

GI MAHOTSAV 2026

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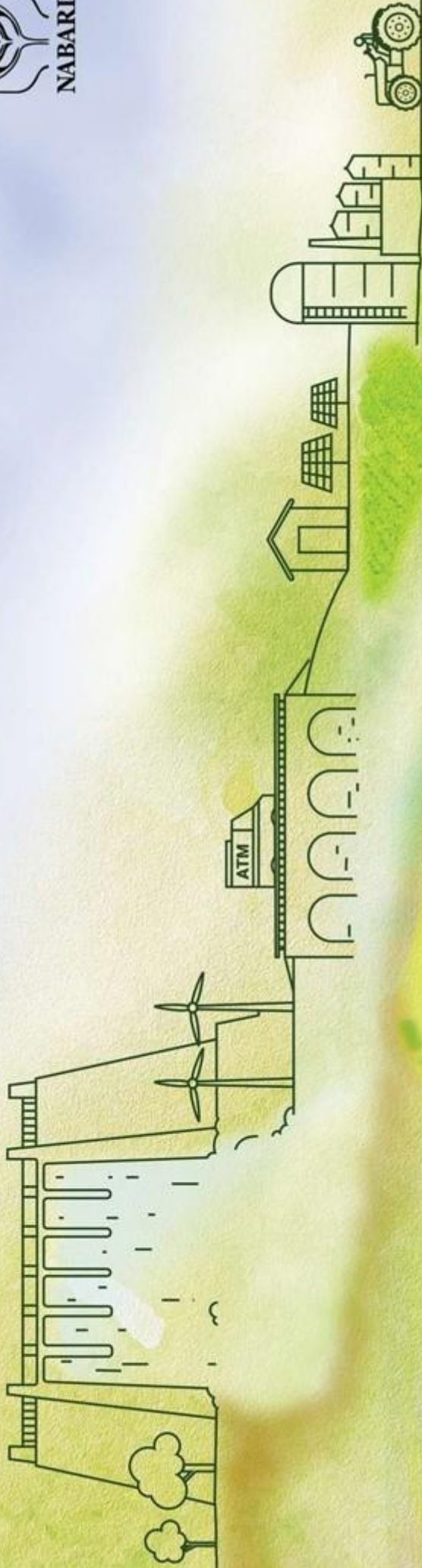
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. Executive Summary**
- 2. Introduction**
- 3. Inaugural Session – GI Mahotsav 2026**
 - 3.1 Welcome Address – Shri Jayanta Chakraborty**
 - 3.2 Keynote Address – Dr. Rajani Kant, Padma Shri**
 - 3.3 Address by Guest of Honour – Shri P.K. Bhardwaj, Chief General Manager, NABARD**
 - 3.4 Address by Chief Guest – Shri Rajesh Pandey, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of MSME & Textiles, Government of West Bengal**
 - 3.5 Concluding Observations of the Inaugural Session**
- 4. Technical Session on IPR & GI Tagging**
 - 4.1 Address by Dr. Mou Sen, Joint Director, Department of MSME & Textiles**
 - 4.2 Address by Dr. Mahuya Hom Choudhury, Senior Scientist & Nodal Officer, Patent Information Centre**
 - 4.3 Concluding Perspective of the Technical Session**
- 5. Exhibition Proceedings & Participating Organisations (26–28 February 2026)**
 - 5.1 Exhibition Overview**
 - 5.2 Product-wise Participation**
 - 5.3 Market Response, Outreach and Institutional Engagement**
 - 5.4 Exhibition Significance**
 - 5.5 Digital Outreach and Promotional Visibility**
- 6. Conclusion**
- 7. Recommendations**

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BCC&I GI Mahotsav 2026 was organized as a strategic policy–industry–producer convergence platform to strengthen the Geographical Indication (GI) ecosystem in India with special focus on Eastern and Northeastern States of India. The three-day Mahotsav was designed ensuring a robust platform for artisans and traders who work with GI Products. Along with exhibition knowledge sessions were organized where experts spoke on the significance of having GI tag on a product, process and hand-holding support required for doing the entire process.

