

India is the fifth largest importer of Canadian vegetables and raw agricultural materials

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Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Rural Development, Panchayat Raj and Food Processing Industries, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar said yesterday that the recently announced initiatives under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi include policy reforms for establishment of One Nation-One Market, contract agriculture with appropriate measures to protect small and marginal farmers, and Rs one lakh crore Agri Infra Fund. India is developing a digital agri-stack as an important provider for online marketplaces and smart agriculture. The government is committed to turning the agricultural sector into an investment opportunity.

In his inaugural address at the two-day India-Canada Agri-Tech Virtual Seminar organized by the Indo-Canadian Business Chamber (ICBC) in collaboration with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Ministry of External Affairs of India, Shri Tomar said that India, in particular, during the last six months of the global pandemic crisis has made considerable progressive reforms in the agricultural sector. These include policy reforms for the establishment of One Nation-One market, contract farming along with appropriate measures for the safety and freedom of farmers. India has over 450 start-ups in the agri-tech sector, which means that every 9th start-up in the world is Indian. Public-private partnerships are increasing due to investment in line with this sector.

Indicating the rapid growth in agri-trade between India and Canada, Shri Tomar said that India is the fifth largest importer of Canadian vegetables and raw agricultural materials and the seventh largest importer of leguminous vegetables, called "Vegetarian Protein". He said that there is great potential for growth in the Indo-Canadian agri-business. India is an excellent place for the production of healthy food including nutritious grains, organics, herbals, etc., which are the foundation of Ayurveda's rich traditions and methods of yoga treatment. Shri Tomar said that after signing of the MoU in 2009, he would like to see Indo-Canadian cooperation accelerate forward in leveraging its natural capabilities in the agricultural

sector.

At the event, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food of the Government of Canada Ms Mary-Claude Bibeau highlighted the fact that Canada and India have a proud history of strong bilateral trade and collaboration in agriculture, with a vibrant trading relationship in agriculture and agri-food, valued at over \$1.5 billion. She went on to point that in India, rapid economic growth is driving new consumer demands and preferences, and Canada can help India meet those demands through scientific and technological expertise in food processing, food safety and transportation infrastructure. Minister Bibeau concluded by reiterating that as we look to the future, expanding and diversifying mutual trade and investment opportunities between Canada and India, will also help both economies recover after the pandemic.

The CEO of ICBC, Ms. Nadira said that ICBC will soon be releasing a white paper report mapping the business opportunities between India and Canada in Agriculture and Agri-tech. Canadian High Commissioner to India Mr. Nadir Patel, Indian High Commissioner to Canada Mr. Ajay Bisaria, Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Dr. Alka Bhargava, Additional Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs Mr. P. Harish, CEO of the Indo-Canadian Business Chamber Ms. Nadira Hamid, CII National Council Member Mr. Salil Singhal and other dignitaries were part of the program.

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