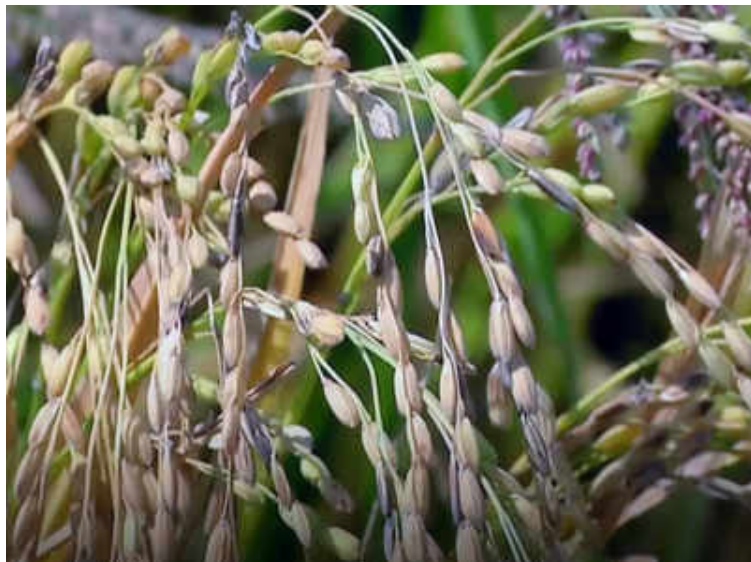


# Uttar Pradesh: Kala namak rice to be exported to Singapore

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LUCKNOW: UP will start exporting 20 tonnes of Siddharthnagar's famous Kala Namak rice or Buddha rice to Singapore soon.

A government spokesperson explained that the rice, known as Buddha ka Mahaprasad or offering to Lord Buddha has been rebranded as Buddha rice in order to promote it in Buddhist countries. "The packaging of the rice carries a popular quote of Mahatma Buddha and adds 'The unique aroma of the rice will remind people about me,'" the official said.

Additional chief secretary, MSME and export promotion Navneet Sehgal said that the consignment will be sent by the end of March. "The rice is being packaged in attractive glass jars with all its qualities mentioned on it. One can read the qualities by simply scanning the bar code," he said.

The export order comes as a boost for economy of the areas where the Kala Namak rice is grown. These include Gorakhpur, Deoria, Kushinagar, Maharajganj, Siddharthnagar, Sant Kabir Nagar, Bahraich, Balrampur, Gonda and Shravasti. It is part of the government's one district-one product scheme under which specialty local products and produce of each district is being promoted. Kala Namak rice is the ODOP of Siddharthnagar, Basti, Gorakhpur, Maharajganj and Sant Kabir Nagar.

Agricultural scientist Dr Ramchet Chaudhury said that historically Kala Namak rice was grown in Siddharthnagar's Bajaha Village during the period of Buddha.

“It is said that Mahatma Buddha broke his fast at Hiranyavati bank with pudding made of the rice and had distributed it as an offering among devotees. The rice also finds mention in Chinese traveller Fahyan’s account,” he said. Chaudhary added that the rice is not only highly aromatic, but also healthy and delicious.

The government will also be organising a Kala Namak Rice festival. There is also a plan to set up a Kala Namak rice Research Centre at Siddharthnagar.