

# The Tribune

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

## **Rat menace ruins grain markets, authorities in sleep mode**

Neeraj Bagga, May 14 2016, Tribune News Service, Amritsar, India

Rat menace has assumed alarming proportions in the city while the government authorities do not have any plan to contain it. The worst affected is the walled city area where wholesale grain, spices, dry fruits, pickles, jams and other eatable markets are situated.

A number of walled city areas are bearing the brunt of rodent menace as their number has grown rapidly in view of the traders storing foodgrain and spices in an unscientific manner.

Areas which are in the severe grip of rodents are Majith Mandi, Atta Mandi, Daal Mandi, Kanak Mandi, Wadi Dhab, Dhab Wasti Ram, Swank Mandi and surrounding localities.

High population of rats has spilled over to almost all localities in the walled city, which houses roughly 40 per cent of about 15 lakh city population.

A wholesale karyana merchant, Om Prakash, said the rat menace had reached to alarming proportions in the grain markets. The traders were forced to invest their money to trap these rodents who eat and waste a lot of grain, spices and other eatables in these markets.

“Shopkeepers are using various methods to snare these rodents but with limited success,” he said. He added that people were banking upon conventional rat ensnaring equipments. However, he felt the need of the hour was to bring in scientific, sophisticated and effective measures to end the menace.

A wholesale trader, Amarjit Singh of Majitha Mandi, said a majority of structures in these grain markets were constructed decades ago and there was no provision for planned and scientific storage of eatable materials which made them accessible to rodents.

He said these rodents managed to tear open all kinds of bags made of jute and plastic to eat and squandered away a lot of packaged eatables.

Availability of plenty of eatables and absence of any drive to ensnare these rodents led to manifold increase in their population. The MC had initiated a drive to curb rodent menace some years back but the situation has only worsened.

Another resident, Vicky Bhatia, said fatty rats moving at a snail’s pace could be noticed on deserted roads at night. He reasoned that it may be the outcome of leftovers on the streets.