

SC nod to be sought to study medicinal value of arecanut

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VITLA (DAKSHINA KANNADA): Union Minister for Law and Justice D.V. Sadananda Gowda said here on Saturday that the Union government will file an appeal before the Supreme Court to allow it to constitute a three-member committee to decide about the medicinal properties in arecanut.

Addressing a gathering at the inauguration of a krishi mela organised by the Central Plantation Crops Research Institute (CPCRI) at its regional station here, Mr. Gowda said that the Union government would also file a "supplementary affidavit" before the Supreme Court in a case (Ankur Gutka vs. Indian Asthma Care Society and others) relating to arecanut and gutka.

The previous United Progressive Alliance-led government had already filed an affidavit before the court in this case to present its stand.

Allaying the fears over banning arecanut, he referred to



Union Minister for Law and Justice D.V. Sadananda Gowda at the krishi mela organised by the CPCRI at Vitla on Saturday.

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the plans of filing the "supplementary affidavit" and said that the case would come up for hearing on January 17. If required, the government would seek an adjournment or would file the affidavit be-

fore the date of hearing, he said. The former Chief Minister of Karnataka reiterated that consumption of arecanut per se was not injurious to health. There were no evidences for it. Some research

institutes have mentioned that consumption of arecanut in itself was not injurious to health. Its consumption might be dangerous only when it was blended with some other food products.

Stating that the government was taking steps to reduce the imports of arecanut by strengthening vigil at the borders, he said that it would not be possible to impose a total ban on the imports of arecanut. It could be done in phases. This was because under the SAARC agreement relaxations have been given to some commodities and exchange of some commodities allowed, he said.

He asked the CPCRI to submit to him the status report on the activities of the institute, including progress in research works, once in three months. Research trials and demonstrations should be conducted on the fields of farmers.

Mr. Gowda said that the CPCRI should not remain a mere institute of laboratory experiments but must bridge the gap between research and farmers. Farmers should be taken into confidence in field trials and research. "The CPCRI should become people-friendly within a year," the Minister said.