



Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) Signs 70-Year Lease Agreement for Basmati and Organic Training Centre in Pilibhit

AI-Based Basmati Paddy Survey Project Launched to Enhance Crop Assessment and Export Planning

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In a significant step towards strengthening the Basmati rice ecosystem in India, the transfer of land for the establishment of a Basmati & Organic Training Centre-cum-Demo Farm at Tanda Bijaisi, Pilibhit, has been formalised through the signing of a 70-year lease agreement between the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), the Department of Agriculture, and the Government of Uttar Pradesh.

The proposed Basmati & Organic Training Centre-cum-Demo Farm will be developed over an area of approximately seven acres. The centre will be equipped with facilities including an auditorium, museum and gallery on Basmati and organic farming, conference room, laboratory and storage space for organic farming inputs. The facility is expected to support training and capacity building for Basmati and organic farmers, and also serve as a resource centre for agricultural experts and students.

Once established, the facility will be the country's first Basmati organic training and demonstration farm covering both conventional and organic Basmati cultivation. Owing to its location, the centre is expected to benefit farmers and stakeholders in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Addressing the gathering, Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry and Electronics and Information Technology, Shri Jitin Prasada, appreciated the initiative and highlighted the potential of Pilibhit as a major Basmati-producing region. He emphasised the importance of expanding organic cultivation and called for greater farmer engagement. Shri Prasada suggested incorporating an AI-based interactive museum at the centre to provide information and experiential learning for visitors and students, along with establishing a dedicated outlet for quality Basmati seeds and organic inputs for farmers.

On the occasion, Shri Jitin Prasada also unveiled India's first AI-based Basmati Paddy Survey project (2026–2028), to be implemented by APEDA in collaboration with the All-India Rice Exporters Association (AIREA). The project will cover nearly 4 million hectares, collect data from over 150,000 ground-truth points and engage with more than 500,000 farmers. It aims to support precise crop assessment, varietal identification, scientific advisory services and improved export planning.

It was also announced that the upcoming centre has been designated as an All India Coordinated Research Projects (AICRP) centre for national-level Basmati trials, as recognised at the 61st Annual Rice Research Group Meeting. With this, Pilibhit will become the third AICRP centre in Uttar Pradesh's Basmati GI zone

after Nagina (Bijnor) and BEDF Modipuram, following the operationalisation of the facility. This will facilitate systematic testing and evaluation of new Basmati varieties suited to the region's agro-climatic conditions.

Basmati rice, a Geographical Indication (GI) product of India, recorded exports valued at USD 5.67 billion in 2025–26, with export volumes reaching around 6.5 million metric tonnes. The sector continues to contribute significantly to India's agricultural exports, with a strong presence in markets across the Middle East, Europe and North America.

APEDA is promoting organic farming through training, certification support and market linkage initiatives to facilitate adoption of sustainable agricultural practices. These efforts are aligned with global demand for environmentally responsible produce.

The event was attended by Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry and Electronics and Information Technology, Shri Jitin Prasada, senior public representatives of the district, officials of APEDA, the Government of Uttar Pradesh and other stakeholders.

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