



BASAI News Updates

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Cabinet nod to 5.5% MSP hike for wheat

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NEW DELHI: The Union Cabinet on economic affairs chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday approved hikes in minimum support prices (MSPs) for rabi or winter-sown crops (2023-24).


Wheat is one of the crops planted in winter, and harvested in late spring of the following year, and this year's harvest was affected by extreme weather in March, trimming output, and forcing the government to curb exports.

In percentage terms, the government has increased the MSP on wheat by 5.5%, the highest in three years, to ₹2125 a quintal (100 kg). The highest increase in MSP was for lentils (masur), grown mostly during winters. Its MSP was set at ₹6000 over the previous year's ₹5500 a quintal, a rise of nearly 9%. The second-

Better returns for rabi crops
The Union Cabinet approved hikes in MSPs for rabi crops for 2023-24, as the country heads into the wheat-planting season

Crop	MSP 2022-23	MSP 2023-24	Change
Lentil (Masur)	5,500	6,000	↑ 9.1%
Rapeseed, Mustard	5,050	5,450	↑ 7.9%
Barley	1,635	1,735	↑ 6.1%
Wheat	2,015	2,125	↑ 5.5%
Safflower	5,441	5,650	↑ 3.8%
Gram	5,230	5,335	↑ 2.0%

(in ₹/quintal)



highest raise was for mustard, whose floor rates were increased to ₹5450 a quintal, up 7.9% from the previous year's ₹5050. The MSP for safflower, another key oilseed, was increased by ₹209 to ₹5650 a quintal from ₹5441 a quintal earlier, up 3.8%. The floor rate for gram (channa) was increased from ₹5230 to ₹5335,

an increase of ₹105 a quintal.

"PM Narendra Modi has consistently worked to raise farmers' incomes. Therefore, the new MSPs for rabi season are set to give up to 104% returns over cost," Union minister Anurag Thakur said at a briefing.

The upcoming wheat crop,

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BKU to block train tracks near Ambala

KURUKSHETRA, OCTOBER 18
The Bhartiya Kisan Union (Charuni) has announced to block the railway tracks near Mohra in Ambala on November 24 if the Centre failed to fulfil the promises made during the farm agitation.

Farmer leaders from Haryana, Punjab and Himachal gathered at the Jat Dharmashala here and decided to gather at Mohra grain market on the occasion of Chhotu Ram birth anniversary on November 24.

BKU (Charuni) chief Gurnam Singh said, "To raise the issues of pending FIRs, guarantee on MSP and farm loan waiver etc., it has been decided to gather at the Mohra grain market on November 24 and hold a demonstration. Later we will block the railway tracks in front of the grain market and chalk out the further strategy." — TNS

11K farmers await bajra payment

RAVINDER SAINI
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

ROHTAK, OCTOBER 18
The state government's claim of making payment to farmers within 72 hours of the procurement of their bajra has fallen flat as the bajra growers in Rohtak, Jhajjar, Rewari and Mahendragarh districts have not got payment even after two weeks. They are compelled to make rounds of grain markets to get updates about payment but local officials are not in a position to clear the situation.

More than 11,000 farmers in the four districts have sold their bajra to HAFED, a government agency, this season at rates ranging from Rs 1,900 to Rs 1,950 per quintal while the Centre had announced Rs 2,350 per quintal as the minimum support price (MSP). However, the state government has announced to pay Rs 450 per quintal to



A labourer manages bajra at a grain market in Jhajjar. PHOTO: SUMIT THARAN

farmers under the Bhavantar Bharpai Yojana (BBY) to bridge the gap between the MSP and the buying rate.

The procurement of bajra started at grain markets of various districts on October 1 and no procurement has been done in the past one week after the state government

announced to extend the bajra growers a financial aid of Rs 450 per quintal under the BBY.

"I sold bajra to HAFED in the beginning of procurement but I am yet to get payment. The money is needed not only to repay the loan but also to buy seeds and fertilisers for next crops," said

Ravinder Kumar of Aurangapur village (Jhajjar).

Barhmanand of Nigana village (Rohtak) said more than 35 quintals of bajra was sold to the government over two weeks ago but the payment had not yet been credited to his bank account. "The situation is similar with other

farmers of my village. We have no option but to wait for the payment," he added.

Inderjit Singh, state vice-president, All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS), said the government made hollow promises of releasing the payment within 48 hours. "It should release payments without further delay otherwise we will launch an agitation," he said.

Anoop Nain, District Manager (DM), HAFED, at Rohtak and Jhajjar, said the bills regarding the payment of bajra growers had been sent to the state authorities hence the payment was likely to be released soon. The bajra crop of over 5,000 farmers in Rohtak and Jhajjar districts had been procured by HAFED this season, he added.

HAFED Chief General Manager RP Sahni, meanwhile, said they had started sending payments into bank accounts of the farmers this evening.

