



MSP for Makhana | Bihar | 17 Jul 2024

Why in News?

- Recently, The **Bihar government** has urged the Centre to declare the **Minimum Support Price (MSP)** for **makhana**, an aquatic crop **cultivated across 10 districts** in the state.

Key Points

- The state has raised concerns about the shortage of staff at the Darbhanga-based **Indian Council of Agricultural Research - National Research Centre (ICAR-NRC)** for Makhana.
 - **Bihar produces about 85% of the country's makhana**, with approximately 10 lakh people directly or indirectly involved in its cultivation and production process.
- According to the Agriculture Ministry, The **ICAR-NRC for Makhana in Darbhanga** was **approved by the Department of Agricultural Research & Education**, Government of India, as a new scheme **during the IX Five Year Plan period (1997-2002)** for Conservation, Research & Development of the makhana crop.
 - The **NRC for Makhana started operating in February 2002**, but in **2005 it was merged with the ICAR-Research Complex for Eastern Region (RCER) in Patna**, resulting in the **revocation of its "national" status**.
 - **In May 2023**, the Central government upgraded the Research Centre for Makhana, Darbhanga to **"National Research Centre for Makhana, Darbhanga"** and expanded its mandate to include other aquatic crops such as fish.
 - The **NRC for Makhana was transferred under the ICAR's Agricultural Engineering Division** and attached **to the Ludhiana-based ICAR-Central Institute of Post Harvest Engineering & Technology**.

Mithila Makhana

- Mithila Makhana or Makhan (botanical name: *Euryale ferox Salisb.*) is a special variety of **aquatic fox nut cultivated in Mithila region of Bihar** and Nepal.
- Makhana is the **one of the three prestigious cultural identities** of Mithila.
 - **Pan, Makhan and Machh (fish)** are the three prestigious cultural identities of Mithila.
- It is also very famous in the **Kojagara festival of Maithil Brahmins** celebrated for newly married couples.
- Makhana contains **protein and fiber**, along with **micronutrients like calcium, magnesium, iron, and phosphorus**.
- **It received its Geographical Indication (GI) Tag in 2022.**