



The Farmer Who Has Always Fed the Nation is Now also Lighting it up, with the Annadata Becoming an Urjadata: Union Minister Shri Pralhad Joshi

Agrivoltaics Can Enable Farmers to Produce Food and Clean Energy from the Same Land: Shri Joshi

7th Agrivoltaics World Conference 2026 to be held in New Delhi from 21st to 23rd October

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The farmer who has always fed this nation is now also lighting it up with the Annadata becoming an Urjadata, said Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy, Education and Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Shri Pralhad Joshi, while addressing the curtain-raiser event ahead of the 7th Agrivoltaics World Conference 2026 in New Delhi today.

The Union Minister said the next phase of PM-KUSUM will carry a dedicated component for agrivoltaics, enabling farmers to continue farming while also earning from electricity. He said the focus will be on small and marginal farmers, Farmer Producer Organisations, cooperatives and panchayats, while ensuring that land ownership remains with the farmer. He said solar income can provide greater income security to farmers whose earnings are otherwise dependent on monsoons and market prices.

Shri Joshi said that a farmer can earn three streams of income from the same acre — from the crop sold, the power sold to the DISCOM, and the money saved on diesel. For a small farmer, solar income is not just extra income, it is security, he said, adding that it can provide a regular source of income in both good years and bad years.

The Minister noted that India has about 18% of the world's population but a 2.4% of world's land, with more than 85% of farmers being small and marginal farmers cultivating less than 2 hectares. With agrivoltaics, he said, we do not have to choose between crop and solar plant, we can do both at the same time. The same land can continue to grow crops below, while generating clean energy above.

The Minister said India added 55.29 GW of non-fossil capacity last year, more than the entire installed power capacity of several developed countries: Norway (40.6 GW), Switzerland (around 30 GW), Austria (34 GW) and Belgium (around 33 GW).

Shri Joshi highlighted the progress under PM-KUSUM, stating that around 29 lakh pumps have been solarised. He added that last year, decentralised solar contributed 16.3 GW, comprising 7.6 GW from PM-KUSUM and 8.7 GW of rooftop solar, largely under PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, which is touching 5.6 million beneficiaries.

The Union Minister highlighted the need for more research on Agrivoltaics to understand what works best for different crops, climates and regions. He gave the example of BAIF's Rural Innovation Centre in Pune where researchers are testing 17 solar configurations across 30 crops, underscoring the importance of finding the right combination of crop, panel height, spacing, tracking system and business model for each farming condition.

Shri Joshi urged stakeholders, including industry and innovators, to focus on structures that allow tractors and harvesters to move freely and withstand local weather conditions, crop-wise and region-wise data generation by ICAR, agricultural universities and Krishi Vigyan Kendras, and innovation in structures, materials and mounting systems to narrow the cost gap with conventional solar. He said India is already building village-level skills and has trained almost 70,000 Surya Mitras.

The Minister said India's experience in agrivoltaics can be particularly relevant to the Global South, where farms have small holdings, abundant sunshine and grids that are still catching up. He said India's scale provides an opportunity to develop affordable and practical solutions that can be replicated across the Global South.

During the Curtain Raiser, the Union Minister also launched the teaser of the 7th Agrivoltaics World Conference 2026 along with the unveiling of the official Conference logo. The Agrivoltaics Pitch Hub on the theme "Fueling Farm to Fork Innovations" was also announced with the National Solar Energy Federation of India (NSEFI) as the knowledge partner. Built around the 3F framework of Food, Fuel and Fibre, the Pitch Hub will invite innovative solutions that can contribute to the future of agrivoltaics.

Several national and international stakeholders, along with senior officials and representatives from Ministries, State Departments, research and industry sectors, were present during the Curtain Raiser.

The 7th Agrivoltaics World Conference 2026 will be held from 21st to 23rd October 2026 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. The three-day international conference will bring together farmers, policymakers, researchers, industry leaders, international delegations and other stakeholders from across the world to deliberate on the future of agrivoltaics and explore pathways for scaling the sector.

The Conference is expected to provide an important platform for global and national stakeholders to exchange experiences, foster partnerships and identify practical pathways for integrating agriculture and solar energy. It will seek to advance farmer-centric, sustainable and scalable agrivoltaics solutions while strengthening India's role in shaping the global discourse on the sector.



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