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Push for Mod-Trad food

By Admin2 | Saturday, 21 March 2015 00:00 | font size | Print | Email

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Minister of Industry and Commerce of Sri Lanka Rishad Bathiudeen addresses World Consumer Rights Day Forum organized by the Institute of Policy Studies and collaborated by Consumer Affairs Authority under Minister Bathiudeen, and Kuala Lumpur based Consumer International, held on March 16 in Colombo

In an effort to overcome issues posed by rising fast food lifestyle to its consumers, Sri Lanka called its R&D players in food sector to focus on more and more Mod-Trad innovations and the Lankan customers consume almost 7000 tons of food items annually, as announced on March 16.

“Increased use of ‘Mod-Trad’ in fast food sector can help to close the nutrition gap in our busy lifestyles. Food security and cost have become important in protecting rights of Lankan consumers who consume around 7000 tons of food items per year. The government is expanding the Cost of Living basket calculation to all nine provinces from this year” said Minister of Industry and Commerce of Sri Lanka Rishad Bathiudeen on March 16 in Colombo.

Minister Bathiudeen was addressing the World Consumer Rights Day Forum organized by the Institute of Policy Studies and collaborated by Consumer Affairs Authority under Minister Bathiudeen, and Kuala Lumpur based Consumer International, held on March 16 in Colombo.

“A healthy diet is very much part of our food security which, in turn, is part of consumer rights. The Consumer Affairs Authority under my Ministry has been established as the government’s regulatory authority to protect the consumers and to promote healthy competition in the market. The Consumer Affairs Authority is envisioned to safeguard the rights of consumers,” said Minister Bathiudeen, and added: “Managing food security as well as cost of consumer goods have become important steps in protecting rights of Lankan consumers who consume around 7000 tons of food items per year. This includes all food categories such as cereals, milk, meats, sugar, fruits, and vegetables. 35% of this is

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cereals such as rice while 5% for fruits, 5% for sugar. Only 01% for eggs.

“This ‘availability of food items’ alone is not food security which is more than the mere availability. In that, high quality, healthy, affordable and freshness of foods too are aspects of food security. All our national efforts in food crop management and food security are only as good as our success in overcoming these issues. The concept of a healthy diet too is becoming a part of overall food security. What is important to note in the healthy food trend is that it is the youth who are keen on it. This is encouraging. But we believe that this should not be limited to youth only.

“Even low income families need to have strong food security up to micro security levels, similar to any high income family. As a result there is a lot more work to be done. This habit should be introduced from schools onwards. We all know of the importance of a healthy diet. However, there is no great impact in calling for healthy diets, if we cannot integrate it well to our lifestyle.

“Rapidly growing fast food culture is taking over the school population as well as working population, as a result of our busy lifestyles. This creates problems in our efforts on healthy diets. We believe that a way to overcome this would be to increase the use of combined modern and traditional foods called as “MOD-TRAD”.

“Increased use of ‘Mod-Trad’ in fast food sector can help to close the nutrition gap in our busy lifestyles. The McDonald’s ‘Mac-Rice’ and the ‘Samaposhā’ product are two good examples of the ‘Mod-Trad’ approach. Also I am pleased to note that even our processed food sector is expanding. In fact, when it comes to value addition, our food processing industry stands above even the country’s apparel sector. The processed food exports too have recovered from its 2013 decline with 14% increase. In 2014 our exports of food feed beverages and tobacco totalled \$317 million. It is here that increased research and development facilities for food sector becomes important for us to be a part of the global healthy foods market which is expected to be as high as thousand billion dollars by 2017.

“Today I call upon the universities the food industry as well as other research and development players to focus more on the ‘Mod-Trad’ trend in a significant way. Also our efforts on the healthy diet can become useless if food prices are high. Inflation and Cost of Living are related challenges that the government is trying to address. I am pleased to tell you that to get a good picture of our Cost of Living the government is expanding the Cost of Living basket calculation to all nine provinces from this year. The new calculations may also include items such as mobile phone bills, school van hires, and even three-wheeler costs.”

The 16 March Forum also packed speeches by Dr Saman Kelegama (Executive Director of IPS), Satya Narayana (Kuala Lumpur’s Consumer International), and Sarath Wijesinghe (Former Sri Lanka Ambassador to Israel and UAE) as well as many other presentations by health professionals from Health Ministry and the WHO.

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