BCC&I GI Mahotsav 2026 was organized with the support of NABARD and the Department of MSME & Textiles, Government of West Bengal. The Mahotsav was attended by 24 artisans and producer representatives, who showcased a diverse range of GI-linked and traditional products including Santipur sarees, Tangail sarees, Dokra metal craft, Patachitra paintings, Kantha stitch products, Madhurkatti craft items, Gobindobhog rice, Tulaipanji rice, Kalonunia rice, Radhunipagal rice, Katarni rice, Kalanamak rice, Lakadong turmeric, Waigaon turmeric, Sikkim large cardamom, Mithila Makhana, Vengurla cashew, traditional sweets such as Sita Bhog and Mihidana, Sohrai paintings, Bherugarh Batik print textiles, tea products, and other handicraft and handloom products.

The most critical structural gap identified during the discussions is the limited expansion of Authorised User certification. Without authorised user registration, producers cannot legally and credibly claim GI authenticity in the marketplace. In an increasingly counterfeit-prone environment, authorised certification is essential to protect product identity, strengthen consumer trust, and enhance price realization. Expanding authorised user registration across districts must therefore become a time-bound priority.

The Technical Session underscored that GI is embedded within a formal intellectual property framework requiring documentation, geographical demarcation, and procedural compliance. Producer groups, artisans, and SHGs require structured facilitation support to navigate these requirements. Institutional handholding is therefore essential to ensure that GI benefits reach grassroots stakeholders

The three-day exhibition (26–28 February 2026), which recorded a footfall of over **500 visitors**, demonstrated the commercial potential of GI-linked sectors including handloom products such as Santipur and Tangail sarees, Dokra metal craft, Patachitra paintings, Kantha stitch, GI rice varieties such as Gobindobhog and Tulaipanji, Lakadong turmeric, traditional sweets including Sita Bhog and Mihidana, tea products, and SHG-led rural enterprises. The exhibition also featured products from other states, including Sohrai paintings from Jharkhand, Bherugarh Batik print textiles from Madhya Pradesh, and handicraft and handloom products from Odisha. The exhibition confirmed that GI and traditional products possess strong market appeal when supported through structured branding, institutional visibility platforms, and direct market interaction between producers and consumers.

The deliberations collectively point toward a clear policy pathway: (i) establish district-level, time-bound targets for Authorised User expansion; (ii) strengthen post-GI facilitation mechanisms at cluster level; (iii) integrate traceability tools such as QR-based authentication to combat counterfeiting; (iv) align GI products with MSME cluster development and value-addition initiatives; and (v) institutionalize structured B2B and procurement engagement mechanisms.

2. INTRODUCTION

Geographical Indications (GIs) are a form of intellectual property that identify goods as originating from a specific geographical location where a particular quality, reputation, or other characteristic is essentially attributable to that origin. In India, GI protection is conferred under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999, enacted in compliance with the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement. The GI tag ensures that only authorised users residing in the region of origin can legally use the product name, providing both legal protection and market distinction.

India's GI regime has expanded significantly since *Darjeeling Tea* became the first GI-tagged product in 2004–05. As of 2024, there are over 600 registered Geographical Indications across the country, spanning agricultural goods, handicrafts, foodstuffs, and manufactured products. These registered GIs represent India's rich cultural heritage, regional specialization, and traditional knowledge systems, and they contribute to rural livelihoods, branding, and export potential.

The central government has also set ambitious national targets to scale GI recognition. In January 2025, the Union Minister of Commerce and Industry articulated a vision to expand the GI ecosystem at scale, including the goal of achieving 10,000 GI tags by 2030, underscoring the strategic importance of GI as both an economic and cultural development tool.

Despite the breadth of GI registrations, a persistent challenge remains: the gap between GI registration and authorised user participation. Without authorised user certification, producers cannot legally leverage the GI status in markets, resulting in missed opportunities for price premium, market differentiation, and protection against counterfeiting.

Within this context, GI Mahotsav 2026 was conceived as a dedicated platform to strengthen the GI value chain - from procedural support and intellectual property awareness to market linkage and enterprise scaling. Organized by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce & Industry in collaboration with institutional partners, the Mahotsav aimed to converge policy discourse, technical guidance, and grassroots participation to unlock measurable outcomes for GI products and stakeholders.

3. INAUGURAL SESSION

GI Mahotsav 2026

The Inaugural Session set the conceptual and policy foundation for GI Mahotsav 2026. The deliberations moved beyond ceremonial addresses and focused on structural gaps, institutional responsibilities, authorised user expansion, and the transformation of GI from a legal tag into a livelihood instrument.

