

## **Principal Secretary (Agriculture), Government of Rajasthan visited ICAR-Central Arid Zone Research Institute, Jodhpur**

Manju Rajpal, Principal Secretary (Agriculture), and Shubham Chaudhary, Commissioner (Horticulture), Government of Rajasthan, along with officials from the State Government's Agriculture Department, visited the Central Arid Zone Research Institute, CAZRI, on the afternoon of March 6, 2026, to review ongoing agricultural research in the arid zone. They were welcomed by Acting Director Dr. Priyabrata Santara and Heads of Divisions.



The Director presented a brief overview of the Institute's key research work. He explained that CAZRI has reclassified Rajasthan's agro-climatic zones by analyzing 62 years of data. Intense rainfall events are increasing in the desert region, which has increased the capacity for rainwater harvesting in watershed areas. He also stated that CAZRI has come out with rainwater harvesting models for 1 ha, 2 ha and more in catchment scale. Such changing scenario in rainfall pattern has increased scope for improving agriculture and horticulture production systems in the arid districts aided by pressurized irrigation systems.

The Principal Secretary appreciated CAZRI's rainwater harvesting models and urged that if these models prove to be acceptable at the grassroots level, it would be very useful to implement them on a large scale. CAZRI scientists briefed the Principal Secretary about the Institute's research initiatives on dryland agriculture, which include development of drought-tolerant crop varieties, hybrid crops, new varieties of cumin, promotion of dryland

horticultural crops and use of agroforestry systems, precision agriculture and polyhouse systems for horticulture.



The Principal Secretary highlighted the need for scientific mapping of losses to horticultural crops due to low humidity, climate change, excessive rainfall and heat. Regarding farm ponds, she spoke about the Rajasthan government plans to increase micro-irrigation coverage from the current 23–24% to 51% by 2030 and 95% by 2047. She complimented CAZRI for its new approaches towards arid agro-production systems and looked for strengthening collaboration with the State Agriculture Department to reach farmers in the dry regions of Rajasthan with advanced technologies, efficient water management practices and climate-resilient farming systems.