To prevent farm fires, Delhi starts spraying bio-decomposer

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 18

The Delhi Government on Tuesday started free spraying of Pusa bio-decomposer in agricultural fields to prevent stubble burning in the capital.

Prepared by scientists at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) here, the Pusa bio-decomposer is a microbial solution which can turn paddy straw into manure in 15-20 days.

Environment Minister Gopal Rai, who sprayed the bio-decomposer in a field in Burari, said the spraying of the solution got delayed due to rain earlier this month.

The solution will be sprayed on 5,000 acres of

basmati and non-basmati fields in the capital this year.

The Pusa bio-decomposer was used on 4,300 acres belonging to 844 farmers in Delhi last year. In 2020, 310 farmers had used it on 1,935 acres.

The Delhi Government has set up 21 teams to create awareness about the effectiveness of the bio-decomposer and register farmers who want to use the solution in their fields.

According to officials, spraying of bio-decomposer costs just Rs 30 per acre.

In 2021, a third-party audit conducted to ascertain the impact of the microbial solution in Delhi showed

It can turn paddy straw into manure in 15-20 days



Minister Gopal Rai sprays a bio-decomposer in New Delhi. TRIBUNE PHOTO: MUKESH AGGARWAL

that it was 95 per cent effective, following which Kejri-

wal had requested the Centre to distribute it free in

neighbouring states.

Along with unfavourable

meteorological conditions, paddy straw burning in Punjab and Haryana is a major reason behind the alarming spike in air pollution levels in the national capital in October and November. Farmers set their fields on fire to quickly clear off the crop residue before cultivating wheat and vegetables.

According to the IARI data, Punjab had reported 71,304 farm fires between September 15 and November 30 last year and 83,002 farm fires in the corresponding period in 2020.

Last year, the share of farm fires in Delhi's PM 2.5 pollution had peaked to 48 per cent on November 7. — PTI

Fruit growers fear labour migration

ARJUN SHARMA

JAMMU, OCTOBER 18

The killings of two UP workers in Shopian district on Tuesday has triggered fear of migration of non-local labourers among agriculturalists and industrialists in Kashmir. Manish Kumar and Ram Sagar of UP died after terrorists hurled grenades inside their room.

Condemning the act, fruit growers and industry leaders said if migrants returned to their native places, industrial and construction activities would come to a standstill.

Fayaz Ahmad Malik, president, Sopore Fruit Mandi, said mainly non-local workers were employed in fruit

CAN'T DO SANS THEM

“We can't work without migrant labourers. They are running the industry.

Sheikh Ashiq Ahmad, PRESIDENT,
KASHMIR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

markets for lifting and packing. “We feel threatened as the gruesome killings could result in their migration, which will be disastrous for Kashmir...it is already facing so many problems. We have assured workers that if they feel unsafe, we will provide them safer places to stay,” said Malik.

In July, Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai had informed Parliament

that 28 migrant workers had been killed in Kashmir since 2017. The Valley has been witnessing targeted killings for the past many months.

The J&K Labour Department has no figure of the migrant workers employed in different industries in the Valley.

Abdul Rashid War, Labour Commissioner of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, said there was no Act that said the department had to register the migrant labourers. “The workers have to register voluntarily. On the other hand, interstate workers coming to work here are supposed to be registered through their contractor or the employee,” said War.

Wheat MSP hiked by ₹110/quintal

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recommended an increase of up to 9% following recommendations from the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices, sources said. The hike, which critics said was “less than the current inflation rate”, came amid lower stocks of wheat and its rising prices in the retail market. Farmers dismissed the increase as “paltry” in view of the rising input costs.

Officials said a higher support price would have triggered more inflation and a rise

in market prices. “The rate of return is 104% over cost for rapeseed and mustard, 100% for wheat, 85% for lentil, 66% for gram, 60% for barley and 50% for safflower,” they added.

Agriculture expert Sudhir Panwar called the MSP “of national importance because of the higher spot market price of all these crops”. He said private players procured every kg of mustard from Haryana markets.

“The hike in wheat (5.4%), gram (2%), safflower (3.8%) is lower than 7% hike in dear-

ness allowance while increase of 9% in lentil and 7.9% in mustard is to provide positive signal for sowing of pulses and oilseeds for import substitution,” he said.

With wheat prices ruling higher than the increased MSP in the open market, it remains to be seen if farmers would be willing to sell their produce to official procurement agencies. Due to higher prices, farmers have been selling their produce to private traders, resulting in a drop in official procurement.

New cane variety identified

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NAMED CO-16030

KARNAL, OCTOBER 18

A new variety of sugarcane, Co-16030, also known as Karan-16, has been identified in the 34th meeting of the All India Co-ordinated Research Project (AICRP) on sugarcane at the ICAR-Indian Institute of Sugarcane Research, Lucknow, three days back. The variety has been developed by scientists of ICAR-Sugarcane Breeding Institute, Regional Centre, Karnal.

As per the scientists, trials of this mid-late group variety were conducted at nine different locations of the North West Zone of the country from 2019-20 to 2021-22. After observing success, it was identified.

