs-planned-in-several-provinces-to-absorb-production-surplus>; published 22 May 2014)

research center for litchis who has denied any link between the fruit and Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES). "The DM (District Magistrate) said scientists of National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) have unanimously ruled out that AES has been caused by litchi virus," the story reported. "AES seems to be a seasonal disease and it is a coincidence that both AES and litchi harvesting occur almost at the same time. But no scientist has so far established that the disease is caused by litchi, he stressed."

Meanwhile, fears surrounding the fruit are believed to be the cause for a slump in sales. In another report

yesterday, International Business Times India said that "fears of virus and pest in the food has perturbed the people and forced them to choose other fruits to appease their palate, leading to a loss in the litchi market". It went on to explain how several municipalities under the Darjeeling district government had banned litchi sales as a precautionary measure. At the time of writing, the total death toll from the AES outbreak stood at 81. **ST**

Source: <http://www.freshfruitportal.com/2014/06/18/india-child-deaths-not-connected-to-litchis-says-ncdc/?country=south-Africa>; published 18 June 2014; shortened

## TAIWAN

### First container of Taichung lychees sent to Singapore

The year's first container of lychees destined for Singapore left Taiwan Tuesday, 10 June, the Taichung city government said that day. Taichung plans to export 200 metric tons of locally grown lychees to Singapore this year, twice as much as in 2013 and three times the amount exported to the city state in 2012, said Taichung Deputy Mayor Shyu Jong-shyoung at a promotion event Tuesday. He noted that the exported lychees have been processed under "cold-chain" technology, which is a special treatment that can extend the fruit's preservation period to 21 days. Taiwan's lychee season runs from June to mid-July, according to the Taichung city government's Agriculture Bureau. Shyu expressed gratitude to the Agricultural Research Institute under the Council of Agriculture for its efforts in developing the preservation technology, which he said can enable "foreign countries to now enjoy fresh Taichung lychees." **ST**

Source: <http://www.freshplaza.com/article/121872/First-container-of-Taichung-lychees,-pears-sent-to-Singapore>; published 12 June 2014; shortened



Photo: Fsfuji.com