

Rest of India has a lot to learn from Sikkim on organic farming: Union Agriculture minister

PIB/IPR

GANGTOK, January 17: Union Agriculture minister Radha Mohan Singh has said there is a lot that the rest of country could learn from Sikkim on organic farming.

"I must congratulate Government of Sikkim, which has taken the lead in organic farming. We have a lot to learn from Sikkim," said the Union Agriculture minister while addressing the inaugural function of the national conference on sustainable agriculture and farmers' welfare here at Chintan Bhawan on Sunday.

In his address, Singh spoke about the Agriculture ministry's efforts to promote organic farming and to develop potential markets for organic products. "To promote organic farming and to develop potential markets for organic products, my Ministry has framed guidelines under Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana under National Mission of Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA). This promotes comprehensive organic farming practice, which would focus mainly on rainfed and hilly areas," he said.

Singh urged States to motivate the farmers in areas

that use less inorganic fertilizers adding that farmers would be provided Rs.20,000 per acre during three years to convert himself into an organic farmer. Our aim is to develop 10,000 clusters of 50 acres each over three years to increase certified area by 5 lakh acres in the country, he said.

The Union Agriculture minister urged the participants to focus on convergence of various schemes to enhance investments in agriculture and land lease policy. He sought recommendations from them for the ministry.

Singh highlighted that the 'soil health card' policy launched by the Prime Minister last February aims to promote soil test based application of fertilizers and needed soil nutrients in respect of all 14 crore holdings in the country. "The target for the current year 2015-16 has been fixed for 100 lakh samples. The soil sample collection will have to be carried out in a campaign mode by creating a positive environment at the field level," he said.

Singh mentioned that the agricultural year 2015-16 has been a challenging one with India experiencing a deficit rainfall during kharif season and moisture stress during



Union Agriculture minister Radha Mohan Singh and Chief Minister Pawan Chamling lighting the ceremonial lamp during the inaugural function of the agriculture conference at Chintan Bhawan. Pic: IPR

sowing for rabi season. He also spoke about the newly launched *Prime Minister Fasal Bima Yojna* and its special benefits for the farmers.

In his address, Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Chamling expressed his gratitude to the Prime Minister on complimenting

the efforts of the State towards organic mission within and outside the country which further strengthened Sikkim's commitment. While the benefits of organic farming is widely known, no State and country in the world before Sikkim has implemented it as State-wide or mission wide policy solution to unsustainable and harmful technique of agriculture production, he said.

Chamling informed that a historic declaration has made through a resolution in the Sikkim Legislative Assembly on February 24, 2003. Since then, Sikkim has marched ahead with an uncompromising vision of transforming the State into a total organic farming State, he said outlining the journey of Sikkim Organic Mission, the ban on chemical fertilizers and encouragement of use of natural products for boosting farming practices. He highlighted the massive awareness campaigns, training and capacity building programmes organized to promote and enable organic methods and strengthening of infrastructure like seed processing units and seed testing laboratories.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister of State for Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Balyan said the green revolution which increased production by manifold brought along side effects which are now being faced. The increase in death rate due to use of chemical fertilizer is turning people back to organic and sustainable farming, he said.

Minister of State for Agriculture Mohanbhai Kalyanjibhai Kundariya said the various schemes and programmes meant for the welfare of farmers should reach the intended targets and not remain only on paper. He expressed hopes the two-day conference would work towards enhancing the productivity in the agriculture field and at the same time help the farmers.

Agriculture and Horticulture Ministers of various States along with representatives from NITI Aayog, NABARD, State government and ICAR, agriculture scientists and others are attending in the two-day conference. They have been divided in five technical groups to discuss important issues on agriculture and are to make a presentation before the Prime Minister tomorrow.

SIKKIM IS SUKHOSTAN: MODI

PM Modi praise organic farming, urge other States to follow Sikkim's example

Staff Reporter/PIB/IPOR

GANGTOK, January 18: 'Desh ma Sikkim euta namuna rajya hunu sakcha', said Prime Minister Narendra Modi while addressing the plenary session of the national conference on sustainable agriculture and farmers' welfare here at Chintan Bhawan on Monday afternoon.