■ Co-16030, also known as Karan-16, has been developed by scientists of the ICAR-Sugarcane Breeding Institute, Regional Centre, Karnal

■ The variety is a good combination of high cane yield, commercial cane sugar and red rot resistance. It attains maturity in the 12th month

They claimed that it would be released soon and will be available for farmers.

The variety is a good combination of high cane yield, commercial cane sugar and red rot resistance. It attains maturity in the 12th month.

“Co-16030 is a cross variety which has a good commercial cane sugar yield as well as cane yield. The commercial cane sugar yield of

this variety is 11.96 tonnes per hectare in North West Zone, while the cane yield is 94.97 tonnes per hectare,” said Dr SK Pandey, Head of the Regional Centre.

The average sucrose percentage of this variety in the AICRP trials was 17.90, which is superior in comparison to the other varieties, he added.

“In plug method of inoculation, Co-16030 showed disease resistance for red rot pathogen, yellow leaf disease. It was also rated as the least susceptible for shoot borer, top borer and stalk borer,” said Dr Pandey.

He claimed that this variety might serve as a suitable substitute for the existing check varieties in the mid-late groups like CoS-767, CoPant 97222, and Co-0501.

PAU VC Gosal's appointment illegal, remove him: Guv to Mann

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

LUDHIANA, OCTOBER 18
In what appears to be a further escalation of the tussle between him and the AAP-led state government, Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit on Tuesday asked Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann to remove Dr Satbir Singh Gosal from the post of Vice-Chancellor (VC) of Punjab Agricultural University (PAU).

This came a week after Purohit, who happens to be the Chancellor of the state-run universities, had refused to approve the appointment of the state government's pick, noted cardiologist Dr Gurpreet Singh Wander, for the VC's post at the Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, Faridkot.

A renowned biotechnologist, Dr Gosal, who turned 68 on October 1, was appointed



DR SATBIR SINGH GOSAL

GIVE CHARGE TO AGRI SECY

“The charge of the PAU VC may be handed over to the Administrative Secretary of the Agriculture Department till the appointment of a new VC.

Banwarilal Purohit, PUNJAB GOVERNOR



the PAU VC on August 20, a year after his predecessor BS Dhillon's extended term

expired. Following Dhillon's exit, senior IAS officers of the Additional Chief Secre-

tary rank, heading the Agriculture Department, had been heading the PAU as administrative heads.

In a letter to the CM, a copy of which is with *The Tribune*, the Governor wrote that it had been brought to his notice that the government had appointed Dr Gosal as the PAU VC "without following the UGC norms and approval of the Chancellor". "This act of the state government is

totally illegal and cannot be accepted," he noted.

He said since Dr Gosal had been appointed by the government, the CM was requested to remove him without a delay.

"The charge of the PAU VC may be handed over to the Administrative Secretary of the Agriculture Department till the appointment of a new VC," the Governor said, while

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Former VCs of PAU rally behind Gosal, say Guv's move unfortunate

MANAV MANDER
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

LUDHIANA, OCTOBER 18
A row has erupted after Governor Banwarilal Purohit asked Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann to "remove" Dr Satbir Singh Gosal from the post of Vice-Chancellor, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. In a letter to the CM, the Governor claimed that the appointment of Dr Gosal was not done as per the UGC norms.



Dr Satbir Singh Gosal on the day he took charge as PAU VC. FILE

VARSITY SHOULD NOT SUFFER DUE TO POLITICS

“The decision should be reconsidered and Dr Gosal be allowed to carry on as the VC. He is an upright person and great academic. The university should not suffer due to politics. Prof HS Kingra, PRESIDENT OF THE

PUNJAB FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE TEACHERS' ORGANISATIONS

the file is sent to the Governor who is the Chancellor of the university.

Sources said a meeting was held on August 19 and three names were proposed out of which Dr Gosal was

selected unanimously.

Dr KS Aulakh, former VC, PAU, said Dr Gosal's appointment was done according to the rules. "The only flaw which I can see is that since the VC's post

remained vacant for more than a year, the board was supposed to send an intimation to the Governor and ask him to appoint the new VC. Other than this, all rules were followed," he said.

Dr SS Johal, former VC, PAU said, "The letter seeking removal of Dr Gosal is an insult to a well-recognised scientist. The way he has been accepted in the university by teachers, students, staff and farmers is unprecedented. It is very unfortunate. It has hurt the feelings of all those who are connected with the university."

Dr Manjit Singh Kang, former VC, PAU, said, "Dr Gosal met the Governor after his appointment. Now after two months, he has sought his removal. Political football is going on and academicians should be kept out of it," said Dr Kang.

The executive councils of the PAU Employees' Union and PAU Fourth Class Workers' Union have appealed to the Governor to reconsider his decision.

PAU VC...

asking the CM to initiate the process to appoint the new VC in consultation with the Chancellor. Dr Gosal, however, remained incommunicado despite repeated calls and messages.