

KAU, Asia's largest cocoa germplasm repository, ready to release 6 more clones

The Hindu Bureau

Kochi

Kerala Agricultural University (KAU), the largest Asian repository of cocoa germplasm, is ready to release six more clones to farmers. The university's Cocoa Research Centre at Vellankkara has so far released 15 clones, which are being widely used by farmers across the State. The clones are of the forastero type, best suited to tropical conditions.

Cocoa is largely grown as intercrop in the State and the average yield from the clones is 1.5 kg to 2 kg of cocoa beans per tree per year.

year against the global average of 0.5 kg, according to B. Suma, director of the Cocoa Research Centre. She said the clones had genetic potential of up to 5-7%.

The research centre has a collection of 700 cocoa genotypes from 23 countries, accumulated over a period of over four decades for research and breeding purposes. Commercial cultivation of cocoa took off in India in the early 1970s and is now spread over Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. The research centre was commissioned in 1979, bolstered by a Cad-

bury-KAU Cooperative Cocoa Research Project launched in 1987.

The centre is now the biggest source of planting materials in Kerala with an estimated production of 35 lakh saplings a year. Dr. Suma said that about 90% of the planting materials was sourced from the KAU.

According to data from the Directorate of Cashewnut and Cocoa Development, India has a total area of 97,563 hectares under cocoa cultivation and annual production is 27,072 tonnes (2020-21). Of this, Kerala accounts for 17,366 hectares and 9,647 tonnes.

Kerala's cocoa productivity is 850 kg per hectare. Cocoa is grown across the State, but Idukki, Kottayam, and Malappuram districts have a fairly large share of the cultivation.

Cocoa has been in the news with the price of beans going up sharply since the beginning of 2024.

A farmer in Manimala, Kottayam, said the price of dry beans was around ₹900 a kg on Thursday. Cocoa price has held steady at the higher levels since early this year with reports of a steep fall in production in countries such as Ivory Coast and Ghana.

HSE teacher training to resume after six years

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Thiruvananthapuram

er education sector such as four-year undergraduate programmes and common entrance examinations.

The workshop, held at the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) here on Thursday, pointed out that as nations moved towards the goal of knowledge society, the need for classroom teaching to adopt interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary aspects and factor in the recent changes in the high-

models were coming up even in teaching.

It emphasised the role of teachers in ensuring that each student acquired 4Cs of 21st century skills, that is creativity, communication, collaboration, and critical thinking. They also had to impart design thinking, soft skills, leadership skills, Industry 4.0, and Education 4.0 to children.

The workshop underlined the need for teachers

to use the technology intelligently, especially owing to its increasing use in teaching, assessment, and development of learning materials.

The training should also cover classroom management through novel psychological approaches as some higher secondary students experienced excessive anxiety, depression, learning difficulties, and drug problems.

KOZHIKODE

FRIDAY, APR. 19

● RISE 06:13 SET 18:38

● RISE 15:17 SET 03:15

SATURDAY, APR. 20

● RISE 06:13 SET 18:39

● RISE 16:01 SET 03:51

SUNDAY, APR. 21

● RISE 06:12 SET 18:39

● RISE 16:44 SET 04:25

● RISE 16:44 SET 04:25