

Centre, states need to cooperate to double farmer income by 2022: Modi

Addressing farmers, the PM said income could be doubled through diversification, reduction in input costs

BS REPORTER
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Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday once again reiterated his government's commitment to double farmers' income by 2022, saying that though the task is challenging but it can be done through cooperation from all stakeholders, including farmers, states and the Union government.

He said even as the Opposition is doubting his claim, farmers' income can be doubled by diversification in agriculture and reducing the input costs.

Addressing a mega farmers fair, "Krishik Unnati Mela", which is expected to be attended by nearly 100,000 farmers from across the country over the next three days at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute in New Delhi, the Prime Minister said his government has started various measures that will reduce input costs on fertilisers, water for irrigation, and ensure better marketing of farmer produce.

"We along with the state governments and all others should work together to realise this dream," Modi said.

As per the latest government data, the all-India average monthly income of agricultural households during the crop year July 2012-June 2013 was an estimated ₹6,426.

Chief ministers of Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Haryana and Meghalaya also participated in the inaugural session.

Modi said the Union Budget of 2016-17 is dedicated to farmers and rural poor, and such has been its appreciation all round that even our detractors are being forced to applaud it.

Attacking opposition parties for claiming that all projects and programmes started when they were in power, the Prime Minister said: "You would be surprised to know that as many as 90 projects that are full of



Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaking at the Krishik Unnati Mela being hosted by the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, in New Delhi on Saturday

water, dams for example, have been built, but there is no way to provide water to farmers."

He added: "Now, my government is working to provide water from these projects and once it is completed, around 8 million hectares of area will get water. And, once the water reaches there, you all can think how much that land will give us back."

Modi also spoke of funds from the MNREGA programme to be utilised this summer for creation of assets, such as ponds to conserve water.

"About MNREGA, many discussions take place, but no asset has been created. This government is emphasising... during this summer in every village, one task that should be completed through MNREGA is desilting of ponds, deepening of ponds and the creation of new ones. In this Budget, the government has aimed for 500,000 ponds," he said.

For a good part, the Prime Minister emphasised on micro and drip irrigation as well as liquid fertilisers to reduce cost of production and raise farmers' income level.

"Water harvesting is of as much importance as water conservation. We do not have the right to waste water. Per drop more crop is how we can do that," Modi said.

He said through use of modern and new technologies, it has been proved that traditional water guzzling plants such as sugarcane and paddy can be grown in areas where micro-irrigation systems is dominant.

The Prime Minister asked farmers to continue with their regular farming activity, but also told them to adopt animal husbandry, grow timber and go for value addition and processing.

"Food processing is the best way to increase the farmers' income," Modi suggested.

He also said that till now Indian agriculture was obsessed with growth rates, but no more, we need an integrated approach to solve the problems of the farming sector.

He said purchasing power in rural India needs to be raised and it can be done only through improving economic activity.

Talking about the newly launched Prime Minister's Crop Insurance Scheme, Modi said the scheme provides for record low premiums while at the same time ensuring maximum coverage. "For the first time, even post-harvest losses and even pre-harvest damage is covered under this insurance scheme," the Prime Minister said.

He even gave a clarion call for second green revolution in eastern states, which have adequate water and fertile land, through adoption of modern technologies.

Putting a premium on water conservation to raise farm productivity and income, Modi said the government has identified 90 stuck irrigation projects that can irrigate 8 million hectares. The government, spending ₹20,000 crore to boost irrigation projects.

Earlier, Modi visited the exhibition pavilions, and was given an overview of best practices and techniques followed by various institutions and agriculture entrepreneur latest agriculture equipment, and milch cattle.

The Prime Minister also gave away the Krishi Karman Awards for 2014-15 to states and farmers, and launched mobile application for farmers - "Kisan Suvidha".

This will provide information farmers on subjects such as wealth market prices, seeds, fertilisers, pesticides and agriculture machinery.

Agriculture Minister Radhika Mohan Singh in his address said that till now such farmer fairs were held just to enable growers to purchase new quality of seeds, but this is the first time when they would be given on-farm demonstration of technologies and also participate in the technical sessions which would be held over the next three days.

The event will be telecast live in block panchayats and is being jointly organised by CIL.

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