Starting his 45-minute speech in Nepali language, the Prime Minister showered praise on Sikkim government for its organic farming initiative while calling Sikkim as a 'Sukhostan'.

Dressed in light brown overcoat and wearing a Lepcha headgear, the Prime Minister entered the Chintan Bhawan to a rousing reception at 4.15 pm. He was accompanied by Union Agriculture minister Radha Mohan Singh, Governor Shrinivas Patil and Chief Minister Pawan Chamling.

"Sikkim ka manis haru sojho ra sadharan raheychan, yaha ko vatavaran ati sundar pavitra ra shanti purna cha. Yaha ko swacha paryavaran, vividh van sampada ani sundar vatavaran ma mohit bhaye," said Modi at the outset.

(People in Sikkim are humble and simple. The environment here is clean, pure and beautiful which has left me mesmerized.)

"Yaha ko jaivik kheti ko bareyma mailey dherai kura suney. Sundar Sunakhari ani baurangi phool haru ko darshan bhayo ani moh ati nai harshit bhaye. Desh ma Sikkim euta namuna rajya hunu sakcha," said Modi.

(I have heard so much of organic farming of Sikkim. I was very happy to see orchids and colourful flowers. Sikkim can be an exemplary State in the country).

The Prime Minister said Sikkim is developing due to the vision of Chamling who took the organic farming initiative despite several challenges. "There are many problems here (in Sikkim) being Himalayan state. There are geographical barriers, connectivity issues and others, but despite these problems, Sikkim is Sukhostan (a land of contentment)," he said.

"The vision of making Sikkim an organic State was conceived in 2003. There must have been many challenges. The government must have faced protests and complaints from the farmers as it was a big financial challenge for them. However, the determination of farmers for more than a decade towards organic farming is really appreciable and praiseworthy. The world is showering praises for Sikkim," he added.

"I have come as the guest of Sikkimese farmers on behalf of crores of farmers from all over India. When I was invited by the Chief Minister to Sikkim for this programme, I said I will not come alone but will also bring the Agriculture ministers and secretaries of all the States so that they can learn from Sikkim and implement organic farming in their respective states," said Modi.

He suggested Sikkim to start a digital online platform through which the farmers can interact and share their success stories on organic farming with other farmers of the country. He exhorted States to identify a district, or even a block, to convert to a 100 percent organic area. This, he said, would catalyse the process in other parts of the State.

On the occasion, the Prime Minister handed over to the Chief Minister a letter of appreciation and a certificate

of the Agriculture ministry and APEDA under Commerce ministry recognizing Sikkim as a vanguard of organic farming in the country. He also handed over commendations for two districts of Sikkim for achieving 100 percent coverage of soil health cards.

Modi also appreciated the Swachha Bharat Abhiyan efforts in Sikkim.

"M.G. Marg is one of the popular places in Gangtok which has been developed beautifully; cleanliness is a habit of people here. If there is any State in India which has seen development without keeping environment in jeopardy, it is Sikkim," said the Prime Minister.

Referring to the recently announced crop insurance scheme, Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, the Prime Minister said the scheme had instilled confidence among farmers, and efforts should be made to increase coverage of insurance.

The Prime Minister said farmers have to be motivated for schemes such as soil health card. He said a network of soil laboratories should come up across the country, and even school labs could be used during summer holiday months for this purpose.

Earlier in his address, Modi paid tributes to the former Governor of Sikkim, V. Rama Rao who passed away Sunday at Hyderabad.

The Prime Minister arrived at Libing helipad at 3 pm. He then proceeded to Ridge Park and Guards Ground to witness the exhibition of cymbidium orchids and seasonal flowers before reaching Chintan Bhawan for the conference on sustainable agriculture.

