

# ANDAMAN SHEEKHA

The True Mirror of A & N Islands

## Inauguration of Kisan Mela–2026 cum Exhibition at ICAR-CIARI

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Sri Vijaya Puram, Feb 27: The Kisan Mela–2026 was inaugurated on 27 February 2026 at ICAR–Central Island Agricultural Research Institute (ICAR-CIARI), Sri Vijaya Puram. The event was inaugurated by Dr. A. K. Nayak, Deputy Director General (Natural Resource Management), ICAR, New Delhi. The inaugural ceremony was attended by distinguished guests including Dr. A. Velmurugam, Assistant Director General (SWM), ICAR, New Delhi; Dr. B. Augustine Jerard, Project Coordinator (Palms), ICAR-CPCRI, Kasaragod; Dr. Jai Sunder, Director, ICAR-CIARI; Tribal Chief Mr. Lionald Nicomed from CTC, Car Nicobar; and Mr. Rakesh B. Pangat, Deputy General Manager at NABARD, Sri Vijaya Puram, along with scientists, officials, farmers, and other stakeholders.

In his inaugural speech, Dr. A. K. Nayak commended the substantial contributions made by ICAR-CIARI in the development and transfer of technology across various sectors including agriculture, horticulture, livestock, fisheries, and natural resource management. He noted that the commencement of the Kisan Mela signifies a special occasion dedicated to farmers. By highlighting the unique ecological wealth of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which is marked by extensive forest cover, plentiful water resources, and rich biodiversity, he underscored the necessity for sustainable use of these resources to improve farmers' income and ensure livelihood security. He also pointed out that the growth of tourism in the Islands has had a positive impact on the rural economy and has created new opportunities for farmers.

He urged farmers to embrace the advanced technologies presented during the mela to boost productivity and economic returns. He stressed that agricultural products from the Islands hold potential not only for local markets but also for distribution to mainland India. Dr. Nayak encouraged farmers to actively share their feedback with the Institute so that technologies can be adjusted according to practical field conditions. He further stressed the importance of collaborative and multidisciplinary efforts among research institutions, local administration, and stakeholders to address farmers' problems and strengthen the farming community of the Islands.

Dr. A. Velmurugam, Assistant Director General (SWM), ICAR, New Delhi, emphasized the importance of utilizing the Agromet Advisory services provided by the Institute and urged farmers to regularly follow these advisories to enhance agricultural productivity and minimize climate-related risks. He encouraged the farmers to actively engage with the institute's scientists, visit the institute frequently, and seek expert guidance to resolve field-level problems. He further advised farmers to maintain regular contact with scientists to receive timely and periodic advisories for improving farm management and achieving sustainable agricultural development.

Dr. B. Augustine Jerard, Project Coordinator (Palms), advised farmers to adopt best management practices in plantation crops to enhance productivity and sustainability. He emphasized the importance of scientific crop management, including proper nutrient management, water conservation, pest and disease management, and timely cultural operations. He also highlighted the benefits of intercropping in plantation systems, which can improve resource utilization, diversify farm income, and reduce economic risk. He encouraged farmers to integrate suitable intercrops to ensure higher returns and year-round income generation from plantation farming systems.

Mr. Rakesh B. Pangat, Deputy General Manager, NABARD, elaborated on the various schemes and financial support mechanisms available for farmers, Self-Help Groups, and rural entrepreneurs.

Dr. Jai Sunder, Director, ICAR-CIARI, extended a warm welcome to the dignitaries and farmers attending the programme. In his address, he briefed the gathering on the importance of organizing the Kisan Mela as a vital platform for technology dissemination, knowledge exchange, and strengthening farmer-scientist interaction. He emphasized the need for farmers to adopt institute-developed technologies to enhance agricultural productivity and achieve better economic returns. He encouraged farmers to regularly visit the institute and maintain close interaction with scientists for technical guidance and support. He further urged them to seek timely advisories to effectively address field-level challenges and improve overall farm management practices.

During the mela, various divisions of ICAR-CIARI displayed technologies related to horticulture, fisheries, animal science, natural resource management, and crop improvement. A total of 16 stalls were set up, featuring technological exhibits from ICAR-CIARI, the Department of Agriculture, NABARD, SBI, Self-Help Groups (SHGs), PPVFRA, and private organizations. Approximately 400 farmers and farm women participated in programme and interacted with scientists and experts, making the event a vibrant platform for knowledge exchange and technology dissemination.

During the Kisan Mela, various extension related publications were released in the local language to popularize improved agricultural and allied management practices among farmers. Dr. Y. Ramakrishna, Principal Scientist and Head of KVK, South Andaman, delivered the vote of thanks. The program was coordinated by Mr. Mohit, Subject Matter Specialist at KVK, South Andaman.

Earlier, the Deputy Director General and ADG, visited the various experimental farm of the institute, including the World Coconut Germplasm Centre (WCGC). An interactive meeting was also organized with scientists and officials to discuss ongoing research programmes, institutional priorities, and strategies for strengthening agricultural development in the Islands. During the visit, he inaugurated Sanvardhan, the primary plant hardening facility, and also inaugurated the indoor portable carp hatchery unit. He further visited the ornamental fish breeding unit, where he interacted with scientists and appreciated the ongoing research and technological advancements.