

Agra's century-old footwear industry gets geographical indication tag

After a long legal battle, Agra's (leather) footwear industry was granted a Geographical Indication (GI) tag, making it the 53rd product of Uttar Pradesh to join the elite club.



AFMEC President Puran Dawar said that the team had been working closely for GI tag for the last 3 years. (Photo: India Today)



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The footwear industry of Agra was granted a Geographical Indication (GI) tag, making it the 53rd product of Uttar Pradesh to enter the elite club.

"With the cooperation of NABARD UP and the state government, 2 handicrafts of the state, Agra leather footwear (GI registration number-721), and Jalesar metal craft (GI registration number-722) got GI tag status," said GI expert Padmashree Dr Rajinikanth.

Meanwhile, Agra Footwear Manufacturers and Exporters Chamber (AFMEC) President Puran Dawar said that the AFMEC team had been working closely on every aspect of its legal process for the last 3 years.

"Under the guidance of GI expert Padma Dr Rajnikant Dwivedi, effective legal action was taken. Shoe designer Devki Nandan Son compiled a history of Agra's footwear over generations, strengthening Agra's claim for the GI tag," Puran Dawar said.

He added that AFMEC had applied for GI certification in December 2020 and after a long legal process, Agra's leather footwear received the GI tag. All artisans, traders, manufacturers, and exporters living in the city will benefit from this.

Additionally, with the GI tag, exports will increase along with extensive employment in the coming times and Agra leather footwear will play a strong role in the self-reliant India campaign. Raw-material depots, CFCs, specialized toolkits as well as training of artisans would pave the way and other special schemes would be launched.

"The art of making leather on a large scale in Agra started during the Mughal period. In 500 years, new methods of leather refining were developed and at present Agra's shoe industry is doing business for Rs 25,000 crore annually, out of which shoes worth Rs 4 to 5 crore are exported annually to countries around the world, including Europe," Mohammad Sharif Kala, associated with this industry, told India Today.

"More than five lakh people are directly involved in shoe manufacturing and in such a situation, getting a GI tag will give Agra shoes a different place in the world," he added.

