

Strengthening Horticultural Development: Visit Of The Managing Director, NHB, To Key Institutions And Stakeholders In Karnataka

B.Raja

Deputy Director. NHB, Bangalore, Karnataka

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Shri Kapil Meena, IAS, Managing Director, National Horticulture Board (NHB), undertook an official visit to Bengaluru, Karnataka, on 4th and 5th September 2026 to review and strengthen coordination with the Government of Karnataka, horticulture stakeholders, flower auction infrastructure, research institutions and NHB-assisted horticulture projects.



The visit included important interactions with the Department of Horticulture & Sericulture, Government of Karnataka, International Flower Auction Bangalore (IFAB) and ICAR– Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR), Hessaraghatta. The discussions focused on strengthening horticulture clusters, improving market linkages, enhancing the income of horticulture farmers, promoting technology adoption and facilitating effective implementation of NHB programmes in Karnataka.

1. Meeting With Secretary, Department Of Horticulture & Sericulture, Government Of Karnataka

Shri Kapil Meena, IAS, Managing Director, NHB, met Shri Girish R, IAS, Secretary, Department of Horticulture & Sericulture, Government of Karnataka, at his chamber in M.S. Building, Bengaluru, on 04.09.2026.

The Managing Director, NHB, was warmly received by the Horticulture Secretary, Government of Karnataka. The meeting provided an opportunity for detailed discussions on



the development of the horticulture sector and effective implementation of NHB-supported programmes in the State.

Key issues discussed

The discussions primarily focused on the following areas

1. Effective implementation of the Cluster Development Programme (CDP) in Karnataka.
2. Identification and development of large-scale horticulture clusters, with emphasis on achieving a minimum area of 10,000 hectares, as envisaged under the programme.
3. Development of multi-commodity horticulture clusters and peri-urban vegetable clusters, particularly in and around Bengaluru, considering the significant demand from the urban market.
4. Identification of suitable commodities and potential clusters in Karnataka, particularly flowers, mango, grapes and other commercially important horticultural crops.
5. Effective coordination among the State Horticulture Mission (SHM), Department of Horticulture, Government of Karnataka, and NHB officials for identification, planning and implementation of suitable clusters.
6. Discussion on the recent amendments in NHB Scheme Guidelines, effective from 21.08.2026, and their effective implementation in the State.
7. Discussion regarding the implementation and scope of CPP in Karnataka.

Directions of the Horticulture Secretary

During the meeting, the Horticulture Secretary advised the concerned officers of the Department of Horticulture to undertake careful and comprehensive identification of large scale horticulture clusters having significant production and market potential.

Special emphasis was given to crops such as flowers, mango and grapes, along with the development of peri urban vegetable clusters around Bengaluru to cater to the growing demand of the urban population.

The Secretary also appreciated the role being played by the National Horticulture Board in providing assistance to horticulture farmers and promoting the development of the horticulture sector in Karnataka.



M.S. BUILDING, BANGALORE



The meeting concluded with an emphasis on strengthening institutional coordination between NHB and the Government of Karnataka for accelerated development of commercially viable horticulture clusters.

2.Visit To International Flower Auction Bangalore (Ifab)

Thereafter, Shri Kapil Meena, IAS, Managing Director, NHB, visited the International Flower Auction Bangalore (IFAB) at Bellary Road, Hebbal, Bengaluru.

The Managing Director, NHB, was warmly received by Dr. M. Vishwanath, Managing Director/Joint Director (Horti), IFAB.

Dr. M. Vishwanath briefed the Managing Director, NHB, about the functioning and operational mechanism of IFAB and the role of the institution in providing an organized market platform for flower growers.



Discussions with IFAB Management

During the interaction, the Managing Director, NHB, discussed various aspects of the functioning of IFAB, including:

- Mode of functioning of the flower auction
- Terms and conditions for participation
- Participation of NHB-assisted project promoters/farmers
- Auction procedure and price discovery mechanism
- Minimum and maximum prices of flower stems
- Market demand and profitability for growers
- Payment mechanism and settlement process
- Cold storage and post-harvest handling facilities & Domestic and export market linkages.



IFAB LTD, BAGALORE



The following key details were presented during the visit:

- IFAB was registered as a company in 2002 and was established as a joint venture involving various shareholders with the objective of tapping the potential of both the domestic and export flower markets.
- The Chairman and Managing Director of IFAB are nominated by the Government of Karnataka.
- The auction operates through a Dutch auction/reverse-clock mechanism, similar to the system followed at the Aalsmeer flower auction centre in the Netherlands.
- The auction is conducted throughout the year, with operations taking place 365 days a year. The auction commences from 8:30 AM onwards.
- A number of NHB-assisted project promoters are regularly participating in the auction and deriving good returns from the organized flower market.
- Auction proceeds are transferred digitally to the growers' bank accounts within seven days.
- The transactions are carried out through an online system, facilitating transparency and efficient settlement.
- IFAB has seven automated cold rooms, having an aggregate capacity of approximately 10 lakh flowers. Out of these, five cold rooms are utilized for growers' produce and two for buyers' produce.
- Flowers auctioned through IFAB are transported to major markets including Delhi, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Chennai, Visakhapatnam, Chandigarh and Guwahati, among other destinations.
- Flowers are also supplied to domestic and export markets during major demand periods such as Christmas, New Year, Valentine's Day and other special occasions.

