

DISTRICTS

No ban on tobacco cultivation, says Simha

'Problem of unauthorised growers will be resolved'

MYSURU, DHNS

M P Pratap Simha on Thursday, said that the government will not ban tobacco cultivation and assured of protecting the welfare of tobacco growers in the region.

The MP was addressing a gathering of the 20th Tobacco Institute of India (TII) Tobacco Farmers' award programme in the city. He said, "There is confusion among tobacco farmers that tobacco cultivation will be banned."

"The World Health Organisation (WHO) has submitted a proposal to ban tobacco cultivation by 2020. But, we have made it clear that cultivation will not be banned. We, the people's representatives, are not against tobacco growers.

We work for the growers," he said.

The MP said, "It is not right to blame the Indian Tobacco Company (ITC), if the farmers do not get suitable price. The company procures 50% of the tobacco from the farmers. So, the company should maintain consistency in price. The problem of unauthorised growers will be resolved."

MLA H P Manjunath said, "The growers are facing several problems from many years. We are trying to solve the issues."

Tobacco Board Chairman Y Raghunadha Babu said, "Tobacco cultivation is expensive, compared to other agriculture crops. It needs nearly Rs 1 lakh for cultivation on one acre."

Awards

Syed Mahmood Ahmad, Di-



Tobacco farmers were awarded for exemplary farming practices and crop achievements, during the 20th Tobacco Institute of India (TII) Tobacco Farmers' award programme in Mysuru on Thursday. MLAs H P Manjunath, K Mahadev, MP Pratap Simha, Tobacco Board Director (Auctions) T V Ravi and Central Tobacco Research Institute, Hunsur, head S Ramakrishnan are seen. DH PHOTO

rector, TII said, "The awards were instituted to felicitate and encourage the cigarette leaf tobacco farming community for its effort in adopting modern and progressive farming practices."

He said, "It is important to

recognise the socio-economic importance of tobacco and its employment-generation capacity, while framing tobacco taxation and regulatory policies. Policies, seeking excessive cigarette taxation and extreme regulations, should

consider the consequences of such measures on the livelihood of millions of people."

Any policy on tobacco must ensure the active involvement of tobacco farmers and consultation with all stakeholders. This will ensure adoption of

policy that is balanced, evidence-based, equitable and implementable and prevent unilateral policy initiatives that lead to adverse consequences on the livelihood of tobacco farmers and on the occupation of all those who are engaged in the legal tobacco supply chain, he said.

FCV tobacco farmers

The increase in taxation and the resultant drop in legal cigarettes had a devastating impact on the Indian Flue-Cured Virginia (FCV) tobacco farmers, he said.

A total of 17 tobacco farmers were awarded for exemplary farming practices and crop achievements. B N Jayaram, a veteran tobacco farmer, was presented the 'Lifetime Achievement' award.

MLAs Sa Ra Mahesh, K Mahadevu, Tobacco Board Director (Auctions) T V Ravi, Central Tobacco Research Institute, Hunsur, head S Ramakrishnan, farmer leaders B V Javeregowda and G Sheshagiri Rao from Andhra Pradesh were present.