

## **Union Minister Parshottam Rupala pitches for scientific innovations to foster sustainable agri-food systems**

Kochi, Oct 10 (PTI) Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Parshottam Rupala on Tuesday stressed on the need to transform agri-food systems into sustainable enterprises through scientific innovations, in view of rising food demand.

Rupala was speaking after inaugurating the 16th Agricultural Science Congress (ASC) at the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) here.

"In view of the increasing food demand, environmental degradation and the challenges posed by climate change, there is an urgent need to transform agri-food systems into sustainable enterprises through scientific innovations," Rupala said adding that the future of India's agriculture depends a lot on how the accumulated scientific knowledge can be translated into commercial success.

The Minister noted that during the Sagar Parikrama drive, it was found that that marine and inland water pollution had seriously affected aquatic life and coastal ecology. He exhorted the scientists to find lasting and sustainable solutions to address this perilous threat, CMFRI said in a release.

Sharing his enthusiasm, the Union Minister said that traditional farm products such as pokkali rice needs to be promoted and measures taken to ensure profitability for the pokkali farmers.

The Minister also inaugurated the Agri Expo being held on the sideline of the event which showcases innovative agricultural technologies of public and private sector research institutes, universities, agro-industries, extension agencies and NGOs.

He 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 to the recipients.

The Congress, organised by the NAAS, assures to serve as a dynamic platform for discussions on the transformation of the agri-food system for achieving sustainable development goals, CMFRI said.

Himanshu Pathak, Secretary to the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) and Director General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) delivered the presidential address.

Kerala Agriculture Minister, P Prasad, in his speech emphasised the need to ensure food and nutritional security for all the citizens of the country, while maintaining the health of the ecosystem and environment intact.

Over 1,500 delegates from India and abroad are attending the four-day event, which is taking place for the first time in Kerala and hosted by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI).

The four-day Congress will feature five plenary lectures by prominent figures in the field of agriculture and allied sectors. The event will also witness a farmer-scientist interface session, facilitating a direct exchange of knowledge and experiences between the farming community and leading researchers.