

The agriculture and allied sector have a significant contribution to the GDP

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Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar and the Lieutenant Governor, Shri Manoj Sinha today virtually inaugurated the Apple Festival, organized for the first time in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir. Speaking on the occasion, Shri Tomar said that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi is working with full force for the development of agriculture and allied sector in the country and to increase the income of farmers. At the same time, the Prime Minister is making every effort to increase India's reputation and credibility at the international level. Appreciating the Jammu and Kashmir Government's efforts, Shri Tomar said that Government is doing good and speedy work for the development of agriculture in the UT with the funds provided under various schemes by the central government.

Shri Tomar said that apple and Kashmir are synonymous with each other, it is the main crop and this important event will provide a better platform to apple growers and other stakeholders here under the able leadership of Lt. Governor Shri Manoj Sinha. With an annual production of more than 2.2 million metric tonnes, the apple from J&K contributes to 87 per cent of the national production and is linked to the livelihood of about 30 per cent of the population of Jammu and Kashmir. He said that under the leadership of Shri Sinha, the work of filling the gaps in the field of agriculture is being done at a very fast pace. The organization of the apple festival under the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav will prove to be a milestone in increasing the income of the farmers. Shri Tomar expressed happiness that high-density plantation has been done in 2300 hectare area under a special scheme in the UT and the largest quarantine center for high-density planting material is also being opened.

Lt Governor Shri Manoj Sinha said that agriculture and allied sector have a significant contribution to the GDP and most of the residents are dependent on agriculture, for whose upliftment the Central and UT Governments are working together. Various schemes have been implemented to double the income of the farmers. Work is being done with full force to fulfil the Prime Minister's vision of a self-reliant India. He requested the scientists to bring the benefit of their research from the lab to the land. Shri Sinha assured that full financial assistance would be provided to the farmers by the UT's administration for the loss caused due to adverse weather in Jammu and Kashmir. He said that it is the responsibility of the Jammu

and Kashmir government to protect the land of the farmers in the UT. The legal provision in this regard is in the interest of the farmers only.

The Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shri Kailash Choudhary said that the progress of the farmers is certain due to the concrete steps taken under the leadership of the Prime Minister. The agriculture budget of the Center is now 1.23 lakh crore rupees, which was only about 22 thousand crore rupees before the Modi government came. Farmers are benefiting from measures like procurement on MSP, Agriculture Infrastructure Fund of Rs 1 lakh crore, he added.

In the program, cheques and certificates related to various schemes were given to the farmers. Booklet on Horticulture was also released. Local public representatives, apple growers, farmers, entrepreneurs, agricultural scientists and other dignitaries were present on the occasion. Shri Naveen Kumar Choudhary, Principal Secretary (Agriculture), Jammu and Kashmir delivered the welcome address and Director General (Horticulture) Shri Ejaz Ahmed Bhatt proposed a vote of thanks.

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