

## Planters body seeks comprehensive labour reforms, new policies

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Kochi, Oct 11:

The Association of Planters of Kerala has underlined the need for introducing productivity-linked wages in the plantation sector to increase the earning potential of the workforce.

The current financial crisis prevents plantations from fulfilling the desires of employees for higher wages as the sector is facing an unprecedented existential crisis, C.Vinayaraghavan, outgoing president of APK, said.

Being one of the biggest employers and most labour intensive industry, he noted that comprehensive reforms at the labour front are very much essential for the plantation sector to survive.

Addressing the 77th annual general meeting here, the planters' body president reiterated APK's demand to formulate new policies to encourage the sector to participate in the new developmental model of the State Government.

Redundant land laws, which have outlived its purpose and time, are preventing the freedom of farmers to shift from one plantation crop to another. Such interchange of crops will make the plantations more remunerative, besides enhancing job opportunities in the sector.

It has been brought to the notice of the government that the industry can support the government in achieving self-sufficiency in vegetable production, dairy products, egg & poultry and meat products.

However, the policy makers should look at the industry from a developmental spectrum and formulate new policies to encourage the sector to participate in the new developmental model of the government, he said.

As the climate change now becomes a reality, Vinayaraghavan called upon the government to utilise the climate change fund for constructing rainwater harvesting structures, percolation pits for ground water recharge and other soil conservation measures to improve the ground water table and reduce the water scarcity in the low elevation areas.

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