



Minister calls for innovations to foster sustainable, climate resilient agri-food systems

The Hindu Bureau

KOCHI

There is an urgent need to transform agri-food systems into sustainable enterprises through scientific innovations in view of the increasing demand for food, widespread environmental degradation, and challenges posed by climate change, Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Parshottam Rupala said in Kochi on Tuesday.

He was speaking after inaugurating the four-day 16th Agricultural Science Congress (ASC) and Expo at the Le Meridien here.

Pokkali rice

Mr. Rupala highlighted the need to promote traditional farm products such as pokkali rice, so that more farmers take to it.

Minimising post-harvest losses is equivalent to boosting production and can be achieved by focusing on advanced technological interventions, he said.

Mr. Rupala also presented the Dr. B.P. Pal Award for Excellence in Agricultural Sciences, Dr. A.B. Joshi Memorial Lecture Award, and several other National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS) awards.

Agri expo

He inaugurated the agri expo being held on the sidelines of the event, which showcases innovative agricultural technologies of



Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Parshottam Rupala with Agriculture Minister P. Prasad and Hibi Eden, MP, after the inauguration of the 16th Agricultural Science Congress and Expo in Kochi on Tuesday. THULASI KAKKAT

public and private sector research institutes, universities, agro industries, extension agencies, and NGOs from various States.

Genome editing

Himanshu Pathak, Secretary, Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) and Director General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), delivered the presidential address. Research on genomics and genome editing will be the core focus for technological breakthroughs in agriculture, he said.

Mr. Pathak also read out Prime Minister Narendra Modi's message on the need to live in harmony with nature.

Nutritional security

Agriculture Minister P. Prasad stressed the need to ensure availability of economically priced nutritious food in the country while maintaining the health of the ecosystem

and the environment. The 'Poshaka Samrudhi' scheme launched recently by the State government would contribute towards this goal. It was also time to turn to carbon-neutral agricultural practices, to focus on newer technologies to augment production and to pay attention to post-harvest handling, he added.

In his address, Hibi Eden, MP, sought Central funds to build seawalls, wherever needed, to protect the coast.

J.K. Jena, Deputy Director General of ICAR, too was present.

Organised by NAAS, the ASC will come up with recommendations to enhance sustainable agricultural practices. Over 1,500 delegates from India and abroad are attending the event, which is taking place for the first time in Kerala and is being hosted by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI).