

# *The Wave Andaman*

## Island Food Festival to Feature CIARI's Mango Ginger and Kokum Innovations

**Sri Vijaya Puram (Port Blair) April 16:** The ICAR–Central Island Agricultural Research Institute (CIARI) in Sri Vijaya Puram is set to showcase its food innovation products developed from endemic Andaman Kokum and native Mango Ginger at the Island Food Festival 2026, scheduled from April 17 to 19 at the ITF Ground.

The institute will present three value-added products derived from locally sourced agricultural produce, offering visitors an opportunity to experience island-based innovations rooted in regional biodiversity.

CIARI, which has long focused on promoting island agriculture while conserving native plant diversity, has developed and popularised the endemic species *Garcinia dhanikhariensis*. The species, found exclusively in the Andaman Islands, has been identified through research to contain bioactive compounds such as antioxidants, anthocyanins and hydroxycitric acid.

To establish its distinct identity, CIARI has branded the fruit as “Andaman Kokum” for wider national and international recognition. Due to the limited natural population of the species, the institute developed nursery protocols for its large-scale propagation. Planting materials are being distributed to farmers through its Horticultural Plants Propagation Unit.

Researchers, including senior scientists Dr. Pooja Bohra and Dr. Ajit Arun Waman, have developed value-added products from the fruit such as Andaman Kokum syrup, candy and dried rind. These products are designed for ready consumption while retaining nutritional benefits.

In another development, CIARI has worked on Mango Ginger (*Curcuma mangga*), a native rhizome known for its mango-like aroma. Scientific studies conducted by the institute have indicated the presence of curcumin and essential oils with medicinal relevance, although the crop has remained underutilised in the islands.

To enhance its commercial and culinary use, researchers developed a ready-to-use culinary paste after several years of experimentation. The product can be used in multiple dishes, including biryani, fried rice and curries, making it suitable for both household consumption and hospitality applications.