

It will help in doubling the income of farmers

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Union Minister of Food Processing Industries in the Government of India and Member Smt **Harsimrat Kaur Badal today inaugurated the Zoram Mega Food Park Ltd at Kolasib in Mizoram through virtual conference.** The Food Park built at a cost of Rs 75 crore and spread over 55 Acres of land will directly benefit over 25,000 farmers and will provide employment opportunities to over 5,000 people in the region. Describing the inauguration of the food park as a new dawn for the region, Mrs Badal said that it will go a long way in realizing the dream of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for an Atmanirbhar Bharat. She informed that in the last six years, 88 projects including 7 in Mizoram initiated for the entire North-Eastern Region with an outlay of Rs1000 crore by her Ministry which will directly benefit 3 lakh farmers and will provide job opportunities to 50,000 youth from the region.

In his remarks, Guest of Honour, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), Dr Jitendra said that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has accorded highest priority to North-Eastern Region in the last 6 years and the changed the work culture with micro attention to the needs and aspirations of the region. He said, soon after the Modi government took over in 2014, Prime Minister had stated that every effort would be made to bring the North Eastern region at par with the more developed regions of the country. Dr Jitendra Singh recalled that Prime Minister himself dedicated a 60-MW Tuirial hydropower project in Mizoram in December 2017 to make it the third power-surplus state in the North-east after Sikkim and Tripura. He said, the intent, commitment and sincerity of Modi Government for holistic development of the North-Eastern region is quite obvious and MDoNER is carrying forward this mandate and the agenda. He said, there is a need to bring rest of India closer to North East as the tiny states offer so much to learn from its rich and diverse cultural experiences.

Hailing the inauguration of Zoram Mega Food Park, Dr. Jitendra Singh said that it will help in doubling the income of farmers in the area by doing away with the middlemen. Referring to nearly 40% wastage of

fruits in the absence of any processing unit, the Minister said the rich and high variety of fruits could also be sold as pure packaged juice in major metropolitan cities in India. He said, the North-East Region has the potential to become the Organic Destination of the world due to its rich agricultural and horticultural produce. He informed that Sikkim has already been declared as an organic state.

Dr. Jitendra Singh complimented Mizoram for its high literacy rate of about 96 percent, next only to Kerala and for its high disciplinary culture for freeing the state from the insurgency and the drug menace for which the entire civil society and religious organizations worked together. The Minister also lauded Mizoram for remaining Corona-free till third lockdown, when some migration happened and some cases cropped up. He expressed the hope that the North-Eastern Region will take a lead for India to emerge as an economic power with the support of its huge natural and human skill resources in the Post-COVID era.

Dr Jitendra Singh said that Zoram Mega Food Park located near National Highway 54 will help in overcoming the transportation constraints and will soon become a major milestone for the storage and processing of high variety of foods, spices, fruits and vegetables grown in the region.

In his remarks, the Minister of State for Food Processing Shri Rameshwar Teli said that in the last six years of Shri Narendra Modi Government 37 Mega Food Parks have been approved and 18 of them are already in operation.

The Commerce and Industry Minister of Mizoram Dr. R. Lalthangliana, the Power Minister R. Lal Zirliana and the Lok Sabha MP C. Lalrosanga and senior officials from the Food Ministry and Government of Mizoram joined the e-inauguration event.

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