

INDIA AND PAKISTAN ISSUE OVER BASMATI RICE



Issue

India has approached the European Union's Council on Quality Schemes for Agricultural Products and Foodstuffs for getting a protected geographical indication (PGI) status for the basmati rice.

Background

India is the world's largest exporter of the basmati rice. The move by European Union would give India the sole authority over basmati title.

Details

Pakistan is also another exporter of the rice variety to Europe. It has opposed the move as it may lose its export market in EU.

Basmati growing locations

- Basmati rice is a long-grained variety that is historically grown at the foothills of Himalayas in the Indo-Gangetic plains.
- The states that come under this area include Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Delhi.
- In Pakistan, such basmati growing region is located in Kalar tract, which is a region situated between Ravi and Chenab rivers in Punjab province.

Need for protection

- Basmati rice has a great value and demand across the globe. In such situations, there are varieties that are passed off as basmati growing beyond the region.

- Indian state like Madhya Pradesh has been demanding recognising it as basmati producing area but the move is opposed by The All India Rice Exporters' Association (AIREA).
- They feel that if the geographical criterion is relaxed, countries such as China may start growing basmati varieties and export them to India's traditional markets.
- India already has a GI tag for the basmati variety it grows and this protection has allowed it to produce genuine variety and reap profits.

NOTES

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