Observation

The visit provided valuable insight into the importance of organized flower auction platforms in ensuring transparent price discovery, market access, digital payment, post harvest management and wider market linkages for flower growers.

The participation of NHB-assisted project promoters in the IFAB auction demonstrates the importance of integrating production infrastructure with efficient marketing and auction mechanisms for improving the commercial viability of horticulture projects.



2. Visit To Icar–Indian Institute Of Horticultural Research (Icar–Iihr), Hesaraghatta

Subsequently, Shri Kapil Meena, IAS, Managing Director, NHB, visited the ICAR–Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (ICAR–IIHR), Hesaraghatta, Bengaluru, and met Dr. T. K. Behera, Director, ICAR–IIHR. The Managing Director, NHB, was warmly received by the Director and scientists of the Institute.



A detailed interaction was held with the Director and scientists representing various horticultural disciplines. The discussions covered research, varietal development, technology dissemination, quality planting material, post harvest management and the scope for wider adoption of improved horticultural technologies by farmers.

Research and Varietal Development

Dr. T. K. Behera, Director, ICAR–IIHR, briefed the Managing Director, NHB, regarding the Institute's research and development activities and the various Arka varieties and technologies developed for horticultural crops.

The discussion covered important crops including:

- Mango
- Tomato
- Grapes
- Jackfruit
- Vegetables
- Flowers
- Other fruit and horticultural crops



ICAR-IIHR, HESSARAGHATTA

The Director explained how improved varieties and technologies developed by ICAR–IIHR can contribute towards higher productivity, improved quality, better marketability and enhanced profitability for horticulture farmers.



Field Visit And Institutional Facilities

During the visit, the Managing Director, NHB, inspected various facilities and research activities of ICAR–IIHR, including

- Research laboratories
- Mushroom production unit
- Post Harvest Management (PHM) unit
- Seed outlet/unit
- Nursery facilities
- Horticultural research farm
- Demonstration and research activities relating to flowers, vegetables and fruit crops



The Managing Director reviewed the ongoing research and development activities and interacted with scientists involved in different horticultural disciplines.

The field visit provided an opportunity to understand the application of scientific research, improved varieties, nursery technologies, post-harvest practices and other innovations for strengthening the horticulture value chain.

Observations of the Managing Director, NHB

The Managing Director, NHB, appreciated the dedicated efforts of the Director and scientists of ICAR–IIHR towards research and development in horticulture.

He acknowledged the importance of strengthening the linkage between research institutions, development agencies, horticulture departments, NHB-assisted projects and farmers so that technologies and improved varieties developed through research reach the farming community effectively.



The visit also highlighted the importance of integrating production, technology, post harvest management, marketing and market linkages for achieving sustainable growth in the horticulture sector.



ICAR-IIHR , HESSARAGHATTA



Key Outcomes of The Visit

The visit resulted in important observations and areas for further coordination

A. Strengthening Horticulture Clusters

Greater coordination between NHB and the Government of Karnataka may facilitate identification and development of large-scale, commercially viable horticulture clusters, including multi-commodity and peri-urban vegetable clusters.

B. Focus on High-Value Crops

Special attention may be given to commercially important crops such as flowers, mango and grapes, based on production potential, market demand and availability of suitable infrastructure.

C. Strengthening Market Linkages

The IFAB visit demonstrated the significance of organized auction systems in providing farmers with transparent price discovery and access to domestic and export markets.

D. Integration of NHB-Assisted Projects with Markets

NHB-assisted project promoters may benefit from stronger linkages with organized flower markets and auction platforms such as IFAB.

E. Research–Farmer Linkage

The visit to ICAR–IIHR emphasized the need for closer linkage between research institutions and horticulture development programmes, particularly for dissemination of improved varieties and technologies.

F. Technology and Post-Harvest Management

The facilities at ICAR–IIHR highlighted the importance of quality planting material, protected cultivation, post-harvest management, scientific production practices and value chain development.



Conclusion

The official visit of Shri Kapil Meena, IAS, Managing Director, National Horticulture Board, to key horticulture institutions and stakeholders in Karnataka provided a valuable platform for strengthening coordination and identifying opportunities for further development of the horticulture sector in the State.



The interaction with the Secretary, Department of Horticulture & Sericulture, Government of Karnataka, focused on effective implementation of NHB programmes, development of large-scale horticulture clusters and strengthening peri-urban vegetable production around Bengaluru.

The visit to International Flower Auction Bangalore (IFAB) provided important insights into organized flower marketing, digital auctioning, price discovery, cold-chain infrastructure and domestic and export market linkages. The participation of NHB assisted project promoters in the auction further demonstrated the importance of connecting production infrastructure with organized markets.

The visit to ICAR–IIHR, Hessaraghatta, provided an opportunity to review advanced horticultural research, improved varieties, nursery technologies, mushroom production, post-harvest management and other research and development activities.

Overall, the visit reinforced the importance of a coordinated approach involving NHB, State Horticulture Departments, research institutions, organized markets, project promoters and farmers for accelerating horticulture development, strengthening value chains and improving the economic returns of horticulture farming.

The visit reaffirmed NHB's continued commitment towards promoting technology driven, market oriented and farmer centric horticulture development in Karnataka.

