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Dr RS Paroda Highlights Climate-Resilient Arid Horticulture at ICAR-CIAH's 34th Foundation Day

The ICAR-Central Institute for Arid Horticulture (ICAR-CIAH) celebrated its 34th Foundation Day with great dignity on Sunday at its institute campus. Padma Bhushan Awardee Dr RS Paroda, former Secretary of DARE and former Director General of ICAR, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

In his chief guest address, Dr RS Paroda emphasized the conservation, promotion, and scientific utilization of the rich biodiversity and indigenous agricultural resources of arid regions, highlighting the need to scientifically harness the nutritional, nutraceutical, and medicinal



potential of underutilized crops such as Pilu, Kachri, Karonda, and Ker alongside value addition. Outlining core recommendations, Dr Paroda underscored crop diversification and integrated farming—combining fruits, vegetables, indigenous crops, and livestock—as essential to making arid agriculture more profitable and sustainable while encouraging initiatives like "Har

Khet Ko Tree Par Phaldaar Tree" (fruit trees in every field). He called for prioritizing climate-resilient breeding of indigenous varieties adapted to changing conditions, as well as strengthening lab-to-market integration by directly addressing farmers' challenges and accelerating technology commercialization through Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and local entrepreneurs. Through these measures, he highlighted how arid horticulture can drive farmers' prosperity, nutritional security, employment generation, and ecological resilience, contributing significantly toward the vision of *Viksit Bharat @ 2047*.



As part of the celebrations, Dr RS Paroda planted a tissue-culture-developed date palm sapling on the institute premises and released 25 scientific publications highlighting the institute's achievements in arid horticulture.

The function was attended by prominent dignitaries and agricultural leaders, including Special Guests Dr Sumant Vyas (Vice-Chancellor, Rajasthan University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences), Prof Vimla Dhukwal (Vice-Chancellor, Agriculture University, Kota), Dr Anil Punia (Director, ICAR-NRCC), and Dr OP Pareek (Founder Director, ICAR-CIAH). Following the welcome address delivered by Dr DK Samadiya, Institute Director Dr Vishwa Bandhu Patel presented CIAH's research journey since 1993 and outlined future priorities, focusing on tissue culture, biotechnology interventions, quality planting material, and processing.


