



GI Tag for Mithila Makhana

Why in News?

The government has recently awarded the [Geographical Indication \(GI\)](#) tag to **Mithila Makhana**.

- The move is expected to **help growers get the maximum price for their premium produce.**



What is Understood by a Geographical Indication (GI) Tag?

▪ About:

- **Geographical Indication (GI)** is an indication used to identify goods having special characteristics originating from a definite geographical territory.
- The **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999** seeks to provide for the registration and better protection of geographical indications relating to goods in India.
- It is governed and directed by the [WTO](#) Agreement on [Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights \(TRIPS\)](#).
 - It was decided and also stated under Articles 1 (2) and 10 of the Paris Convention that the protection of industrial Property and **Geographical Indication** are elements of Intellectual Property.
- It is **primarily an agricultural, natural or a manufactured product** (handicrafts and industrial goods).

▪ Validity:

- This tag is valid for a **period of 10 years** following which it can be **renewed**.

▪ Significance:

- Once a product gets this tag, **any person or company cannot sell a similar item under that name.**
- GI registration of a product **provides it legal protection** and prevention **against unauthorised use** by others.
- GI tag helps in **promoting the exports** of the product.
- It also provides **comfort to customers about the authenticity** of that product.

▪ GI Registration:

- There is a proper process of registration of GI products which includes **filing of application, preliminary scrutiny and examination**, show cause notice, publication in the geographical indications journal, opposition to registration, and registration.
- Any association of persons, producers, organisation or authority established by or under the law can apply.
- The applicant must represent the interest of the producers.
- **GI Tag Products:**
 - Some famous goods which carry this tag include [Basmati rice](#), [Darjeeling Tea](#), [Chanderi Fabric](#), Mysore Silk, Kullu Shawl, Kangra Tea, [Thanjavur Paintings](#), Allahabad Surkha, Farrukhabad Prints, Lucknow Zardozi, [Kashmir Saffron](#) and Kashmir Walnut Wood Carving.

What do we need to Know about 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 identity of Mithila.
- It is also very famous in **Kojagara festival of Maithil Brahmins** celebrated for newly married couples.
- Makhana contains **protein and fiber**, along with **micronutrients like calcium, magnesium, iron, and phosphorus**.

What Other Products of Bihar have GI Tag?

- GI tagging of products in Bihar has helped in **brand building, creating local employment, creating a regional brand, generating spin-off effects in tourism, preserving traditional knowledge** and traditional cultural expressions and conserving biodiversity.
- Many products from Bihar have been granted GI tag such as:
 - [Bhagalpuri Jardalu Mango](#)
 - Katarni Rice
 - Magahi Betel (Paan)
 - Shahi Litchi
 - Silao Khaja (a delicacy)
 - [Madhubani Painting](#)
 - Pipli Work
- In June 2022, the **Geographical Indications (GI) Registry in Chennai** accepted the initial proposal for conferring the GI tag to Nalanda's '**Bawan Buti**' Saree, Gaya's '**Pattharkatti stone craft**' and Hajipur's '**Chiniya**' variety of banana.
 - There have also been proposal for providing GI Tag to three sweet delicacies of Bihar - **Khurma, Tilkut and Balushahi**.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Years Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Which of the following has/have been accorded 'Geographical Indication' status? (2015)

1. Banaras Brocades and Sarees
2. Rajasthani Daal-Bati-Churma
3. Tirupathi Laddu

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (c)

Exp:

- A Geographical Indication (GI) is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
 - Darjeeling tea was the first product in India to get a GI tag.
- Banaras Brocades and Sarees and Tirupathi Laddu have got GI tag while Rajathan's Daal-Baati-Churma does not. **Hence, 1 and 3 are correct. Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.**

Q. India enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 in order to comply with the obligations to (2018)

- (a) ILO
- (b) IMF
- (c) UNCTAD
- (d) WTO

Ans: (d)

Exp:

- **Geographical indications (GIs) are a type of intellectual property (IP).** The World Trade Organisation (**WTO**) recognises intellectual property rights under **TRIPS** (TradeRelated Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) Agreement.
- **Under Article 22(1) of the TRIPS Agreement, the GIs are defined** as “indications which identify a good as originating in the territory of a Member, or a region or locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographic origin”.
- **Therefore, option (d) is the correct answer.**

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