



PM Launches National Makhana Board In Bihar

Why in News?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the [National Makhana Board](#) in Purnea, Bihar as part of the [Union Budget 2025](#) initiative.

Key Points

- **About:** This new board aims to **strengthen the [makhana sector](#)**, enhance its production and processing, and expand its export reach globally.
- **Cost:** The government has approved a **Rs 475 crore** development package to support these efforts.
- **Focus Areas:** The National Makhana Board is set to focus on key aspects of the sector's growth:
 - Raising production standards
 - Improving **post-harvest management**
 - Introducing innovative technologies
 - Enhancing **value addition**
 - Building stronger marketing and **export linkages**
 - Assist [farmer-producer organizations](#), helping them access central schemes
- **Ideal Geography:** **The state of Bihar contributes to around 90% of India's makhana production, with the crop grown across 15,000 hectares, producing nearly 10,000 tonnes of popped makhana annually.**
- The production is concentrated in the Mithilanchal region, covering nine districts in northern and eastern Bihar.
- Districts like Madhubani, Darbhanga, and Purnea have the perfect wetland ecology for growing makhana.

Impact	Challenges
Market Growth Potential: Better grading, packaging, and branding can make Mithila Makhana a premium international product, raising farmer incomes.	Low Productivity: Farming is labor-intensive, with slow adoption of high-yield varieties.
Support for Mallah Community: Provides socio-economic uplift and jobs for the traditionally marginalized Mallah community.	Lack of Processing Units: Limited local infrastructure forces raw makhana sales at low prices to other states.
Economic Diversification: Boosts agriculture and food processing, supported by new export infrastructure like expanded airports.	Export Barriers: Poor cargo facilities and export hubs push processing to other states, limiting global reach.
Productivity Focus: Promotion of high-yield varieties like Swarna Vaidehi and Sabour Makhana-1.	Export Efforts: Small consignments sent abroad, but large-scale global presence still lacking.

Makhana

- Makhana, or fox nut, comes from the aquatic plant **Euryale ferox**, which grows in freshwater

ponds **across South and East Asia.**

- Often called the 'Black Diamond' in its raw dark seed form, it turns white once popped.

- Makhana is **low in calories and fat**, high in plant-based protein, and packed with dietary fibre, antioxidants, and essential minerals like magnesium, potassium, and phosphorus.
- Makhana has been **part of Hindu rituals** for centuries.

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