



Karnataka signs MoUs for 33 food processing projects valued at Rs 1,121 cr. during GIM

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The Karnataka government has announced 33 food processing projects to come up at a cost of Rs 1,121 Crore. The memorandum of understanding with the companies was signed during the Global Investors Meet that concluded here last week. The projects expected to come up included UB Group's beer manufacturing unit at Nanjangud in Mysore at a cost of Rs 45 Crore, **Premium Farm Fresh** to set up three private wholesale markets at Shimoga, Kolar and Belgaum at an investment of around Rs 350 crore.

According to Karnataka agriculture minister S A Ravindranath, the state has the potential to become an agriculture hub for food processing in the country. With fertile soil and six major agro-climatic zones, the state is noted for its high volume and variety produce along with an abundant marine supply.

"The support of cold chain and warehousing infrastructure, trained and skilled manpower, research capabilities, connectivity to national and international markets along with the industrial-friendly policy of the government provided a firm base for the agro processing industry to flourish," he added.

In his address on the food processing opportunities in the state, Dr V Prakash, director, Central Food Technological Research Institute, Mysore, said that the state which was once ranked number one, was now at the fourth place in fruit production and was estimated to slip to 17th position by 2014 if the right efforts were not made.

He urged the government to increase the efforts to improve food production in the state emphasizing the need to drive investments in creating value-added products and strong partnerships as the need of the hour.

Food technology (FT) was bigger than Information Technology (IT) and Biotechnology (BT), if the total IT and BT population accounted for about 1.2 billion people FT accounted for 3.6 billion.

"That is why we are eating our meals," Dr Prakash said.