



# Dr Jitendra Singh attends Conference at World Food India 2017 on North East India: Organic Production Hub; Opportunities Unexplored

## North East India is indeed a land of opportunities unexplored, says Minister

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The Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh attended the Conference on “North East India: Organic Production Hub; Opportunities Unexplored” at World Food India 2017 here today.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Jitendra Singh said that North East (NE) India is indeed a land of opportunities unexplored. He said that now we have to move ahead and also decide how to move ahead. Highlighting the steps taken by the Government led by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, he said that in the last three years, a lot of initiatives have been taken to explore the unexplored potential of North East India. He said that the earlier always the efforts have been made to bring North East India closer to the rest of India, now the efforts are being made to bring rest of India closer to North East India. He said that there is a lot to learn from North East for all of us. The Minister said that balanced development of all regions is necessary for the overall development of the country.

Throwing light on the potential of North East, Dr Jitendra Singh said that NE region has about 50 species of bamboo, about 14 varieties of banana and 17 varieties of citrus fruits. The NE region also has huge production of fruits such as pineapple and oranges. This production goes waste, if there is no ancillary support to export these products, he added. He said that in the current Government, there has been a lot of emphasis on rail and road connectivity. He further said that for the first time, a region based *North East Road Sector Development Scheme* (NERSDS) has been started in North East for the development of roads specially ‘orphan roads’ that have been neglected by the state governments.

The Minister said that there are 3 Mega Food Parks in North east, in the states of Assam, Tripura and Mizoram. The state of Sikkim has been declared the first Organic state of India, he added. He said that various events have been organized by Ministry of DoNER to promote culture and products of NE region recently such as North East Calling festival in Delhi and Destination North East Festival in New Delhi and Chandigarh.

Speaking on the organic farming, he said that farming has now become an entrepreneurship due to the recent techniques such as soil testing and other related aspects. In addition to the provisions of tax holiday and exit period available in the Government of India’s “Standup India, Startup India” programme, the Ministry of DoNER has also rolled out “Venture Fund” recently for anybody who wishes to Startup in the Northeast region, which would provide a huge financial relief particularly to young entrepreneurs. The “Venture Fund” has already become popular among the youngsters and about 65 proposals are already in the pipeline, he added. Dr Singh said that to create employability, we need to explore new areas, the NE region will be the preference in future.

The Secretary, Ministry of DoNER Shri Naveen Verma also participated in the conference. The other eminent speakers included Dr. A. K. Yadav, Advisor, NAB (Organic), Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority, Shri Pankaj Kumar Prasad, Managing Director, North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Limited and other representatives of industry and young entrepreneurs under start up India.

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