

Lockdown brings black rice, joha rice in minor forest produce list

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The Ministry of Tribal Affairs on Friday said black rice and joha rice grown in the North-East will be among the 23 additional minor forest produce considered for minimum support price (MSP) under a Centrally-sponsored scheme to improve marketing and value chain of these produce collected mostly from forest areas.

While medicinally-important black rice, grown predominantly in Manipur, would have an MSP of ₹100 a kg, Joha rice — an aromatic rice grown mainly in Assam and Meghalaya — can fetch ₹50.

With this, the total number of items supported through ‘Mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP) and development of value chain of MFP’ has gone up to 73 from the existing 50, an official statement said.

It said the decision to enhance the coverage was taken “in view of the exceptional and very difficult circumstances currently prevailing in the country on account of the Covid-19 pandemic”. On May 1, the government had announced revisions in MSP rates for the existing 50 MFPs. This increase ranged from 16 per cent to 66 per cent.

Apart from black rice and johar rice, the ministry has included many other agricultural produce from the north-eastern region in the MFP list stating they are not commercially grown but are found in the wild in forests. They include jackfruit seeds, cashewnut, betel nuts and mustard (*Brassica nigra*).

Nine items, on the other hand, are from forest areas across the country. Among these are van tulsi seeds, van jeera, tamarind seeds, bamboo brooms, dry anola, bedda nuts and seed lac.

Per the scheme, State governments have the flexibility to fix the MSP of these items up to 10 per cent higher or lower than what was decided by the Central government.

Source: <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/lockdown-brings-black-rice-joha-rice-in-minor-forest-produce-list/article31704489.ece>