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Beej Utsav held across 3 states stresses role of indigenous seeds in agricultural sustainability

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Context

- A four-day '**Beej Utsav (seed festival)**' held in the **tribal belt** at the **tri-junction of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat** this month highlighted the role of **indigenous seeds in agricultural sustainability**. Farmers from tribal groups pledged to rebuild community-led seed systems.
- Over 9,400 members of tribal communities, including women and children, participated in events during the festival and learned the techniques of **preserving indigenous seeds** for use in different crop seasons. They were **made aware** of the **significance of seed heritage, biodiversity, and climate consciousness**.
- The festival was organised simultaneously in over 60 panchayats spread across the three States, with activities including '**Beej Samvad (seed dialogue)**', biodiversity fairs, '**seed ball**' making, and plantation drives.
- Community honours, including '**Beej Mitra (seed friend)**', and '**Beej Mata (seed mother)**', were **awarded to exemplary seed-preserving farmers**.
- Seeds should **not just be considered the foundation of farming**, but **treated as symbols of identity, life, nutrition, culture, and climate resilience in tribal traditions**, Vaagdhara secretary Jayesh Joshi said in Jaipur on Monday.
- "When nearly **70% of small farmers depend on market-driven hybrid seeds**, Beej Utsav is a powerful reminder to reclaim our seed sovereignty," he said.
- **Seeds in the market often come with chemical inputs, health risks, and high costs**, Mr. Joshi said.
- Tribal farmers need to return to their roots and join community-led and culturally grounded action, which will offer solutions to climate change and food insecurity, he said