JOHA RICE

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Agriculture and Development*
Why in News?

The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA facilitated the first export consignment of Joha Rice from Assam to the United Kingdom and Italy.

- It is a ***premium short-grain aromatic rice variety*** indigenous to the ***Brahmaputra Valley*** *in* ***Assam***.
- It is known as **Joha/Jaha rice or Mi Jaha** and is often referred to as **"scented gold"** due to its distinctive natural fragrance.
- **Historical Background -** Historical evidence indicate that Joha rice has been cultivated in Assam for over 600 years.
- During the **Ahom dynasty** (13^{th}-19^{th} centuries), Joha rice was considered a regal food and used as a staple energy source for soldiers during battles with the Mughal Empire.
- **Aroma and Taste –** Joha rice is known for its mild floral fragrance and soft texture.
- Aroma is often compared to popcorn or sandalwood.
- The fragrance is caused by the aromatic compound ***2-acetyl-1-pyrroline.***
- **Characteristics – Grain Type-**Short-grain rice.
- **Cultivation method-** Paddy field farming.
- **Growing season-** Sali (winter) or Kharif crop.
- **Crop duration-** 120–160 days.
- **Yield-** Low productivity (about **1–1.5 tonnes per hectare**)
- **Resilience -** Some varieties such as **White Joha** show **drought tolerance.**
- **Soil and Climate –**Thrives in fertile rain-fed lowlands and floodplains of the Brahmaputra valley.
- Requires cool temperatures during flowering stage.
- **Nutritional and Health Benefits -** Contains omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids

- Rich in polyphenols and flavonoids (antioxidants)
- High in protein and amino acids
- Contains oryzanol and multivitamins
- Naturally low in sodium and cholesterol-free
- Studies indicate potential benefits for blood glucose regulation and heart health.
- **Major Producing Regions –** Primarily Cultivated in ***Assam*** (Upper and Central Assam).
- It is also traditionally grown in the **Garo Hills** of **Meghalaya**.
- **Geographical Indication (GI) Tag –** Joha rice received **GI Tag** in **2017**.
- **Major Export Destinations –Europe -** (United Kingdom, Italy)
- **Southeast Asia -** (Vietnam).
- **Middle East -** (Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia).

Reference

1. PIB | Joha Rice
2. Ministry of Science and Technology | Joha rice

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