

the monday interview

**N BIREN SINGH**, chief minister of Manipur

ing runway length of 100 metres. The state government,

net coordination department.

Boeing 747 and Airbus A380.

report in this regard.

NATURALLY HEALTHY

# Patna man develops system to ripen, store fruits

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**PATNA:** Did you know that the fruit chaat you enjoy on the street for a healthy diet is actually harming your body gradually? The use of calcium carbide and acetylene in the ripening of fruits cause headache, dizziness, mental confusion and memory loss. Higher exposure can also cause a buildup of fluids in the lungs and lead to upset stomach.

Concerned over the serious issue, a man from Patna, Rajesh Kumar who is the director of Alpha Agro, an agriculture-based company in Navi Mumbai, has developed a system that ripens the fruits and vegetables naturally without the use of harmful carbide and acetylene.

"The ripening machine is supported by Bureau of Indian Standard (BIS) and being used in various states where carbide and other such chemicals are banned, including Maharashtra, Delhi and Hyderabad. However, Bihar has yet to ban it and most of the farmers use carbide to ripen the fruits," said Kumar.

Rajesh Kumar has also



■ **Rajesh Kumar with bunches of litchis before placing them in the controlled atmosphere box.**

HT PHOTO

developed a control atmosphere (CA) box in which a fruit, especially litchi, can be stored for around 30 days. This can help in export of the fruit to other countries too.

"Recently, a successful trial was held for storage of litchi, at the Masina cold storage in Muktapur, Samastipur. In collaboration with France, we have introduced the technology of controlled atmosphere in modules, which was used to store litchi in regular cold storages. Litchi was plucked from trees and stored on June 3 and brought out on

June 26, after being kept fresh successfully for more than 22 days," he added.

The best part of this CA module technology is that the stored litchi fruit is not treated with any chemical or preservative. "It was as fresh as when it was plucked from trees and stored in the box inside a normal/regular cold storage where potatoes were stored," he said.

The CA box has a capacity of 200 kg in which litchi can be stored and also exported so that farmers can get better price for their produce.

**THE CONTROLLED ATMOSPHERE BOX HAS A CAPACITY OF 200 KG IN WHICH LITCHI CAN BE STORED AND ALSO EXPORTED SO THAT FARMERS CAN GET GOOD MARKET AND BETTER PRICE FOR THEIR PRODUCE**

Despite huge demand of litchi in other states like Delhi, Maharashtra and southern states, Bihar farmers cannot export the fruit due to its highly perishable nature.

"We have also worked successfully on various others fruits like mangoes, adding 28 days of storage life, post harvest, besides Kashmiri cherry with 35 days of storage life, pears with 120 days of storage life, apples with 180 days of storage life, strawberry from Mahabaleshwar adding 25 days of storage life, post harvest, grapes from Nashik and vegetables such as cabbage, beat root, broccoli, for three successful weeks in other states of the country as well.

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