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**PRESS NOTE**

**“VALUE-ADDED PROCESSING HOLDS KEY  
FOR GROWTH OF AGRI-COMMUNITY” -- SMT. HARSIMRAT KAUR BADAL**

**AAHAR 2015 COMMENCES AT PRAGATI MAIDAN**

➤ **OVER 800 EXHIBITORS FROM INDIA AND 22 COUNTRIES**

Stressing need to save post harvest losses through value-added processing, Hon'ble Minister of Food Processing Industries, Smt. Harsimrat Kaur Badal pointed out that Indian food processing industry has a great significance in terms of employment generation, poverty alleviation, improving agricultural productivity, price control of basic commodities, export promotion and foreign exchange earnings. She said that the future of the Indian farmers depends on the success of the food processing industry, as India's prosperity is linked to the growth of incomes in the agrarian sector of the economy.

In her inaugural address of the 30<sup>th</sup> edition of AAHAR-the International Food and Hospitality Fair at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, the Minister asked the India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) and its associates to host the 'Aahar' editions in different States for regional empowerment of the industry and overall socio-economic progress of the country.

Present on the occasion were H.E. Mr. Marek Sawicki, Minister of Agriculture & Rural Development, Government of Poland, Mr. Ranglal Jamuda, Secretary, Minister of Food Processing Industries, Mr. V. Kumar, General Manager, (ITPO) and Mr. Vikram Sehgal, General Manager, ITPO, delegates, participants India and overseas and media persons.

Speaking on the occasion, Smt. Harsimrat Kaur Badal complimented the ITPO for organising "Aahar" with an enhanced scale and stature in terms of participation and area booked. She informed that India is one of the largest producer of food grains besides being second in the world in the production of fruits and vegetables and first in the milk production and livestock population which makes this sector further attractive for domestic and overseas investors.

H.E. Mr. Marek Sawicki, Minister of Agriculture & Rural Development, Government of Poland expressed his happiness over considerable participation of his country in AAHAR2015, one of the biggest specialised food exhibition in the South - Asia . He indicated that this participation would be meaningful in terms of trade promotion and strengthening bilateral trade between India and Poland, one of the largest exporter of food items in European region.

Mr. Ranglal Jamuda, Secretary, Minister of Food Processing Industries elaborated about the new initiatives by the Ministry for empowerment of the food processing community. These include: setting- up of five Mega Food Parks, provision of the corpus fund to help lend to food processing unit and also for creation of infrastructure in these parks, identification of surplus raw material through preparation of a 'Food Map of India'. It aims to identify the surplus and deficient areas in the country of various agricultural and horticultural produce so as to plan processing clusters by means of setting -up processing facilities under current schemes, he added.

In his welcome address, Mr.V. Kumar , General Manager ,ITPO highlighted the salient features of the exposition.

The display profile is segregated into different sectors in AAHAR2015 including: House Keeping (Hall 6, 7 ABC & 7FGH), Machinery Equipment (Hall 7D, 7E, 8-12A & 14) and Food Ingredients & Additives (Hall 15 & 18). Apart from the "Culinary Art India", a live competitions of over 300 chefs, seminars on 'Challenges-food processing Industry', 'Organic Food Scenario & obstacles' and 'Agriculture related topics by the Government of Poland' are also scheduled to be held on the sidelines of the fair.

Aahar 2015 (March 10-14) is open from 10.00 am. to 6.00 pm. for business visitors, while the general public can visit the fair from 2.00 pm. to 6.00 pm., on the last day. Mobile App has been introduced for convenience of the visitors and participants.

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