

Sh. Bhagirath Choudhary, Hon'ble Minister of State, Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India and Dr. M.L. Jat, Hon'ble Secretary, DARE and Director General, ICAR, New Delhi visited ICAR-CAZRI on 20 September 2025

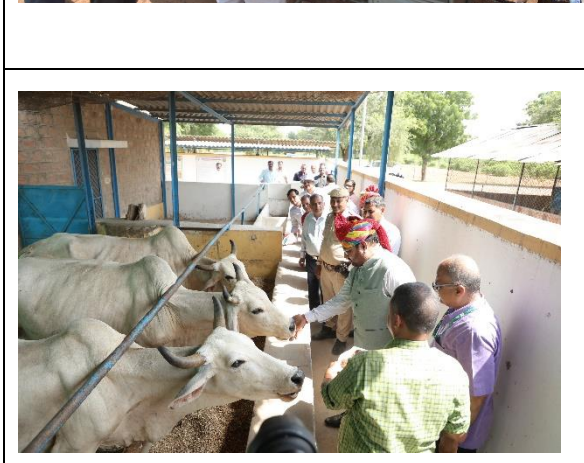
Sh. Bhagirath Choudhary ji, Hon'ble Minister of State, Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare, Government of India, Dr. M.L. Jat, Secretary, DARE and Director General, ICAR, New Delhi visited Central Arid Zone Research Institute, Jodhpur on 20 September, 2025. Dr. A.K. Nayak, DDG(NRM) and Dr. D.K. Yadav, DDG (Crop Science Division) of ICAR also accompanied them. On their arrival, they were accorded warm welcome by Institute's Director, Dr Sumant Vyas. The DG and DDG (NRM) were taken by the Director to various experimental sites of CAZRI Research farm and interacted with scientists at Integrated Farming cafeteria, Solar yard and Agri-voltaic system, Alternate fodder systems, Horticulture block, Integrated Farming System, Cattle Demonstrate unit, Small Ruminant Research Unit, Melia dubia-Gmelina Arborea based new agroforestry systems, long term research on soils, experiment on Moong-Moth and Pearl millet, Precision farming and Poly house vegetable system units.

In the meeting held in the afternoon at the Institute New Auditorium, Hon'ble Minister graced the function as the Chief Guest and addressed the audiences which included institute Staffs, IMC member, local representatives, CAZRI Kisan Mitra, Directors and Scientists of other ICAR institutes located on the campus, ATARI and RC-NBPGR. He emphasized the need for India to become a developed nation by improving the status of agriculture and farmers, which can only be achieved through strengthening agricultural research and meeting the needs of farmers. He commended the efforts of CAZRI and its techniques which has a greater contribution in the changing agricultural landscape and natural resources of desert region. Hon'ble Minister on his speech mentioned about some historical facts about Thar desert and traditional knowledge.

DG-ICAR, in his speech, congratulated CAZRI for its valuable contributions achieved under very difficult circumstances in the Thar region of India. As an example, he cited how soil loss due to wind erosion affects not only farmers but also the public exchequer. He emphasized that if satellite images of the past and present desert landscape were available, the impact of CAZRI's work would be clearly visible. The region is experiencing rapid and remarkable progress, made possible through the collaborative efforts of CAZRI, farmers, and the government. Pearl millet, cluster bean and moth bean of Kharif season and cumin and isabgol of rabi season are prominent crops of arid zone, therefore efforts should be made to develop climate resilient varieties of these crops.

He highlighted the need to strengthen this Mini ICAR, which is achievable by increasing confidence levels and putting in more effort and focus. He suggested that CAZRI has the potential to surpass many international institutes and urged everyone to strive to make it the best desert institute. He acknowledged the complex challenges faced by farmers and stressed the importance of CAZRI providing systemic solutions through integration to increase efficiency. He recommended that CAZRI plan its activities through an inter-institutional collaborative approach. He emphasized that the institute's technology should align with the farmers' systems to encourage adoption. Focusing on demand-driven research was also crucial, and ICAR was working towards this goal. To address a larger population, upscaling was necessary to meet the needs of stakeholders.

Earlier, Dr. Sumant Vyas, Director, welcomed the dignitaries and made a presentation highlighting the salient achievements accomplished by the institute. He mentioned how CAZRI is contributing to agricultural improvements with technologies like digital soil inventory, precision farming, farm mechanization, IFS, natural and organic farming, livestock management system etc.







In his speech, DDG (NRM) discussed how the institute was initially established to address desertification and wind erosion issues, but now showcases various revolutions like green, white, yellow, and brown on the research farm. He noted that the desert landscape is now greener, playing a role in the changing climate scenario. He commended the applied research being conducted at the institute and emphasized the importance of ensuring CAZRI's research reaches farmers through a Scaling research approach.

DDG (Crop Science) praised CAZRI's work, likening it to a Mini-ICAR due to its activities in various agricultural fields such as Crop Science, Horticulture, Natural Resources, and Engineering. He highlighted how the institute is the preferred choice for farmers seeking quality varietal material. He expressed hope that CAZRI scientists would be prepared to address challenges posed by climate change and its trends.

DG-ICAR released e-Maps on Land degradation caused by wind erosion. The maps were prepared for the year 2024 by Scientists from the Division of Natural Resources, CAZRI.

Dr S.P.S Tanwar, Head-Division of Transfer of Technology and Training delivered the vote of thanks.

DDG-NRM visited labs at Division of Natural Resources and interacted with scientists at Soil laboratory (Spectro-radiometer function unit), Digital Soil data repository unit, Centre for Combating Desertification and Minor Forest product unit of the Division. He discussed the various scientific approaches required for preparing the Land degradation mapping at the country level.