

# Water scarcity: Gurgaon admn tests new wheat, barley seeds

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TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

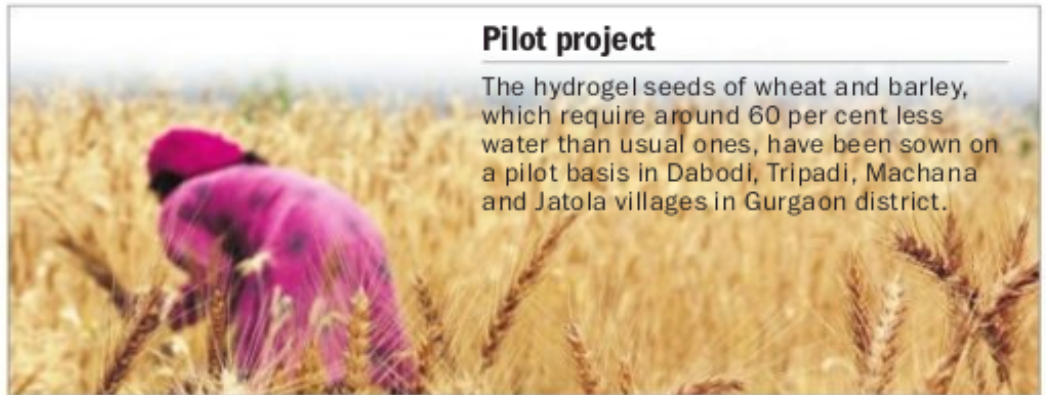
**GURGAON, FEBRUARY 4**

The district administration is experimenting with herbal hydrogel seeds to solve the problems of water scarcity and lack of irrigation infrastructure.

The hydrogel seeds of wheat and barley, which require around 60 per cent less water than usual ones, have been sown on a pilot basis in Dabodi, Tripadi, Machana and Jatola villages.

"In south Haryana, especially in our area, water scarcity plagues agriculture. The majority of farmers feel the irrigation infrastructure is insufficient to meet their needs. The ever-depleting water table is making installation of tubewells and submersible pumps a failed and costly affair," Deputy Commissioner (DC) TL Satyaprakash said.

He added, "New seeds developed by a research centre will not only cut down



## Pilot project

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TL Satyaprakash, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

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PS Sabarwal, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, AGRICULTURE

the need for water, but also eradicate the problem of weeds and, hence, the need for weedicides,” said Deputy Commissioner (DC) TL Satyaprakash.

The special seeds of wheat varieties — WS 283, WS 711, SD 296 and WH 1105 — and barley variety 393 have been quoted with special gel derived from *Tragacanth*

*gum (gond katira)*.

“Irrigation is vital during the stage of critical root initiation. Farmers who have used the new seeds said they delayed irrigating the fields by 18 days. The seeds have been designed to deal with water scarcity. Another advantage is the seeds inhibit the growth of weeds, saving farmer from buying weedi-

cides,” said PS Sabarwal, Deputy Director, Agriculture.

The seeds are being tested for sudden climatic changes that caused crop loss last year, allegedly forcing some farmers to commit suicide.

“The gel coating is expected to make the seeds immune to sudden increase or decrease in water content of soil,” Sabarwal added.

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## Haryana demarcates Mangar Bani forest area

• [Ashok Kumar](#)



Activists welcome government's move.— File Photo

*It is an exercise to protect the Aravalli mountain range*

Taking a step towards protecting the Aravalli mountain range, the Haryana government has identified the Mangar Bani on scientific principles.

As per the exercise carried out by the forest department, the Mangar Bani area has been found to be about 677 acres and the 500-metre buffer will have about 1,200 acre, however abadi areas of the village will be excluded.

The National Capital Region Planning Board (NCRPB) had earmarked the Mangar Bani grove in Haryana as “no-construction zone” and said that it would be out of bounds for tourism activities. The decision was taken in a meeting in May 2014. The move had come following strong protests from the Union Ministry of Environment and Forest, the Delhi government and environmentalists.

Besides the core area of Mangar Bani, the NCRPB had decided that a 500-metre buffer radius around the forest will also be earmarked as “no-construction zone”, as proposed by Haryana. The NCRPB members had also agreed to limit construction activities in the natural conservation zones such as the Aravallis, riverbeds and major water bodies, according to the minutes of the last board meeting, chaired by the then Urban Development Minister Kamal Nath.

Though the Mangar Bani was declared “no construction zone”, the Haryana government was dilly-dallying on measuring the total area of the Mangar Bani and the buffer zone. It has now been done with the intervention of the Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar.

The initiative of the current government to conserve the Mangar Bani in the Aravalli hills, is a step in the right direction and is very welcome, said Lt. Col SS Oberoi, legal activist.

“This is a welcome move to demarcate the Mangar Bani and its buffer on scientific principles, as a No Construction Zone, particularly the numerous flip flops of the earlier government since 2009. The time has come to notify Mangar Bani as a Sanctuary or National Park to accord permanent protection for future generations,” said environment analyst Chetan Agarwal.

Following the measurement, the Haryana government would now have to revise its sub-regional plan as well.

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Himachal » Community

## MLA for new water scheme

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### **Tribune News Service**

#### **Shimla, February 4**

Local BJP MLA Suresh Bhardwaj today raised the issue of expediting the proposal for a new water supply scheme for Shimla either from the Pabbar river or Kol Dam reservoir.

Expressing concern over the supply of contaminated drinking water to residents, putting their health to grave risk, he said Shimla was fast expanding and the water being supplied from the present sources was insufficient to cater to the growing demand. In a statement issued here, he said the residents faced acute water shortage, necessitating the need for a new scheme.

He demanded that the sewerage system of Shimla should be strengthened and all sewage treatment plants be upgraded and renovated. "Sufficient funds should be allocated for this purpose and a separate connection should be given for drinking water and the water used for other purposes in every household," he suggested.

He also said laboratories should be set up and the existing ones be upgraded so that water samples were tested regularly. "The laboratories at Indira Gandhi Medical College (IGMC) and Deen Dayal Hospital should be upgraded and fully equipped with medical instruments and adequate number of doctors and paramedical staff be posted there," he said. He added that a Primary Health Centre or dispensary should be opened in every municipal ward to lessen the burden of the IGMC.

Bhardwaj also said steps need to be taken to decongest Shimla and for this, the wholesale markets of fruits, vegetables and grains should be shifted to Darni ka Bageecha on the Shimla bypass road. He said link roads should be constructed from Holiday Home to bypass road, Nabha Phagli to Lal Pani and Lal Pani to the bypass road to ease congestion on Cart Road.

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