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Minama Research Centre showcases AI, drones and satellite tech in oil palm farming

07 May 2026 | News

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An official delegation from Arunachal Pradesh, led by Agriculture Minister Gabriel D. Wangsu, undertook a structured overseas exposure visit to Pekanbaru in Riau, Indonesia, as part of a broader programme to study global best practices in oil palm cultivation and value chain development. The delegation included senior officials from the departments of agriculture and horticulture, district administrators, agriculture officers, and progressive farmers, with the visit facilitated by the Consulate General of India in Jakarta.

During the Indonesia leg of the visit, the team engaged in extensive field-level exposure across oil palm plantations and processing systems, focusing on cultivation techniques, productivity enhancement, harvesting technologies, and downstream value chain management. A key component of the visit included an inspection of advanced research infrastructure at the Minama Research Centre, where delegates observed high-yield planting material development, breeding programmes, and the integration of artificial intelligence, machine learning, drone surveillance, and satellite imaging in plantation management.

The delegation also studied integrated agronomic systems, including biocontrol mechanisms, nutrient management frameworks, and pest control strategies that underpin productivity in one of the worldâ??s most advanced oil palm producing regions. Interactions with industry experts and researchers provided deeper insights into policy frameworks, investment models, smallholder integration systems, terracing techniques, and sustainability certification standards, alongside environmental safeguards and community engagement practices designed to ensure long-term sector viability.

Officials noted that the exposure provided a comprehensive understanding of the oil palm value chain, with direct relevance to Arunachal Pradeshâ??s ongoing efforts under the National Mission on Edible Oils â?? Oil Palm (NMEO-Oil Palm). The learnings are expected to support initiatives aimed at expanding cultivation, improving productivity, strengthening processing infrastructure, and enhancing farmer livelihoods through technology adoption and improved agronomic practices.

On the sidelines of the visit, the minister also held discussions with select companies to explore potential business collaborations in the oil palm sector, with a focus on investment, technology transfer, and value chain development.

Prior to the Indonesia engagement, the delegation visited Malaysia, where they interacted with progressive farmers and agriculture officials to study advanced oil palm cultivation practices. The programme included a visit to SD Guthrie Seeds and Agricultural Services on Carey Island, Selangor, a globally recognised leader in oil palm seed production and supply systems, facilitated by the Deputy High Commission of India.

The minister stated that the exposure visits highlighted critical gaps that must be addressed to achieve NMEO-Oil Palm targets in Arunachal Pradesh. He emphasised the need for scaling up oil palm expansion, strengthening farmer-industry linkages, improving productivity, and building robust processing infrastructure to develop a sustainable and commercially viable oil palm ecosystem in the state.