

**G.B. Pant University of Agriculture & Technology, Pantnagar
Distt-Udham Singh Nagar (Uttarakhand)**

13th GD of ICAR- AICRP Fruit Research Project organized at University

Pantnagar, 9 February 2026. The 13th Group Discussion of the All India Coordinated Research Project on Fruits, organized by GBPUAT, Pantnagar under the aegis of ICAR was successfully inaugurated at Dr. Ratan Singh Auditorium. Scientists, representatives from 19 ICAR institutes and 22 State Agricultural Universities along with progressive farmers from six states participated in the event. Project coordinators of various fruits were also present. ICAR representatives Dr. A.K. Karnataka, former Vice-Chancellor of MPUAT, Udaipur and UHF, Bharsar and the university's officials attended the ceremony. The group discussion is regarded as an important initiative to strengthen national-level collaboration, knowledge exchange, and innovation in fruit research.

The chief guest on this occasion Vice-Chancellor, Professor (Dr.) Manmohan Singh Chauhan and other dignitaries namely, Dr. Prakash Patil, Project Coordinator (Fruits), ICAR-IIHR, Bengaluru & National Organizing Secretary; Dr. Dilip Ghosh, Director, ICAR-CCRI, Nagpur; Dr. Jagdish Rane, Director, ICAR-CIAH, Bikaner; Dr. S.K. Verma, Director, Research; Dr. Subhash Chandra, Dean of Agriculture and Dr. A.K. Singh, Joint Director of Horticulture shared the dais.

In his address, Vice-Chancellor Prof. Chauhan emphasized the effective dissemination of research results to ensure direct benefits to farmers. He highlighted the need for demand-driven research, use of modern technologies and development of agriculture as an industry. He suggested improving local fruits of Uttarakhand such as *Bedu* and *Kaafal* for better size and weight and encouraged the development of other local fruits through research. He also highlighted the planting of new fruits like dragon fruit, grapes, and avocado at the University's Horticulture Research Center, Pattharchatta and recommended registering local varieties with NBPGR, New Delhi. He stressed research to mitigate post-harvest losses and enhance shelf-life, especially considering the vulnerability of hill regions to climate change.

ICAR-Assistant Director General (Fruits & Horticultural Crops) Dr. V.B. Patel addressed the gathering virtually. He highlighted the need for fruit research in the context of climate change, reducing post-harvest losses, developing high-quality nutrient-rich varieties and increasing productivity. He noted that kiwi productivity in India is 2–3 MT/ha, compared to 38–40 MT/ha in New Zealand. He recommended registering varieties with the PPV&FR Authority, Government of India.

Dr. Dilip Ghosh emphasized developing disease- and pest-resistant varieties in response to changing weather and discussed ongoing research and significant achievements made in citrus at CICR and advised to adopt 3-P model at the AICRP centers. Dr. Jagdish Rane stressed the importance of data in research decisions and the integration of AI applications with tools/equipment to be used in future. Project Coordinator (Fruits) Dr. Prakash Patil presented detailed research updates from 49 centers across India and suggested strategies to increase fruit yield and quality. Dr. Subhash Chandra also shared his insights. Dr. S.K. Verma welcomed participants and highlighted the university's achievements and the need for research on minor fruits of Uttarakhand hills such as *Bedu*, *Kaafal*, *Hisalu*.

The publications were also released by the dignitaries and progressive farmers from six states were honoured for their outstanding contributions. The vote of thanks was delivered by Joint Director of Horticulture and Organizing Secretary, Dr. A.K. Singh.



