



## **Participation in Indian Orchid Festival, Awareness Programme on PPVFR Act and Meeting of the Orchid Task Force at NRC Orchids, Sikkim during 2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2025**



The ICAR-National Research Centre for Orchids (ICAR-NRCO), Pakyong, Sikkim, hosted the first-ever Indian Orchid Festival from March 1 to 4, 2025. The program was marked by a special session inaugurated by Dr. Trilochan Mohapatra, Chairperson, Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority (PPV&FRA), New Delhi on 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 2025. In his address, Dr. Mohapatra sensitized the gathering on the importance of registering indigenous



orchid varieties to ensure legal safeguard on them. On this occasion, new orchid hybrids and official publications of ICAR-NRCO were also formally released. The session was graced by Dr. D. K. Agarwal, Registrar General, PPVFR&A, Dr. K. V. Prasad, Director, ICAR-DFR and officials from the district

administration. In parallel, an awareness session on the orchid cultivation and IPR issues was conducted for the benefit of regional growers. On 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025, the session began with an address by Shri Purna Gurung, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, Horticulture, Fisheries, and Animal Husbandry, Government of Sikkim, followed by the release of value-added products developed by ICAR-NRCO. Third day program included a technical session on the awareness and training on Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Right Act by the experts from

PPVFR&A, New Delhi, where growers and industrialists attended and benefited. A significant institute-industry stakeholders' meet was also held, resulting in the signing of four MoUs between ICAR-NRCO and key players such as Mahyco Pvt. Ltd., Darjeeling Gardens, KF Bioplants, Rhynco Orchids, Eunioa Orchids, Smartogenic Pvt. Ltd., Orchid Societies of NE states, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, and the Neotia University. There was an Orchid diversity show in which many different colorful orchids were exhibited. Dr. S. Das, Director, NRC Orchid accompanied the team and explained various orchid species and hybrids displayed in the exhibition.



A meeting of the Task Force (14/2024) for the finalization of the DUS (Distinctness, Uniformity, and Stability) Test Guidelines for Mokara orchid was held on March 03, 2025, in the Conference Hall, ICAR-NRCO, Sikkim, under the Chairmanship of Dr. K. V. Prasad, Director, ICAR-Directorate of Floricultural Research, Pune, Maharashtra. The meeting was also graced by Dr. T. Mohapatra, Chairperson, PPV&FRA; Dr. D. K. Agarwal, Registrar General, PPV&FRA; and Dr. S. P. Das, Director, ICAR-NRC for Orchids, as special invitees. The meeting was attended by Dr. A. N. Rao, Former Director, Orchid Gene Conservation Centre, Manipur; Prof. S.R. Dhiman, YSPUHF, Solan; Dr. L.C. De, ICAR-NRC for Orchids; and Shri Dipal Roy Choudhury, as members of the Task Force.





Dr. L.C. De, PS, NRCO, Sikkim made a presentation on the DUS Test Guidelines for Mokara orchid and related Vanda Alliance in place of Aranda and their related description of genera and members of the alliance groups. The Task Force deliberated on various aspects, including the number and quantity of planting materials required, identification of grouping characters, leaf and inflorescence characteristics, appropriate decimal codes, and the suitable trial conditions etc. It was recommended that reference varieties corresponding to newly introduced characteristics should be incorporated into the relevant columns of the guidelines following the DUS characterization of other members within the Vanda Alliance group.

Furthermore, it was noted that, from a taxonomic perspective, Mokara orchids are now subsumed under the broader Vanda Alliance. In light of this, the Task Force suggested examining the feasibility of amending the existing DUS Test Guidelines for Vanda to comprehensively include all such orchids like Mokara, thereby classifying them collectively under the Vanda Alliance group.

