

The Wave Andaman

The Voice of Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Khet Bachao Campaign Promotes Balanced Fertiliser Use in N&M Andaman



Sri Vijaya Puram, June 13: Efforts to promote sustainable agriculture and protect soil health received a renewed push in North and Middle Andaman as farmers, agricultural experts and government officials gathered at Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Nimbudera, for a mega awareness-cum-interaction programme under the nationwide “Khet Bachao Abhiyan”.

Organised in collaboration with the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) and KVK Nimbudera, the programme brought together farmers and representatives of local self-government institutions to discuss the importance of balanced fertiliser use, sustainable farming techniques and long-term soil conservation.

The campaign forms part of a broader national initiative aimed at encouraging scientific nutrient management and reducing the adverse effects of excessive chemical fertiliser usage on agricultural land.

Addressing the gathering, Director of Agriculture Debabrata Basantia highlighted the growing need for farmers to use fertilisers and pesticides judiciously and in accordance with recommended dosages. He cautioned that the continuous and indiscriminate application of heavy inorganic fertilisers can gradually harden the soil, reduce its fertility and negatively affect long-term agricultural productivity. He stressed that maintaining soil health is essential for ensuring sustainable crop production and food security. According to him, farmers need to move towards a more balanced approach that combines nutrient management with environmentally friendly farming practices.

Basantia encouraged farmers to increase the use of bio-fertilisers and bio-pesticides as alternatives that can improve soil quality while maintaining productivity. He also recommended the cultivation of green manure crops such as Dhaincha and Sunhemp, which are widely recognised for their ability to enhance soil fertility, improve organic matter content and support sustainable agricultural systems.

The Director of Agriculture also used the occasion to raise awareness about the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY). He urged farmers to enrol in the crop insurance scheme for the upcoming Kharif season and highlighted that the premium cost is fully covered, making the scheme accessible to cultivators seeking protection against crop losses.

Joining the programme through video conference, S. Banumathi, Deputy Director in the Directorate of Extension under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, explained the objectives behind the nationwide campaign and emphasised its relevance in the current agricultural scenario.

She noted that balanced fertiliser application not only improves crop productivity but also protects soil resources for future generations. Banumathi encouraged farmers in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to adopt nutrient management practices based on crop requirements rather than relying on excessive fertiliser application.

Agricultural experts at the event discussed the importance of maintaining a balance between productivity and environmental sustainability. They explained that healthy soils contribute to better water retention, improved nutrient availability and increased resilience against climate-related stresses.

The programme also featured an interactive session during which farmers raised questions and shared their experiences regarding fertiliser use, pest management and crop cultivation challenges. Officials and experts responded to queries and provided guidance on adopting improved agricultural practices suited to local conditions.

Participants were informed about the role of integrated nutrient management, which combines organic and inorganic sources of nutrients to optimise productivity while reducing environmental impact. The approach is increasingly being promoted as a sustainable alternative to conventional input-intensive farming.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Joint Director (Agriculture) Shirley Thomas, who acknowledged the participation of farmers and stakeholders in the campaign.

A total of 46 participants attended the programme through both physical and virtual modes, including representatives from Basantipur Gram Panchayat and members of the farming community.

Agriculture officials described the initiative as an important step towards creating greater awareness about responsible fertiliser use and sustainable farming practices in the Islands. They expressed hope that the campaign would encourage farmers to adopt soil-friendly agricultural methods and contribute to long-term improvements in productivity and environmental conservation.

With soil degradation and changing climatic conditions emerging as major concerns for agriculture, authorities believe such awareness programmes will play a crucial role in promoting resilient farming systems and safeguarding the agricultural future of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.