

# Arecanut

December 24, 2022

**In news**– Farmers have been urging Centre to control import of arecanuts and the Centre has said that import of arecanut is just 2 per cent of the total production in India.

## **About arecanuts-**

- The areca nut is the **fruit of the areca palm** (*Areca catechu*), which grows in **much of the tropical Pacific** (Melanesia and Micronesia), South Asia, Southeast Asia, and parts of east Africa.
- It is commonly referred to as **betel nut**, not to be confused with betel (*Piper betle*) leaves that are often used to wrap it (a preparation known as betel nut chewing).
- **Various compounds present in the nut, including arecoline** (the primary psychoactive ingredient which is similar to nicotine), contribute to histologic changes in the oral mucosa.
- It is known to be a major risk factor for cancers (squamous cell carcinoma) of the mouth and esophagus.
- As with chewing tobacco, its use is discouraged by preventive efforts.
- Consumption by hundreds of millions of people worldwide – mainly of South Asian or Southeast Asian origins – has been described as a “neglected global public health emergency”.
- The areca nut is not a true nut, but rather the seed of a fruit categorized as a berry.
- The areca nut contains the tannins arecatannin and gallic acid; a fixed oil gum; a little terpineol; lignin; various saline substances; and three main alkaloids–arecoline, arecaidine, and guvacine–all of which have vasoconstricting properties.
- The betel leaf chewed along with the nut contains eugenol, another vasoconstrictor. Tobacco leaf is often

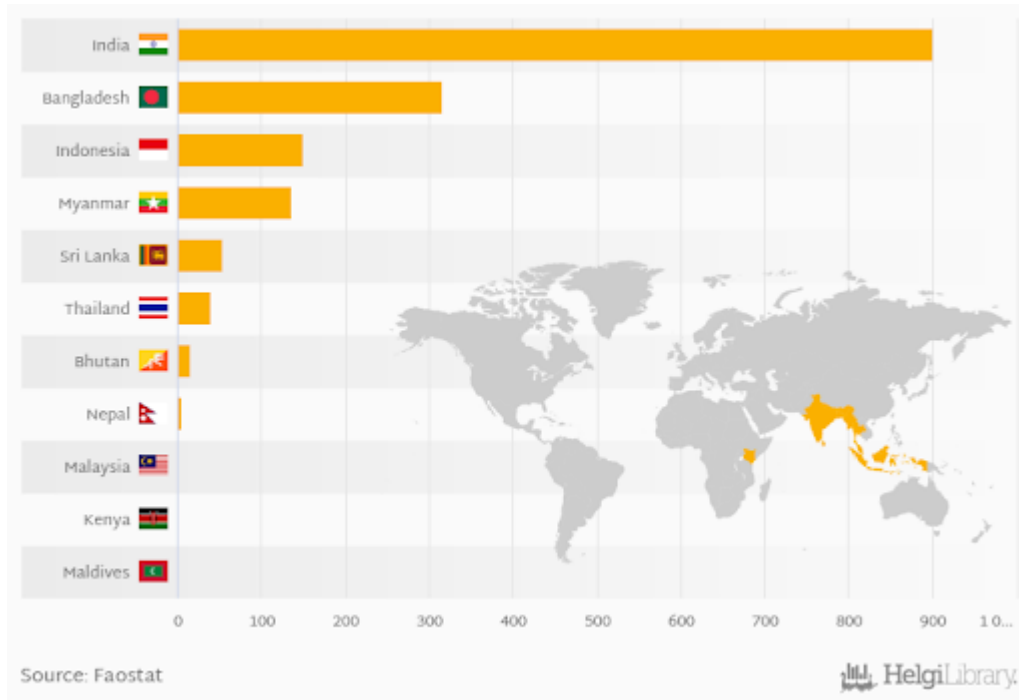
added to the mixture, thereby adding the effect of nicotine.

- The cultivation of arecanut is mostly confined to 28° north and south of the equator.
- It grows well within the temperature range of 14°C and 36°C and is adversely affected by temperatures below 10°C and above 40°C.

### Different terms for arecnuts-

The term areca originated from Dravidian languages, cognates of which are:

- Malayala: romanized: aṭaykka
- Kannada: adike
- Tamil: aḍaikkāy
- The terms dates back to the 16th century when Dutch and Portuguese sailors took the nut from India to Europe.
- It is also known as Elaus in Palau.



**Further**

**reading :**

**<https://journalsofindia.com/yellow-leaf-disease-of-arecanut/>**