3.1. Welcome Address

Shri Jayanta Chakraborty

Mentor, Agri-Horti-Food Processing–Rural Development National Committee, BCC&I



Shri Jayanta Chakraborty welcomed the Chief Guest Shri Rajesh Pandey, IAS; Guest of Honour Shri P.K. Bhardwaj; and Keynote Speaker Dr. Rajani Kant, Padma Shri, along with distinguished delegates and artisans present.

In his address, he positioned GI Mahotsav as a convergence platform integrating artisans, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), Self Help Groups (SHGs), financial institutions, and policy bodies. He referred to ongoing initiatives undertaken by the Bengal Chamber such as Rural Connect and FPO–bank linkage efforts, which aim to strengthen both market connect and financial connect for grassroots producers.

He emphasized that the exhibition component was not merely symbolic but designed to facilitate structured business interaction. Artisans from West Bengal and other states were showcasing their GI and specialty products, with an expectation of attracting both individual buyers and institutional procurement stakeholders. He reaffirmed the Chamber’s commitment

to promoting GI products across West Bengal and preserving regional legacies and traditions while enabling economic benefit for artisans.

3.2. Keynote Address

Padma Shri Dr. Rajani Kant

General Secretary, Human Welfare Association, Varanasi



Dr. Rajani Kant delivered a comprehensive keynote that connected historical context with contemporary policy imperatives. He began by situating GI within India's long-standing craft and cultural legacy, particularly highlighting Bengal's historical contributions in silk, textiles, handicrafts, and cuisine. He observed that traditional products were historically extracted and commercialized abroad, leading to gradual deterioration of local production ecosystems.

He further noted that post-WTO and TRIPS alignment, inadequate preparedness led to foreign product dumping, weakening indigenous value chains. In this context, he clarified that GI must be understood not merely as a statutory compliance mechanism but as a corrective framework to restore economic dignity to geographically rooted products.

A central emphasis of his address was the importance of **Authorised User certification**. He clearly stated that GI registration alone does not translate into empowerment. Only authorised users are the legitimate beneficiaries of GI protection. Without authorised user status, artisans and producers cannot claim authenticity in formal markets. He cited instances where certain GI products had minimal authorised user penetration despite being registered, highlighting a significant structural gap.

Dr. Kant further clarified that support for GI interventions does not require consultancy fees and that individual artisans, weavers, and producers can directly seek guidance. He suggested that

if a time-bound target were set to expand authorised user registration within one year, it would represent a measurable and meaningful outcome of GI Mahotsav 2026. His address thus shifted the discussion from awareness generation to actionable and measurable institutional outcomes.

3.3. Address by Guest of Honour

Shri P.K. Bhardwaj

Chief General Manager, NABARD



Shri P. K. Bhardwaj congratulated the Bengal Chamber of Commerce & Industry for organizing GI Mahotsav 2026 and appreciated the initiative of bringing together policymakers, financial institutions, industry representatives, and grassroots producers on a common platform to strengthen the Geographical Indication ecosystem.

In his address, he emphasized that a Geographical Indication functions as a **geographical identifier that certifies the origin and authenticity of a product**, ensuring that its unique qualities and reputation linked to a particular region are preserved. GI protection, he noted, plays a vital role in safeguarding traditional knowledge, promoting regional identity, and enhancing market credibility for products originating from specific geographical areas.

Highlighting **NABARD's role in the GI ecosystem across India**, Shri Bhardwaj mentioned that NABARD has been actively supporting the promotion and development of GI products through various initiatives focused on **producer collectivization, capacity building, value chain development, and market linkage**. He noted that NABARD works closely with **Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), Self Help Groups (SHGs), artisan clusters, and producer collectives** to strengthen production systems, improve product quality, and enable better access to markets. Through financial support, technical assistance, and institutional

partnerships, NABARD has been facilitating the integration of GI products into broader rural enterprise and livelihood development programmes.

Referring to the enterprising nature of producers in West Bengal, he cited examples of regional specialties such as **traditional sweets, aromatic rice varieties, jute products, and metal crafts**, which have evolved through generations of craftsmanship and local expertise. He observed that GI recognition can significantly enhance the visibility and branding of such products, enabling them to reach wider markets while preserving their authenticity.

