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Kashmir Saffron got GI Tag

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Why in News

Recently, the Kashmir saffron got **Geographical Indication (GI) tag status**.

Key Points

- Saffron cultivation is believed to have been **introduced in Kashmir by Central Asian** immigrants around the 1st Century BCE.
 - It has been associated with **traditional Kashmiri cuisine** and represents the rich cultural heritage of the region.
 - It is a **very precious and costly product**.
- In ancient Sanskrit literature, saffron is referred to as '**bahukam**'.
- It is cultivated and harvested in the **Karewa (highlands) of Jammu and Kashmir**.
- **Uniqueness:** The features which differentiates it from other saffron varieties available the world over are:
 - It is the **only saffron that is grown at an altitude of 1,600 m to 1,800 m** above mean sea level.
 - It has **longer and thicker stigmas, natural deep-red colour, high aroma, bitter flavour, chemical-free processing**.
 - It also has a high quantity of **crocin** (colouring strength), **safranal** (flavour) and **picrocrocin** (bitterness).
- **Types:** There are **three types** of saffron available in Kashmir — **Lachha Saffron, Mongra Saffron and Guchhi Saffron**.
- **Uses:**
 - Kashmir saffron is used globally as a **spice**. It also helps in revitalizing health.
 - It is used in **cosmetics** and for **medicinal purposes**.
- **Benefit of tag:** With the GI tag, Kashmir saffron would **gain more prominence in the export market**.

Iran is the largest producer of saffron and India is a close competitor.

Source: TH