Boosting horticulture through remote sensing

Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh on Monday announced March 2018 as the deadline to complete the ambitious project of developing the horticulture sector using remote sensing technology and geo-informatics.

India is the second-largest producer of fruits and vegetables in the world and the biggest producer of fruits such as banana, mango, papaya and lemon among others. But the country still has some distance to cover in terms of exports as post-harvest wastage of produce in India is high.

In 2015, the Modi government started project CHAMAN — acronym for Coordinated Horticulture Assessment and Management using geo-informatics — to prepare a comprehensive horticultural plan. Using remote sensing technology to study soil conditions, land use, weather and cropping patter, the Centre has chosen 185 districts across the country where seven selected crops are being promoted.

Once complete, the findings of the project would be shared with all states to give to boost to cultivation of horticultural crops.

States put into groups

Different states have been divided into different groups to grow banana, mango, citrus fruits, potato, tomato, onion and chilli.

Sharing the progress of the project CHAMAN at a press briefing, Mr Singh said the Centre would convene a meeting of the northeastern states by January next year as the report on horticulture development for this region was ready.

“This sector provides nutrient rich crops to the people and better remunerative prices to the farmers and increases their incomes,” Mr. Singh said.

Under CHAMAN, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Gujarat and Maharashtra have been identified as the major banana-growing states. Mango cultivation is being promoted in Andhra, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana, while onion is the focus for Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh.

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