

Atul leaps forward in Agri Biotech business

Atul Ltd, a leading chemical company belonging to Lalbhai Group, has acquired majority stake in the UK based DPD Ltd, one of the largest producers of tissue cultured date palm plants in the world. This is one more step forward by Atul in its endeavour of 'Greening the deserts'.

Atul Rajasthan Date Palms Ltd (ARDP), a JV company of Atul and the Government of Rajasthan, is about to commission a state-of-the-art date palm tissue culture laboratory with overseas technology in Jodhpur, Rajasthan.



In close co-operation with the Government of Rajasthan, Atul has set up the largest demonstration farms of about 400 acres in Jaisalmer and Bikaner showcasing various elite varieties of tissue cultured date palms being scientifically cultivated successfully. Over 1000 acres of arid farm land in Rajasthan, Gujarat and other States in South India have been brought under tissue culture date palm cultivation.

Speaking on this occasion, Mr Bharathy Mohanan, Whole-time Director of Atul said, "The cultivation of tissue cultured date palms has the potential to transform the ecology and economy of the arid regions and it is heartening that we are able to take one more step towards realizing the idea of our Chairman, Mr Sunil Lalbhai, of making India self reliant in the produce of date fruit and greening the deserts. This will help increase returns per acre to the farmers of arid regions, generate rural employment, save forex for the country through import substitution and improve overall ecological balance."

Incidentally, India is the largest importer of date fruit in the world today with various applications in Food and Nutrition industry. Mr Ajit Singh Batra, General Manager of Atul said, "This acquisition, completed on the eve of Independence Day of India, will complement the initiative by ARDP and help in building a modern Date industry in India."

Atul was awarded the prestigious Khalifa International Date Palm Award 2009 in the 'Best Producer category' in the UAE and the prestigious Siemens Ecovatives Award 2010 in 'Earth Care' category in India for its efforts to promote tissue cultured date palms in India.