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Need to build a future ready Agriculture- by plugging the existing gaps: Shri Shekhawat

Shri Shekhawat inaugurates EIMA AGRIMACH INDIA 2017

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The Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat inaugurated three-days EIMA AGRIMACH INDIA 2017 in New Delhi, today. H.E. Mr. Maurizio Martina, Minister of Agricultural, Food & Forestry Policies, Italy, H.E. Lorenzo Angeloni, Ambassador of Italy to India, Shri S.K. Pattanayak, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare were also present on this occasion

Speaking on this occasion, Shri Shekhawat said that as we all know, India is in a far better situation today than it was a few years ago — be it the macro-economic performance, or the confidence in the economy or ease of doing business. This is partly because of the buoyant rural economy, of which, agriculture is an important constituent.

Shri Shekhawat further stated that even though, we have been nearly sufficient on food production, we have to keep our selves prepared for future need. Some estimates shows that Food grain demand of country is expected to reach 355 million tonnes in 2030 as compared to 250 million tonnes in 2016. Therefore, there is a need to build a future ready Agriculture- by plugging the existing gaps.

Shri Shekhawat said that Agriculture is a labour intensive activity. The labour intensive crops entails high manpower requirement, which is fast depleting and posing a big challenge to crop productivities. This has resulted in shift from labour - intensive to mechanization intensive techniques.

The Minister said that the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare is working on mission of doubling farmers' income by 2022 and farm machinery is an important constituent of it. With the country's population growing and the amount of arable land being limited, it is important that we provide our farmers with all the tools to optimize the output on their farms. The question thus emerges not only as to how to leverage farm mechanization for enhancing agricultural productivity, but also, how to include the large community of small and marginal farmers into the fold of mechanized farming.

Shri Shekhawat said that the government is therefore promoting farm mechanization by subsidising purchase of equipment through scheme of Sub-Mission of Agricultural Mechanisation (SMAM) that promotes models of custom hiring as well.

It is generally believed that the benefits of modern technology have been restricted to farmers with large land-holdings. Yet the fact remains that even small farmers are adopting and utilizing selected farm equipment for efficient farm management through custom hiring.

Shri Shekhawat informed that during the last few years Indian agricultural equipment market has been widely exposed to international trade. I am told that India is a strong exporter of agricultural machinery with a CAGR of 6.2% over the last 4 years. The presence of 180 buyers from over 40 countries at EIMA AGRIMACH 2017 will certainly give a big push to the international trade in farm machinery.

The Minister said that strengthened concentration on commodity specific farm equipment is also a viable path to pursue for increasing mechanization. Attempts should be to diversify the pattern of mechanization in India. Time has come to get the farm equipment industry into a loop and enter into meaningful discussions for spreading the culture of mechanization in the rural areas.

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