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Union Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan launches 'ASEAN-India Fellowship' for Higher Education in Agriculture and Allied Sciences today in PUSA, New Delhi

Agriculture has been the backbone of India's economy for centuries, providing livelihoods to millions and contributing significantly to the Gross Domestic Product

The ASEAN-India Fellowship for Higher Education in Agriculture and Allied Science was launched by Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan in the presence of Union Ministers of State for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Shri Bhagirath Choudhary and Shri Ram Nath Thakur in ICAR, PUSA, New Delhi today.



Shri Chouhan applauded that the ICAR has been at the forefront of shaping and ensuring the quality of agricultural education in India. It sets the rules, policies, and standards to ensure that agrarian education thrives across the country and contributes to sustainable development in this sector. Currently, around 135 international students are pursuing their degrees at various agricultural universities. India has maintained a strong partnership with ASEAN member countries since the establishment of ASEAN. ASEAN is the cornerstone of India's 'Act East Policy' and the 'Indo-Pacific Vision' built upon it. India fully supports ASEAN unity, ASEAN centrality, and ASEAN's outlook on the Indo-Pacific.

The Agriculture Minister stated that the ASEAN-India fellowship aims to support postgraduate studies in various emerging fields of agriculture and allied sciences. Participating Indian faculty members will be facilitated with introductory visits to ASEAN member countries to aid ASEAN capacity-building which will promote the development of a pool of expert human resources in ASEAN for the growth of agriculture and allied sciences, he added. He emphasised that the long-term degree courses in India can help researchers from both regions stay connected for a long time and better understand agriculture-related issues in ASEAN countries and India.



Mr Josel F Ignacio, Ambassador of Philippines to India and also India's (ASEAN) Country Coordinator, emphasised that the programme will promote the development of a pool of expert human resources in ASEAN for the growth of agriculture and allied sciences. He also highlighted the spirit of collaboration and mutual growth that this ASEAN-India Fellowship Programme embodies.

Shri Sanjay Garg, Additional Secretary (DARE) and Secretary (ICAR) briefed about the contributions of ICAR in providing solutions to the problem of food security issues faced by ASEAN Countries. He further gave an insight into the significance and collaboration between ASEAN Countries in India.

Ms Alka Nangia Arora, Additional Secretary (DARE) & Financial Advisor (ICAR) was also present during the programme.

Ms. Paramita Tripathi, Joint Secretary, Oceania & Indo-Pacific, Ministry of External Affairs, discussed the ASEAN Cooperation Project and provided an introduction and insights into the 'Act East Policies.'

Earlier, Shri R.C. Aggrawal, Deputy Director General (Agricultural Education) in his welcome address briefed about the ASEAN-India fellowship programme.

Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Deputy Chief of Mission of ASEAN Countries, ICAR's Deputy Directors General, Vice-Chancellors of Deemed Universities and State Agricultural Universities, delegates from the ASEAN Member States, Representatives from the ASEAN Secretariat and Indian Mission to ASEAN, and Officials from the Ministry of External Affairs, were also present during the programme.



This initiative will expose students to cutting-edge research offered by Indian agricultural universities in their master's programmes, preparing them for future innovations. Additionally, long-term degree courses in India can help researchers

from both regions stay connected for a long time and better understand agriculture-related issues in ASEAN and India.



Starting from the academic year 2024-25, a total of 50 fellowships (10 per year) will be awarded to students from ASEAN member countries for a master's degree in agriculture and allied sciences. This project has been approved for funding under the ASEAN-India Fund for five years, covering fellowships, admission fees, living expenses, and incidental expenses for the students. It will also help students from ASEAN member countries receive quality research-based education, bringing India and the ASEAN community closer together and providing a platform for intercultural and international exchange of knowledge among students from ASEAN countries.

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