GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA

PRESS RELEASE

Government Support Helps Farmers Expand Horticulture Activities in South West Garo Hills

Shillong, November 14: Farmers in South West Garo Hills are increasingly exploring diversified horticulture activities with support from government schemes, enabling them to improve farm productivity, adopt modern cultivation practices and generate additional income.

A team of journalists from Shillong, as part of a press tour organised by the Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), visited several horticulture projects in the district to highlight the progress of these initiatives and the opportunities they are creating for local farmers.

At Harigaon village under Rerapara Block, the team visited the farm of Shri Nerdaya Koch, who has been engaged in organic cultivation of various vegetables since 2013-14.





Cultivating summer and winter vegetables across 1.5 hectares in 2026, Koch has benefited from regular assistance provided by the District Horticulture Officer, South West Garo Hills, Ampati, under the Vegetables Development Scheme. The assistance includes quality hybrid, high-yielding variety (HYV) and open-pollinated seeds at 75 per cent subsidy, along with fencing nets, seedling trays, cocopeat and watering cans at 50 per cent assistance. A naturally ventilated polyhouse and permanent trellises for creeper vegetables have also been provided with 100 per cent assistance.

These interventions have enabled him to earn approximately ₹7-8 lakh during 2025-26 from vegetable cultivation. Beyond growing vegetables, Koch has also ventured into nursery production, raising seedlings in trays inside a 100-square-metre polyhouse and supplying them to other farmers at ₹2.50 per plant.





He has further diversified his activities by cultivating watermelon across 0.4 hectares following the winter vegetable harvest in 2025-26, earning an estimated profit of ₹3-4 lakh. The department supported this initiative by providing seeds at 75 per cent assistance under the Vegetables Development Scheme. Drip irrigation was also installed under the Per Drop More Crop (PDMC) component of the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) during 2025-26.



The team also visited the dragon fruit farm of Shri Robelson M. Marak at Ampati Songma, who took up organic dragon fruit cultivation in 2023. His harvest in 2025 yielded around 80-100 kg of fruit, generating an income of approximately ₹35,000-50,000.





His cultivation received departmental support through the provision of planting materials, concrete pillars and drip irrigation under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) during 2022-23, followed by further assistance under the Fruit Development Scheme in 2025-26.

At Zikzak Horti Hub, the journalists visited three polyhouses developed under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) for the cultivation of Anthurium, Gerbera and Dendrobium, each covering an area of 500 square metres.

The project, covering a total area of 1,500 square metres at a cost of ₹70 lakh, was sanctioned on March 7, 2023, and completed on April 1, 2025. Executed through the approved supplier, M/s Phira Enterprise, Shillong, the facility currently generates around ₹2 lakh annually from the sale of cut flowers. However, the income potential of the project has been constrained by delays in payments from institutional buyers.

Another initiative visited was the Vertical Column Method for Black Pepper, implemented under the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) during 2023-24. The project was conceived to maximise land utilisation while enabling large-scale production of quality planting materials.

With an approved cost of ₹36.62 lakh, the project was designed to cover 1,000 square metres, with 300 columns and 3,000 plants of the Panniyur-2 variety. However, implementation fell short of the approved targets, with a smaller area developed, 198 columns erected and 1,920 plants supplied and planted. Serve Well Agro Solutions, Shillong, East Khasi Hills District, was the approved supplier.

The facility currently produces two rounds of cuttings annually, which are used for raising seedlings in the nursery.

The field visits provided an insight into the range of horticulture activities being undertaken in the district, from vegetable and fruit cultivation to commercial floriculture and planting material production. The initiatives demonstrate the scope for diversifying agriculture and strengthening farm-based livelihoods, while also underscoring the importance of effective implementation and sustained support in ensuring better returns for farmers.