Large number of people lined up along the road sides

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RIDGE PARK



Prime Minister Narendra Modi inspects the display of orchids and seasonal flowers at Ridge Park. He is accompanied by Governor Shrinivas Patil, Chief Minister Pawan Chamling, Tika Maka Chamling, Union Agriculture minister Radha Mohan Singh and other dignitaries. Pic: PIB

LIBING HELIPAD

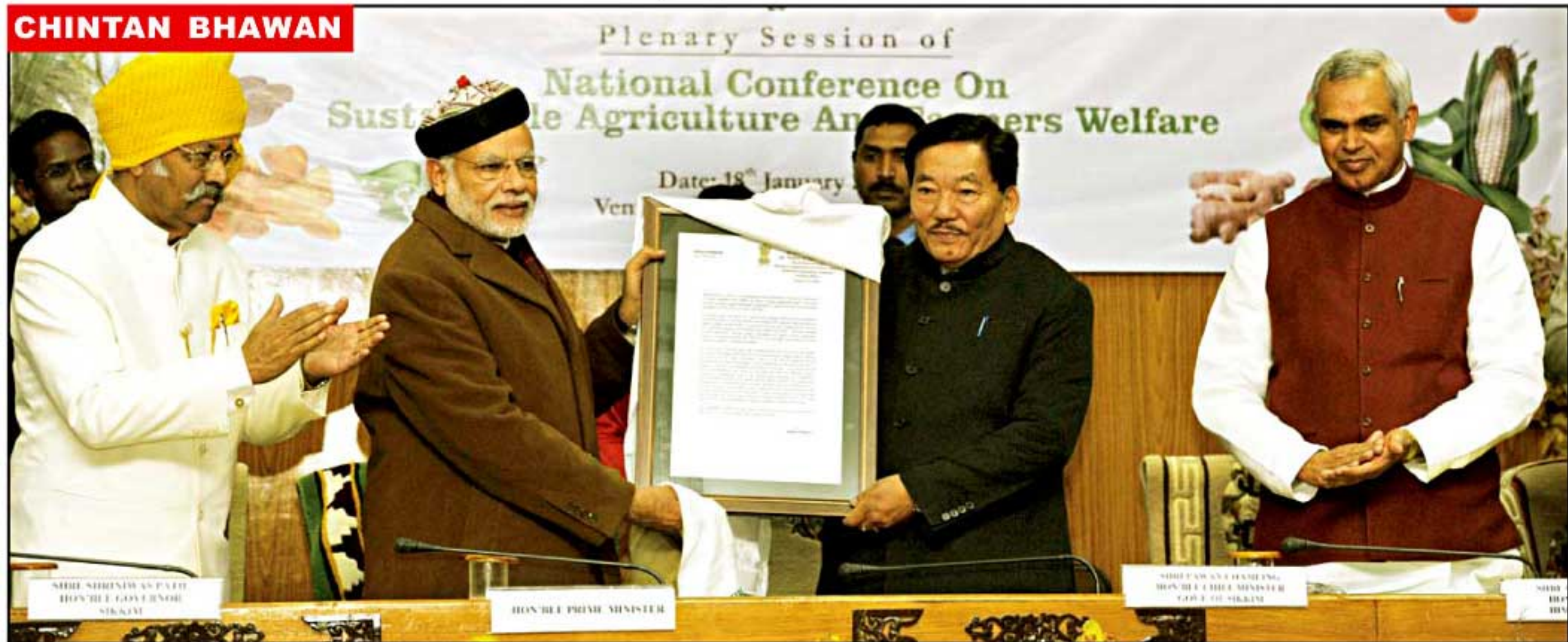


Governor Shrinivas Patil welcomes Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Libing helipad. Pic: PIBD

