LUNGLEI DISTRICT SUPPLY CHAIN COMMITTEE ENSURES SUPPLY OF FRESH VEGETABLES AND FRUITS AMIDST COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

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In the wake of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and subsequent nationwide lockdown, the Mizoram Government and society at large, have been concerned about the welfare and livelihood of farmers in villages across the State. Supply Chain Committees have been set up in all Districts of the State to ensure seamless procurement and supply of essentials from farmers/ suppliers to end consumers. Deputy Commissioners have also directed the Village Level Task Forces to allow farmers to continue working at their respective farms, with clear instructions that the farmers observe good personal hygiene and social distancing while out on their farms. The initiative has an added agenda of facilitating continuous supply of fresh produce to citizens, in a bid to boost their health and build up immunity during this unprecedented health crisis.

It was against this backdrop that a Supply Chain Committee was set up for Lunglei District, with the Horticulture Department serving as the Nodal Department. The team swung into action on the 28th March, 2020 (Saturday), procuring more than 40 varieties of fresh farm produce from farmers across the District, which were then subsequently supplied to Village Level Task Forces across the District, especially in and around Lunglei Town. As on date, the team has facilitated procurement of 43 pickup truckloads of vegetables worth Rs. 22.44 lakhs approx from 29 villages across the District. This includes 190.75 quintals of cabbage, 95.25 quintals of brinjal, 30 quintals of tomatoes, 10,500 bundles of mustard leaves, 2400 bundles of pumpkin leaves and other vegetables. It is worthwhile to note that the supply chain has been functioning smoothly, and there hasn’t been any wastage of the perishable vegetables. The initiative has also brought to light the self sufficiency of Lunglei District in different varieties of vegetables, with the Horticulture & Agriculture Departments, and farmers alike earning praise and accolades from citizens across the District.

The Lunglei District Supply Chain Committee has also procured strawberries harvested by farmers of Noaotla-III( KM-10) village at Siaha District, located about 6 hours away from the Lunglei District capital. The Horticulture Department Refrigerated Van carried the highly
perishable consignment of 350 packets of strawberries, which was sold out within a few hours from the DHO Sales Emporium in Chanmari, Lunglei. The team has also shared its plan to procure more varieties of fruits from various Districts across the State.

With the onset of sowing season, the District Supply Chain Committee has also initiated sale of seeds of different varieties of vegetables and fruits at the Sales Emporium, Divisional Horticulture Office. More than 30 varieties of seeds are available and can be bought by the general public at the emporium. The emporium is doing brisk business, with more than Rs. 1.5 lakh worth of seeds being sold within a span of few days. With lockdown being extended in the State till 30th April, the Committee is actively encouraging those with garden space to procure these seeds and start a kitchen garden in their homes. With all educational institutions presently being closed due to the pandemic, the kitchen garden initiative will have an added advantage of engaging youngsters in educational and productive activities while under lockdown.

Parallel to the District Supply Chain Committee’s initiative to make available vegetable seeds to the public, the Lunglei High Powered Committee, Agriculture Department and Horticulture Department have tied up to offer Vegetable Seeds at subsidized rate to farmers across the District. The initiative was kicked off by the HPC Vice Chairman Pu Lawmawma Tochhawng at the Agriculture Department Office at Chanmari today. With this initiative, farmers will be able to procure seeds at subsidized rates from these Departments. To ease logistics, staff of 10 Agriculture Circle Office and 8 Horticulture Circle Office spread across the District will facilitate home delivery of the seeds to the concerned farmers.

With these initiatives, the Government aims to ensure adequate supply of nutritional requirements to citizens, while also ensuring continuous production of vegetables during the lockdown.

Any queries related to COVID-19 may be reached on the COVID-19 Helpline no. 102 (Toll free), Lunglei District Helplines - 9774631304, 9436361845, 9862816040, and telephone numbers 0389-2323336 / 2318336 at any time.

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