

UP is no. 1 in GI tagging in country: PM Modi

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Varanasi: Underscoring the leading position of Uttar Pradesh in GI (Geographical Indication) tagging across the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday highlighted the growing international recognition of the state's art, crafts, and skills.

After laying the foundation stone and inaugurating various development projects worth over Rs 3,880 crore, the PM presented GI certificates to the artisans of various items and products, including Shehnai, metal casting craft and Tharu embroidery.

He awarded artisan Ramesh Kumar GI tag certificate for Banarasi shehnai, Anil Kumar for Banaras metal casting craft and Chhiddo from Tharu tribe of Lakhimpur Kheri for Tharu embroidery. A total of 21 GI certificates were presented to various artisans on the occasion. Addressing the gathering, the PM said a GI tag is not just a label, it is a certificate of identity for a region. "When a GI tag is



PM Narendra Modi being welcomed by CM Yogi in Varanasi on Friday. Also seen is Governor Anandiben Patel

granted, it opens the path to greater market heights. Today, Uttar Pradesh leads the nation in GI tagging. This means our art, products and skills are rapidly gaining international recognition. So far, over 30 products from Varanasi and its surrounding districts have received GI tags," he said, adding that Varanasi's tabla, shehnai, wall paintings, thandai, red stuffed chili, lal peda, tirangi burfi (tricolor barfi) have received a new passport of identity, the GI tag.

"Today, products from various UP cities have been awarded GI tags, including Jaunpur's imarti, Mathura's sanjhi art, Bundelkhand's kathiya

wheat, Pilibhit's flute, Prayagraj's moonj craft, Bareilly's zaradozi, Chitrakoot's woodwork, and Lakhimpur Kheri's Tharu zaradozi. This means the fragrance of Uttar Pradesh's soil is now crossing borders, spreading its legacy far and wide," said the PM.

During his recent visit to Mauritius, the PM presented an exquisite metal pot, made of GI-tagged Banaras metal casting craft, containing the holy water from Prayagraj Sangam to the Mauritian President Dharambeer Gokhool. A box made from Surat Sadeli craft, a Banarasi sari, and Mithila makhana from Bihar were also gifted by

the PM. All these goods are GI tagged.

Padma Shri Rajni Kant, GI expert from Kashi, also known as the GI Man of India, met the PM at the event. Kant is instrumental in getting GI certification for 155 local products from 24 states and Union Territories. "With 77 GI certified products, Uttar Pradesh has surpassed Tamil Nadu, which has 58. Varanasi itself has become a leader in GI-tagged goods production, boasting 32 certified products — the highest from a single geographical area," Kant told TOI. He said that UP's journey of becoming the state with the most GI tags was humble. In 2007-08, it had only one GI-tagged product, the 'Allahabad Surkha Guava'.

A marked increase to 77 tags is a result of continuous efforts by different stakeholders, including the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). These organisations have been tirelessly working to identify, certify, and promote the unique products of the state.

All pics by Sanjay Gupta