

Look East Policy can boost the agri-horti sector: Tarun Gogoi



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Syed Miraz Ahmed 9 January 2014 Updated 9 Jan 10428 views

The Directorate of Agriculture, the Directorate of Horticulture and Food Processing, Assam and the Assam Agricultural University in association with the Indian Chamber of Commerce and the Assam Horticultural Society Wednesday organized the 1st Assam International Agri-Horticultural Show 2014 at the College of Veterinary Science Playground, Khanapara, Guwahati, Assam. The biggest ever Conference-cum-Exhibition organized in North East India the event scheduled till January 11, 2014 will showcase the prospects and potentials of the region particularly that of Assam with respect to the agriculture and horticulture sector.

The conference, which is the fourth in its row, has gone International this year with active support and participation of countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan, Taiwan, Nepal, Italy, China, Indonesia, South Africa, Israel, Canada, UK, Myanmar, Laos, United States of America, Netherlands and more than 70 Indian companies and corporations representing agri-machinery, seeds, fertilizers, financial institutions and various boards of the agriculture sector.

Sectors of specialization for international exhibitors include agriculture and horticulture products like seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and agrochemicals, food and beverage industry, food processing, nutritional management, animal feeds, fruits and vegetables, biotechnology, livestock and storage units. The event will also find the participation of international Chambers of Commerce, the Consulates, High Commissions and overseas Farming and Development Societies informed Mowsam Hazarika, Publicity Coordinator of the exhibition and SDAO(Information) Directorate of Horticulture and Food Processing, Assam.

Eminent dignitaries and personalities of the Government of India, Government of Assam and the Consulates attended the inaugural session of the 4-day conference. The personages included Tarun Gogoi, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Government of Assam; Vinod K Pipersenia, Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Assam; Charan Das Mahant, Hon'ble Minister of State for Agriculture & Food Processing Industries, Government of India; Kanna Lakshmi Narayana, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, Government of Andhra Pradesh; Dr Benjong Liba, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, Government of Nagaland; Nilamani Sen Deka, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, Horticulture & Food Processing & Parliamentary Affairs, Government of Assam; Mr Pankaj Agarwal, Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India; Anup Kumar Thakur, Secretary, Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India; Madhav Lal, Secretary, Ministry of MSME, Government of India; Ardhendu Dey, Hon'ble Minister of Irrigation, Government of Assam; Member Gogoi, Chairman, Assam Agricultural Marketing Board; Mr Jitesh Khosla, Chief Secretary, Government of Assam; H.E. Mr Saw Myint Oo, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, Sagaing Region of Myanmar; H.E. U Myint Than, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture and Livestock, Mandalay Region of Myanmar; H.E. Dr Khamphad Sourinphoumy, Hon'ble Vice Minister, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Government of LAO PDR; M K Saharia, Chairman, ICC NE Initiative and Dr. Rajeev Singh, Director General, Indian Chamber of Commerce.

Chief Guest Tarun Gogoi, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Government of Assam, appreciated the performance and activities of the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Horticulture of Government of Assam for their efforts in developing the sector in the recent years. Speaking on the need and importance of agricultural sector in the country and especially in the state of Assam, he said that development and prosperity of the sector helps in improving the economic condition of the residents and people of the state. He also mentioned about the prospects and opportunities of the state's sector; there is ample water and irrigation facility in the state, significant amount of land availability and good weather condition conducive for performing multi-cropping and increasing productivity of the crops. Gogoi said that opportunities are galore in the state with respect to the sector and he cordially invited the foreign investors and industrialists for investing in the state across agriculture and horticulture sector. While mentioning about the advantages of the region and that of the state, he said that future of the sector lies with proper implementation of the 'Look East Policy' and hoped that the policy will help in increasing trade and commerce with the nearby countries. However, for witnessing the envisaged growth of the sector and the economy, the requirement of skilled employment and large number of educated people in agri-horti sector is called for. In the concluding remarks, he said that the State Government is looking for employment of sustainable development in the sector.

"There is a need to remove the presence of middlemen to reach the desired level of growth and development of the sector. He hoped that there will be more investments and capital deployment in the agriculture and horticulture sector in the state in days to come," he said.

Speaking of the prospects and development in the agri-horti sector Nilamani Sen Deka, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, Horticulture & Food Processing & Parliamentary Affairs, Government of Assam said that the sub-tropical climate of Northeastern India is extremely favorable for the cultivation of several plantation crops. "The state has performed extremely well in the last fiscal and has even reached record production of some of the crops including tea, jute and paddy. The farmers in the state have developed significantly in the last five years, owing to development and mechanization of farm-level practices," he said. He hoped that with guidance from the Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi, the sector will grow more intensively.

Charan Das Mahant, Minister of State for Agriculture & Food Processing Industries, Government of India said that the state of Assam has performed extremely well in the recent past and has in fact performed better than many other states of the country. Owing to some of the favorable weather conditions, availability of rich resources and irrigation facility, the sector has developed significantly. He is optimistic that with proper implementation of Central and State Policies, the sector will foresee multidimensional growth in the future.

Speaking on lines similar to the other speakers M K Saharia, Chairman, Indian Chamber of Commerce, NE Initiative mentioned that with the proper application of policies, the state has not only witnessed significant growth rate in the present fiscal vis-à-vis last fiscal, but also has helped in developing the economic profile of the farmers considerably. He hoped that the growth path of the sector in the state will continue and reach higher summits in the days to follow.

Syed Miraz Ahmed

Writes, edits and researches. In 2013 he was conferred the Rotary International District 3240 Young Achiever Award for his work in the area of environment and digital journalism. In 2006 he was awarded first in the category of Wildlife Photography by the Department of Environment & Forests and Tourism, Government of Assam.

BY SYED MIRAZ AHMED

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