



## **Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan Addresses Southern States Regional Agriculture Conference in Hyderabad, Focuses on Farmers' Incomes and Agricultural Growth**

**Nation First, It Does Not Matter Which Government Is in Power in a State: Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan**

**If Old Acts and Procedures Need Change, States Should Come Forward with Suggestions: Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan**

**Prime Minister Modi Has Said: Government Must Be Visible in People's Lives, Not Just in Files: Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan**

**Machines Can Make Bread, But They Cannot Grow Wheat; The World Cannot Run Without Agriculture: Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan**

**Every State Has Different Conditions, Making Regional Agriculture Conferences Essential: Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan**

**Food Security, Farmers' Livelihoods and Nutrition Security Are the Three Key Goals of Agriculture: Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan**

**Southern India Has Huge Horticulture Potential; Focus on Maximising Benefits for Coconut and Cashew Farmers: Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan**

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Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan today addressed the Regional Agriculture Conference for the Southern States in Hyderabad, with discussions focusing on key challenges and opportunities facing agriculture in the region. The conference discussed the impact of El Niño, crop diversification and the measures required for the upcoming Rabi

season. Shri Chouhan said the deliberations were not an exercise in discussion alone, but were aimed at bringing tangible improvements in farmers' lives, strengthening India's food security, expanding employment opportunities through agriculture and giving fresh momentum to the economy through the farm sector. 'Nation First' is the guiding principle of the government, Shri Chouhan said, adding that the Centre does not approach agricultural issues on the basis of which political party is in power in a state. The focus, he said, is on finding solutions that can improve the lives of farmers under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

### **Machines can make bread, but they cannot grow wheat**

Shri Chouhan said technological progress, including artificial intelligence, machine learning, robotics and other modern technologies, would continue to transform the world, but agriculture would remain indispensable. "Fruits, vegetables and grains can only come from the farm, and farmers are the ones who produce them. The world cannot function without agriculture," he said. A machine may be able to make bread, he said, but it cannot produce wheat. "Grain will always have to be grown in the field. That is why a farmer is not only an 'Annadata' but also a 'Jeevandata'," he said. Shri Chouhan said serving farmers was, for him, akin to serving God because agriculture is fundamental to human life. He outlined three key objectives for Indian agriculture. The first is to ensure food security for a population of more than 140 crore. He said this has become even more important in the present circumstances and India cannot afford to depend on the world for its food requirements. The second objective is to secure farmers' livelihoods. The farmer who feeds the nation must also live a secure and prosperous life, and increasing farmers' incomes must remain a key priority. The third objective is nutritional security. Ensuring that people have access not just to food, but to nutritious food, must also remain central to agricultural policy. Shri Chouhan highlighted the immense potential for horticulture in southern India, particularly in spices, coffee, cashew, cocoa, sandalwood and other crops. These sectors, he said, also have an important role to play in strengthening nutritional security.

### **Regional agriculture conferences essential for region-specific planning**

Shri Chouhan said India's agricultural landscape is marked by significant diversity. While the country earlier held a single Rabi conference, states have different agro-climatic zones, resources, water availability and soil conditions. "It is not possible to sit at one place for a day and prepare a common Rabi or Kharif plan for the entire country," he said. The Rabi conference was therefore expanded from one day to two days, allowing each state greater opportunity to present its concerns, challenges and suggestions. The Centre can also place its expectations before the states and jointly work towards an agricultural roadmap. Shri Chouhan said Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has also emphasised the importance of regional conferences. The challenges faced by Jammu and Kashmir, Gujarat or the Northeast, he said, cannot necessarily be the same as those faced by Andhra Pradesh or Telangana. Different geographical and climatic conditions require different approaches to farming. The Southern Regional Agriculture Conference has been organised with this understanding and to develop solutions suited to the specific needs of the region.

### **Rules should serve people, not become a burden on them**

Shri Chouhan said Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has placed strong emphasis on reforms and called for a review of rules, laws and procedures that may need to be changed. "Rules are meant for people; people are not meant for rules," he said. He urged state governments to review outdated Acts and procedures and make changes wherever necessary. If any issue requires intervention at the level of the Government of India, states should communicate it openly, he said. The Prime Minister has repeatedly emphasised that government should be visible in people's lives and not confined to files, Shri Chouhan

said. Wherever changes in rules are required, states should put forward their suggestions. The Centre will undertake necessary reforms at its level, while states should make changes within their jurisdiction to provide greater relief to citizens.

### **States should learn from best practices and jointly build an agricultural roadmap**

Shri Chouhan said the conference would include presentations and discussions on various agricultural issues, followed by interaction with farmers and other stakeholders to seek their suggestions. Best practices from different states would also be presented so that successful initiatives in one state could be adapted by others. He noted that southern states have undertaken significant work in agriculture and horticulture and congratulated them for their achievements, while emphasising that there remains scope for further improvement. “The Government of India will support the states with full strength. Land is with the states, farmers are in the states, and the Centre will provide all possible support. Both must work together,” he said. Reiterating the principle of 'Nation First', Shri Chouhan said Centre-State cooperation is essential for taking agriculture forward and is one of the key reasons why regional conferences are important.

### **Coconut exports grow 62% in one year**

Highlighting the potential of the coconut sector, Shri Chouhan said India's coconut exports increased from ₹4,349 crore to ₹7,038 crore in one year, registering a growth of 62%. He said a new scheme for promotion of coconut has been announced in the Budget and is now set to become operational. Since southern states are the country's leaders in coconut production, they should begin preparations to take full advantage of the new initiative. He also called for a strategy to rejuvenate old coconut plantations. Coconut trees that are 60–70 years old often produce fewer coconuts and may not provide the desired quality, he said. States should therefore consider gradually replacing old trees with new plantations in phases. Shri Chouhan also urged states to prepare in advance for the promotion schemes for cashew and cocoa so that farmers in these sectors can derive maximum benefit.

### **FTAs opening new opportunities for Indian farmers in global markets**

Shri Chouhan said India has entered into several Free Trade Agreements with countries around the world under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. These agreements have facilitated market access for a range of agricultural products, including fruits, vegetables and grains. He called for a detailed study of these agreements to identify products in demand in international markets and to align domestic production accordingly. Farmers should be encouraged to produce fruits, vegetables and grains that meet international quality requirements, he said. International standards should be adopted across the agricultural value chain so that Indian farmers can benefit from expanding global markets. “The markets of the world are opening up for India, and this is an opportunity for farmers,” Shri Chouhan said, urging all stakeholders to deliberate seriously on the Rabi season and other issues related to agriculture.

### **Telangana to get 2 lakh houses under PMAY-G**

Shri Chouhan said the present state government has taken the initiative and the first instalment from the Government of India for construction of 2 lakh houses has been handed over to the Chief Minister of Telangana. Construction of these 2 lakh houses will now begin, he said. Shri Chouhan added that beneficiaries whose houses are still kutchha and who have been identified through the survey would also be covered in subsequent phases. The Centre will continue to extend full support to Telangana across sectors, he said. The Southern Regional Agriculture Conference brings together the Centre, southern states and Union Territories, agricultural experts, ICAR institutions, progressive farmers and other stakeholders to deliberate on region-specific agricultural priorities and strengthen coordination for sustainable and resilient agriculture.

**SS/MS/DK**

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