

(23 September 2026)

Dr Bhag Mal, Secretary, TAAS, Honored with the P M Dabadghao Memorial Award at the International Rangeland and Fodder Conference in Jhansi

During the award function organized by the Range Management Society of India (RMSI) at the International Rangeland and Fodder Conference at the Indian Grassland and Fodder Research Institute (IGFRI) in Jhansi, Dr. Bhag Mal—Secretary of the Trust for Advancement of Agricultural Sciences (TAAS), former South Asia Coordinator of Bioversity International, and former Director of IGFRI—was conferred with the prestigious **P M Dabadghao Memorial Award**. On the occasion, Dr Bhag Mal delivered the keynote **P M Dabadghao Memorial Lecture** titled "*Pastures, People and Livestock: Advancing Science for Resilient Rangelands and Livelihoods.*"



In his address, Dr Bhag Mal paid rich tribute to Shri PM Dabadghao, celebrating his pioneering contributions to grassland, rangeland, and fodder research in India, his field-oriented methodology, and his deep commitment to mentoring young scientists and supporting livestock-dependent communities. Emphasizing the global context, he highlighted that 2026 marks the UN International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists (IYRP), pointing out that rangelands cover over 54% of Earth's terrestrial surface, store 30% of global soil carbon, and sustain nearly two billion people directly or indirectly. Noting that almost half of the world's grasslands face degradation, he stressed that fodder

security must receive the same strategic priority as food security, particularly in India where livestock's share in agricultural GVA exceeds 30% and supports millions of rural households.



Dr Bhag Mal detailed key scientific and technological frontiers needed to transform the sector, addressing the critical shortage of quality forage seeds and highlighting IGFR's breakthrough in developing the world's first fertile seed-producing Bajra Napier hybrid. He advocated for a paradigm shift from single-trait selection to multi-purpose, climate-smart forage ideotypes by integrating conventional breeding, genomics, precision tools, and crop wild relatives. He also called for modernizing grassland classifications using GIS and remote sensing, expanding agroforestry systems, and adopting digital tools like AI for precision livestock management.

Concluding his lecture, Dr Bhag Mal urged the adoption of a National Rangeland and Grazing-Land Policy to protect communal grazing access and elevate rangelands into key ecological assets. He called for a collective "**Jhansi Declaration**" and a unified *Pledge for Action* across governments, research bodies, and pastoral communities to turn international declarations into measurable, long-term impact for pastoral livelihoods and ecosystem resilience.
