

**Three-day agar buyers and sellers conference in Agartala**

**There is huge potential for development of agar based industry in the state: Chief Minister**

There is huge potential for development of agar based industries in the state. The state government has taken advantage of this potential for the economic development of the state. Chief Minister Professor (Dr.) Manik Saha said this while inaugurating three-day Agar-buyers and sellers conference organized by Forest Department in collaboration with JICA SCATFORM Project at Hotel Polo Tower in Agartala yesterday. He said, there used to be a lot of agar plants in this Agartala. Many people believe that the name Agartala originated from agar. The Chief Minister said that the agar of India is much better than the agar of other countries of the world. Agar based businesses in the state have huge potential for expansion.

In the conference, the Chief Minister said that the state government is serious enough to take the agar sector forward which was neglected in the past. He said that the present government is continuously working to expand and develop the agar industry by adopting several plans. Various steps including Agar Policy has been adopted to facilitate agar growers and traders. He said that there are more than 12 million agar trees in the private sector of the state. The Government of India has already approved the export of 25 metric tons of agar wood chips and 1,500 kg of agar oil from the country. The Chief Minister said that the present government is committed to the development of agar sector. The government is standing beside agar growers and agar traders so that in future they can focus on agar financially.

In the conference, Tripura Industrial Development Corporation Chairman Tinku Roy said that people associated with agar cultivation in the state are very efficient. He emphasized on adopting modern policies in marketing the products produced from agar and also focusing on the quality aspect. He urged the state government as well as entrepreneurs and investors to play a positive role in the development of agar sector. He said that an initiative has been taken to set up an agar market at Kadamtala in North Tripura district. He also wished the overall success of this conference.

The conference was also addressed by Chief Secretary J.K Sinha, former Secretary of the Department of Tourism, Government of India, Reshmi Varma, PCCF KS Shetty, etc. CEO of JICA SCATFORM Project Dr. AM Kanfade gave the welcome speech. Agar fragrance was also formally launched by the Chief Minister. Investors from India and abroad also participated in this conference.