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## Impetus for Improving Islands' contribution in the National Revenue: ICAR-CIARI organizes Workshop on Import Substitution in Spices

**SRI VIJAYA PURAM, APRIL 3/-** Spices are the low volume high value commodities in trade which contribute significantly in the export earnings of the country. However, a large number of spices are still being imported in our country, thereby losing the valuable foreign exchange. In order to explore the prospects of commercial spices production and export from Andaman and Nicobar Islands, a workshop was organized by ICAR- Central Island Agricultural Research Institute, Sri Vijaya Puram on April 2, 2025 on virtual mode.

Ms. Pallavi Sarkar, IAS, Secretary (Agri.), A & N Administration lauded the efforts made by the ICAR-CIARI in organizing the important event with eminent experts in the field from pertinent organizations. Dr. E.B. Chakurkar, Director, ICAR-CIARI emphasized upon the importance of spice crops in the island

agriculture and their contribution in livelihood generation for the local farmers as well as traders. After the inaugural event, Dr. Ajit Arun Waman, Senior Scientist, ICAR-CIARI and Organizing Secretary of the event, gave a presentation on status and possibilities of quality spices production in the islands. He also elaborated upon the challenges being faced by the island farmers and the unique strengths of spices sector in the islands. He proposed incentivizing arecanut intercropping, pooling of produce at island level and modernizing postharvest infrastructure by establishing custom hiring centres.

Dr. R. Praveena, Senior Scientist, ICAR-Indian Institute of Spices Research, Kozhikode gave a detailed presentation on sustainable production technologies for organic spices in Andamans. She informed the participants about various organic

inputs and stress tolerant varieties of spices developed by their institute, which could be useful for island farmers. Dr. Homey Cheriyan, Director, Directorate of Arecanut and Spices Development (Govt. of India), Kozhikode gave an insightful presentation on the import and export trends of spices from India and emphasized upon the bright prospects of cinnamon production in the islands as the crop is hardy in nature and is not input-intensive. Dr. Rema Shree A.B., Director (Research), Spices Board (Govt. of India), Kochi, Kerala highlighted the issues pertaining to the export of spices from India and the initiatives being taken by the Spices Board in encouraging spice exporters from across the country.

These presentations were followed by an interaction session among the experts and the participants in which key issues about spices sector were discussed.

In her final remarks, Secretary (Agri.) thanked the experts for their valuable inputs and assured that the programme would be followed by action oriented stakeholders' meetings to carve a roadmap for promotion of spice cultivation and trade in the islands. She also instructed the departmental officials to take up necessary steps to develop mother gardens and nurseries in the departmental farms and establish postharvest infrastructure in various production pockets of the islands. Funding for these initiatives could be explored from various relevant schemes of the department. The programme ended with vote of thanks proposed by Dr. Ajit Arun Waman. Dr. Pooja Bohra, Senior Scientist and co-organizer of the event coordinated the whole event. The programme was attended by the senior level officials from UT Department of Agriculture and KVK, South Andaman.