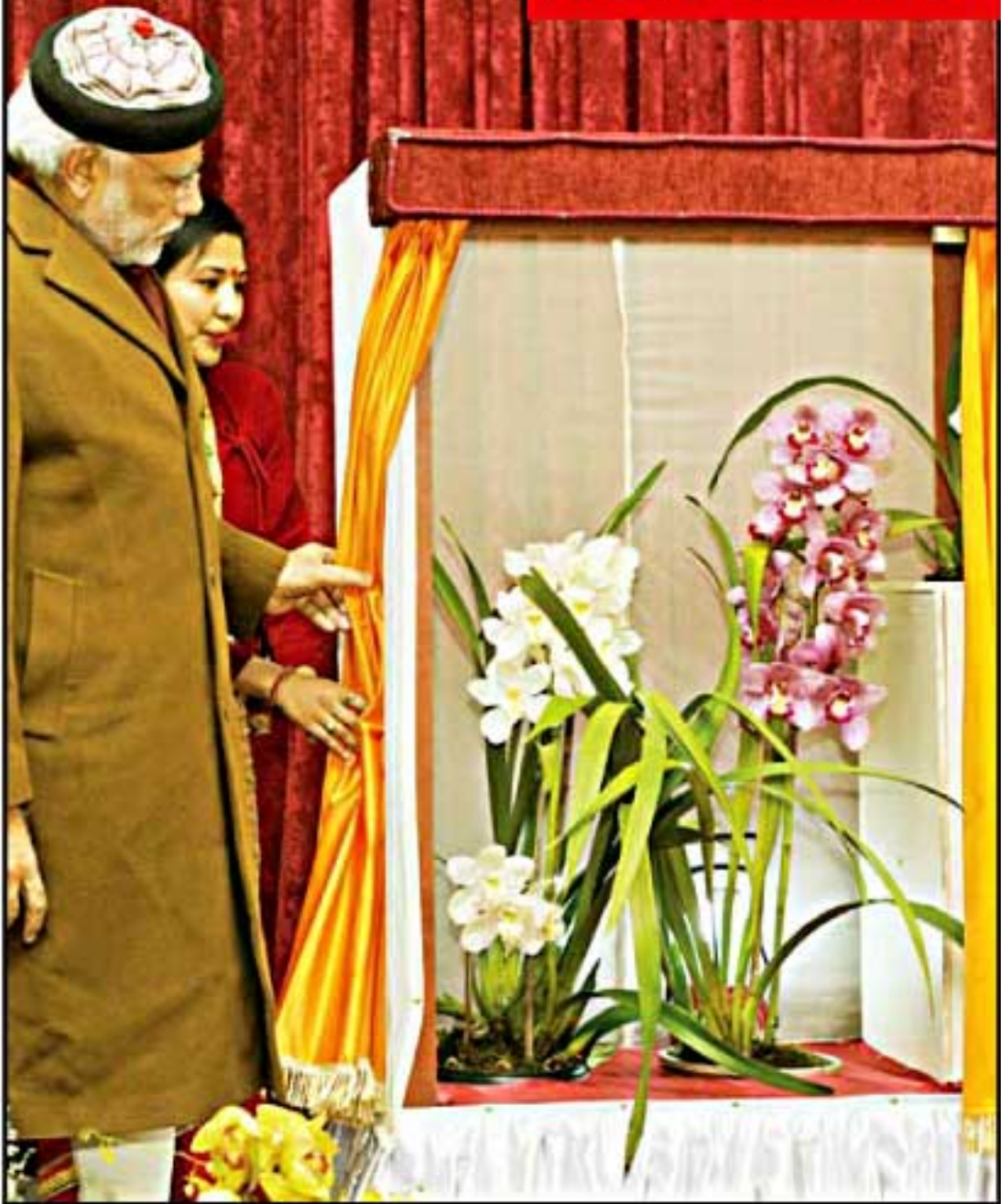
GUARDS GROUND



Prime Minister Narendra Modi inspects the display of flowers at Guards Ground. Pic: PIB



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Governor Shrinivas Patil and Chief Minister Pawan Chamling at Chintan Bhawan during the plenary session of National Conference on Sustainable Agriculture & Farmers Welfare. Pic: PIB



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the three new cymbidium orchid species developed in Sikkim. He named one orchid after Sadar Vallabhai Patel and the other orchid after Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya.

The third orchid was named by Chief Minister Pawan Chamling as 'Namo' after the Prime Minister. The naming of orchids took place at Chintan Bhawan.

"I am grateful to the Chief Minister and people of Sikkim for giving me an honor by naming the orchid after my name" said the Prime Minister.

On the occasion, the Prime Minister digitally launched the logo of 'Sikkim Organic'.

The logo has a sprouting green plant which signifies new beginning, Mount Khangchendzonga and a cymbidium orchid.

The Prime Minister also handed away soil health cards to two farmers of Sikkim, Nim Chuki Sherpa and Narayan Das Sharma from east and south districts respectively.

He released three books namely – 'Fully organic State', 'Transforming Rural Sikkim- year round crop production' and 'New Orchid Varieties in Sikkim' – published by the State government.

