



JANASANYOG, ASSAM
CHIEF MINISTER'S PUBLIC RELATIONS CELL, DISPUR

PRESS RELEASE

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CM Dr. Sarma inaugurates 7th Assam international Agri-Horti Show

Asks Agri department to hold *gaon sabhas* for farmers in villages

Govt is working to give a natural farming a boost in Assam: CM

Dispur, December 17: Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma asked the Agriculture Department to hold *gaon sabhas* in collaboration with Panchayat and Rural Development Department to interact with the farmers at the rural areas to generate awareness on them on the government schemes and policies for agriculture and its allied sectors.

Inaugurating the 7th Assam international Agri-Horti Show at Khanapara here today, Chief Minister Dr. Sarma said that the *gaon sabhas* to be held will be used as knowledge sharing platform with the progressive and prospective farmers. He said that the governments at the Centre and State have been taking several schemes for the promotion of agriculture and its allied sectors. Moreover, several innovations are also taking place in agri-horti sectors. However, sometimes many of these developments do not reach the farmers for whom they are formulated. The interaction programme to be held at the village level will generate awareness and minimise the gap between agricultural innovations and the farmers.

The Chief Minister also said that the three day show is an important intervention in realizing the state's potential in the agri-horti sector as this would go a long way in opening greater avenues for meaningful collaboration and for maximizing the export potential of Assam's agri-horti products. He said that Assam grows some of the unique agri-horticultural products. These are joha rice, black rice, red rice etc which have extraordinary medicinal properties. Stating about the ginger of Karbi Anglong and litchi of Tezpur, Dr. Sarma said that these agri-horticultural products have huge demands outside the state and country. He also said that Assam lemon which is known for its plentiful juice content and peculiar fragrance have excellent scope for exports and fetching remunerative prices to the farmers.

The Chief Minister said that over the last several years, Assam has witnessed reasonable quantities of agri-horti produces being exported to near and far places. Currently, the agricultural products are being exported to countries like European Union, United Kingdom, South Africa, Bangladesh, Bhutan, UAE etc. In the year 2020-21, 14,042.35 MT agri-horti produce were exported to various countries. During 2022-23, it has witnessed remarkable rise and in just four months from April to July, 8,041.28 MT agri-horti products have been exported. To top it all, the Chief Minister said that to promote export potential of the state, his government has notified an export and logistics policy in 2019. One of the focus sectors of this policy is agro and allied products, food processing, floriculture, organic farming, bamboo products, ornamental fishes and pisciculture and medicinal and aromatic products, Dr. Sarma added.

The Chief Minister also said that of late the State has a renewed focus on Natural Farming. The State would leverage natural advantage of low use of chemicals in farming. Under this programme, the Chief Minister said that it is proposed to cover an area of 20,000 hectare under



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natural farming in coming four years, covering 15 districts and 150 clusters. Already identification of clusters in five districts along with the progressive farmers to be developed as Master Trainers has been completed for the spread and growth of natural farming.

Speaking on the importance of millets, the Chief Minister said that the United Nations has declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets. In line with this, the State has launched Assam Millets Mission in the month of November for a period of seven years from 2022 to 2028. The activities have already been initiated. Being highly nutritious, the key objective of the Assam Millets Mission is to assimilate millets in Assamese population's diets particularly women and children. Among the women the focus would be on expecting and lactating women. Around 50,000 hectare area is expected to be brought under millets cultivation over the mission period.

The Chief Minister further said that as part of this show, a buyer seller interaction is being organized on 18th December, wherein agri-horti products of the state shall be showcased. He said that the interaction would offer the International delegates a platform where they can spell their requirements in terms of quality of agri-horti produce required from Assam. Dr. Sarma also thanked Agriculture Department and Assam Agriculture University for organising the show. The Chief Minister on the occasion also released a souvenir 'Fasal'.

Agriculture Minister Atul Bora also spoke on the occasion.

Additional Chief Secretary Asish Bhutani gave the welcome address in the programme which was also attended among others by Minister Handloom and Textile etc UG Brahma, Minister Public Health Engineering etc Jayanta Mallabaruah, Minister Power Nandita Garlosa, MP Queen Oja and Pabitra Margherita, MLA Taranga Gogoi, Ambassador of Myanmar Moe Kyao Aung, Head of Mission Bangladesh Rubul Amin, Head of Mission Ghana Ernest Nana Adjei, Deputy Head of Mission Saudi Arabia Yaser Mobark M. Alyami, Deputy Head of Mission Thailand Thirapath Mongkolnavin, Senior Agri Economist WB Bakzod Shamsiev and host of other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

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