

Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan reviews ICAR-National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources in Bengaluru

Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan visited the ICAR-National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources (ICAR-NBAIR) on 29-08-2020, where he visited the National Insect Museum and Live Insect Repository. He witnessed the exhibits of ICAR-NBAIR technologies on biological pest control of insect pests. Subsequently, the Union Minister interacted with the scientists, students, staff, farmers and entrepreneurs. He commended the institute's contribution in the sustainable pest management of insect pests through biological control approaches, and highlighted the need for accelerated development of farmer-friendly technologies and making efforts to reach them to farming community, especially for smallholder farmers. He raised the concern on indiscriminate use of pesticides, management of emerging pests viz., pink bollworm in Bt cotton. He has suggested to use effective parasitoids, predators and entomopathogens for the management of insect pests, to reduce the environmental pollution, and to improve soil health. He has also emphasized the concept of "live and let live" in management of insect pests using parasitoids and predators. He has also promised that he will be with us for promotion of biocontrol means of pest management.

Dr. S. N. Sushil, Director, ICAR-NBAIR in his welcome speech expressed his gratitude to the Union Minister for visiting the institute and motivating & guiding scientists in fulfilling the expectations of the nation. He appraised the minister on the bureau activities that ICAR-NBAIR is a premier institute, focusing on eco-friendly insect pest management and conservation of beneficial insect biodiversity. The Bureau houses the *National Insect Museum*, designated as the *National Repository* under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, it preserves over **4.1 lakh insect specimens**. In addition, he highlighted that ICAR-NBAIR is having India's richest "Live Insect Repository" maintaining 137 species/ strains of live insects supporting biological control labs and academic institutions. It also holds **1101 strains/species** of entomopathogens, including fungi, bacteria, viruses, and nematodes—vital for biological pest control. He outlined on frontier research areas such as genome editing, RNAi, nanotechnology, and biosensors, aiming to develop globally competitive, pesticide-free technologies. Over the past three decades, ICAR-NBAIR has developed **53 technologies** and licensed them to **126 companies**, contributing significantly to the *Atma Nirbhar Bharat* initiative and reducing chemical pesticide dependence. The Bureau has played a key role in managing invasive pests like Papaya Mealybug, Eucalyptus gall wasp, Tomato Pinworm, Fall Armyworm, Rugose Spiralling whitefly on coconut, Cassava Mealybug etc. using classical biological control. Its outreach programs under SCSP, TSP, and NEH schemes, along with KVK demonstrations, have covered **2.5 lakh hectares** in the last 10 years. ICAR-NBAIR collaborates with national and international institutions (e.g., FAO, CABI, IISc, IARI) and supports human resource development by hosting **MSc/PhD students** and offering national/international training in biocontrol and eco-friendly pest technologies to farmers, scientists, NGOs, and defense personnel.

All the scientists, officers, staff and scholars attended the visit and explained their research activities to the Hon'ble minister. The visit was graced by presence of Sushri Shobha Karandlaje, Union Minister of State for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Labour & Employment; Dr. Raghavendra Bhatta, Deputy Director General (Animal Sciences), ICAR, New Delhi and Dr. T. K. Behera, Director, ICAR-Indian Institute of Horticultural Research, Bengaluru.