Satpal Maharaj lauds Sikkim organic farming

Staff Reporter

GANGTOK, January 18: Manav Utthan Sewa Samity (MUSS) founder Satpal Maharaj has lauded the effort of Sikkim to adopt organic farming.

While addressing a press conference here at Gangtok on Monday, the spiritual leader said: "Sikkim has set up a role model by adopting organic farming. I have a close association with this State. My congratulations to Sikkim's Chief Minister Pawan Chamling and the people for the achievement."

Satpal Maharaj said he would mention about Sikkim in all the meetings and discourses and will place an example of how the State adopted organic farming.

"I met with the Chief Minister last night at his residence and have promised that all support would be



given from my side to his unique mission. Sikkim will be shining example which would lead the world in organic farming," said Satpal Maharaj.

The MUSS founder added that he has suggested the Chief Minister to start the farming of Quinoa which is very rich in protein and the weather of Sikkim is favorable for its cultivation.

He reached Gangtok on Sunday evening.

Show of Organic Strength to PM

Staff Reporter/IPR

GANGTOK, January 19: Prime Minister Narendra Modi wrapped up his two-day tour of Sikkim with a visit to Saramsa Garden where he witnessed the organic produce display by Sikkimese farmers on Tuesday morning. He then departed for Assam from Libing helipad, Deorali in an IAF chopper at around 11 am.

Accompanied by Governor Shrinivas Patil and Chief Minister Pawan Chamling, the Prime Minister inspected the various organic vegetables and crops of the 55 Sikkimese farmers and various government agencies tastefully presented in 77 stalls at the 12-acre Saramsa Garden, located around 14 kms away from Gangtok.

The Prime Minister was informed by the Agriculture department about providing complete assistance to the participants and the arrangements made for a buyer-seller meet at the venue for marketing of various horticulture products.

Mod expressed his pleasure after the inspection of various stalls that also included the integrated mushroom unit, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, ICAR, Spices Board, Mainam Garden Organic Division, ATMA and Bamboo Mission wherein local artisans had showcased bamboo products. Also on display were medicinal plants, products of Organic Sikkim, Parvata Foods, Temi Tea and Sikkim Supreme and works of local entrepreneurs.

The Prime Minister interacted with the participants and exchanged pleasantries with the organic farmers of Sikkim. He commended the efforts of the farmers under the guidance of the Chief Minister for achieving the organic farming milestone and for putting up an overwhelming organic agricultural display.

"The Prime Minister was very happy to see that the farmers in Sikkim are hardworking and progressive. He also inquired about the different vegetables kept on display," said a senior official who was on protocol duty.

The valedictory function of Sikkim Organic Festival would be held at the convention hall of Saramsa Garden tomorrow.

After witnessing the organic produce display, the Prime Minister spent some time to interact with students and local residents outside the venue. He shook hands and waved at the people who had lined up outside the gate to greet him.

The gesture from the Prime Minister made the day for those waiting outside the Saramsa Garden complex to greet him. Among them was 20-year-old Ashish Kharaka.

"I was in the crowd outside the gate to have a glimpse of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister walked towards us and shook hands with me and others. I was stunned for a moment. I really wanted to take a selfie with him but by then, he had walked past us," said Kharka.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi sizes up taruls showcased during the exhibition of organic produce of Sikkim at Saramsa Gardens. (Below) Prime Minister Narendra Modi with students and local people who were waiting to greet him outside the venue. Pics: PIB



Jan 18 declared as Organic Day in Sikkim

IN GRATITUDE

As we come to the final day of the Sikkim Organic Festival and National Conference on Sustainable Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare with the valedictory function being held at Saramsa Gardens, it is time to thank and congratulate everyone involved to make the programmes successful. At the very outset, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to the Hon'ble Prime Minister for his two-day visit to Sikkim. The people of Sikkim are eternally indebted to him for the visit in the midst of his busy schedule, which speaks volumes of his love, care and attention for us.

The inauguration of the Sikkim Organic Festival by the Hon'ble PM and his address at National Conference on Sustainable Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (Plenary Session) has overwhelmed us. By declaring Sikkim as the first Organic State of the Country with the release of Sikkim Organic logo, he has conferred on us a serious responsibility as well. The onus now lies on us to take forward the message of organic farming as a sustainable, ecologically beneficial and healthy form of agriculture. Let us all work to keep the organic flag flying high and make the 'winds' of organic farming blow beyond the borders of Sikkim!

Today, India is truly blessed to have such a personality as Modi ji, who is most innovative, dynamic and progressive. His simple directives on welfare schemes for farmers that he set in the Conference will be there for all of us to follow. Setting up of soil testing laboratories in easily accessible places like school laboratories, crop insurance scheme, integration of more farmers under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, online portal for progressive farmers, identifying one district and ensuring successful implementation of organic farming etc are all meant to transform agriculture in India. We will certainly be following these directives.

The naming of the three orchids, developed by a local floriculturist, after our esteemed National leaders is our contribution towards the emotional integration of people of Sikkim with the Country. Cymbidium Sardar, Lycaste Deendayal and Cymbidium Namo are now part of the botanical genealogy.

The recognition given to us by the Hon'ble PM on all platforms, including social media, as a pioneer of organic farming comes as a validation of our efforts and perseverance that we put in over the last 12 years, in the background of the initial hurdles and resistance we faced. Without his consistent support, motivation and guidance, our dream of organic Sikkim would never have turned into a reality. I once again thank him for being part of a momentous occasion for Sikkim and the Sikkimese people which has been possible only with his presence and blessings in the State.

Last but not the least, my sincere gratitude to the visiting dignitaries, participants, State Government officials, the people of Sikkim and above all, the members of the farming community for their efforts in making all the events that were held a grand success. I also thank Shri Mohan Pradhan, for making it possible for us to name the three hybrid orchids by the PM.

Congratulations and thank you very much everyone!

Pawan Chamling
Chief Minister,
Government of Sikkim



The winners of organic vegetable display receiving their prize cheques from Governor Shrinivas Patil, Chief Minister Pawan Chamling and Agriculture minister Somnath Poudyal. Pics: IPR

The real journey has now begun: CM

Staff Reporter & IPR

GANGTOK, January 20: Chief Minister Pawan Chamling today announced that January 18 will be observed as 'Organic Day' in Sikkim annually.

The Chief Minister made the announcement following the suggestion from Governor Shrinivas Patil during the valedictory function of the Sikkim Organic Festival at Saramsa Garden, about 14 km away from Gangtok.

Chamling had already wrapped up his speech but returned to the dais again to make the 'Organic Day' announcement.

"I have taken the advice given by the Governor Sir. Every year January 18 would be observed as Organic Day. An Organic festival would be organized, we will soon notify this," said the Chief Minister.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had reached Gangtok on

January 18 to attend the national conference on sustainable agriculture at Chintan Bhawan. He had urged other States to follow the Sikkim's model on organic farming.

In his address, Chamling said greater challenges lie ahead for Sikkim to give continuity to the organic farming initiative. "The real journey has now begun. We have achieved glory of being the first State in the country to bring the agricultural land under organic farming. There will be more challenges to give continuity to it for which all stakeholders must come together," he said.

Speaking on the two-day visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chamling said that it was a huge respect and honour given to the people of Sikkim by the Prime Minister.

"The Prime Minister in his

We must protect the organic brand of Sikkim: Governor

Staff Reporter

GANGTOK, January 20: Governor Shrinivas Patil has congratulated Chief Minister Pawan Chamling and agencies who made Sikkim Organic Festival a successful event.

Addressing the valedictory function at Saramsa Garden today, the

Governor said the Sikkim government is in regular talk with the Union government to make organic farming in Sikkim more vibrant. He also applauded the farmers of Sikkim for their dedication.

"The youths of Sikkim should now come into farming. Sikkim will be now known for its organic

farming and there should be no compromise in the quality of crops," said the Governor.

We need to brand and protect the identity of the organic products of Sikkim and not compromise on any level, said Patil. He added that the State government should be alert so that no

one uses the name of Sikkim's organic brand illegally. "We should make sure that there is no misuse of Sikkim's name. The government should be vigilant on this," he said.

Governor Patil, in his address, also underlined the need to motivate the youths of Sikkim towards organic farming.