Shri Bhardwaj further highlighted that GI products have strong potential to contribute to **rural economic development, enterprise creation, and value addition**. By establishing authenticity and strengthening market identity, GI products can help producers command better prices and access larger markets, including export opportunities.

He concluded by emphasizing the importance of **collaborative institutional efforts** among government departments, financial institutions, industry bodies, and producer communities to unlock the full potential of GI products and strengthen the livelihoods of artisans and farmers associated with these traditional industries.

3.4. Address by Chief Guest

Shri Rajesh Pandey, IAS

Additional Chief Secretary, Department of MSME & Textiles, Government of West Bengal



Shri Rajesh Pandey began by acknowledging Dr. Rajani Kant's long-standing work in the GI domain and highlighting the State Government's focused engagement with GI promotion. He presented the growth trajectory of GI registrations in West Bengal, stating that in 2011 the state had only seven GI registrations, whereas currently there are thirty-six registered GIs. Over the last fifteen years, nearly twenty-nine to thirty GIs have been secured, with nineteen

additional applications presently in the pipeline. This data indicated a significant institutional push in recent years.

However, he emphasized that GI registration is only the beginning. The process of documentation, proving geographical origin, and establishing distinctiveness is complex. Even after registration, authorised user certification remains essential. In a market environment affected by counterfeiting, unverified claims of GI status cannot sustain credibility. Without authorised certification, authenticity is not recognized by buyers.

His address reinforced the need for structured post-registration intervention and systematic expansion of authorised user certification.

3.5. Concluding Observations of the Inaugural Session

The Inaugural Session collectively underscored that GI must evolve from symbolic recognition to measurable economic impact. The convergence of the Bengal Chamber, NABARD, and the State Government indicates a collaborative institutional framework. However, the consistent emphasis across all speakers was clear: expanding authorised user certification and strengthening post-registration support mechanisms are critical to realizing the true potential of GI-linked livelihoods.

The session concluded in alignment with the programme schedule and laid a strong policy-oriented foundation for the subsequent technical discussions.

4. TECHNICAL SESSION ON IPR & GI TAGGING

4.1. Address by Dr. Mou Sen

Joint Director, Department of MSME & Textiles, Government of West Bengal



The Technical Session on IPR & GI Tagging commenced as per the programme schedule, with Dr. Mou Sen addressing the gathering on behalf of the Department of MSME & Textiles, Government of West Bengal.

At the outset, Dr. Mou Sen congratulated the Bengal Chamber of Commerce & Industry for organizing GI Mahotsav 2026 and acknowledged the presence of Dr. Rajani Kant, Padma Shri, Shri P.K. Bhardwaj of NABARD, and other dignitaries. She recognized Dr. Rajani Kant as a national authority on GI and noted his long-standing contribution to the domain.

GI Registration: The Beginning, Not the End

Dr. Mou Sen emphasized that while GI registration is an important milestone, it represents only the beginning of a longer institutional and economic journey. She clarified that obtaining a GI involves extensive documentation, including proof that the product originates exclusively from a specific geographical area and possesses distinctive characteristics linked to that geography. She noted that the application process itself is complex and evidence-intensive, requiring structured institutional support.

However, she strongly reiterated that post-registration processes are equally, if not more, important. Authorised User certification was identified as a critical component. Without authorised user status, producers cannot legally claim GI authenticity in the marketplace. In today's environment of widespread counterfeiting, mere verbal claims of GI status are insufficient to establish credibility.

Growth of GI in West Bengal

Dr. Mou Sen presented data reflecting the State's progress in the GI ecosystem:

- In 2011, West Bengal had only 7 GI registrations.
- As of date, the number has increased to 36.
- Approximately 29–30 GIs have been secured in the last 15 years.
- An additional 19 applications are currently in the pipeline.

This trajectory, she indicated, reflects the State Government's sustained support and focused intervention in the GI domain.

State's Role in Facilitation

She explained that the State Government has been proactive in facilitating GI applications by assisting producer groups in documentation, coordination, and procedural compliance. The government's role, she indicated, is that of an enabler - helping communities navigate technical requirements rather than being the beneficiary itself.

Importantly, she reiterated that the real beneficiaries of GI are the authorised users - the artisans, weavers, farmers, and producer groups. Therefore, scaling authorised user registration must become a priority for ensuring economic benefits at the grassroots level.

Combating Counterfeiting and Strengthening Authenticity

Dr. Mou Sen highlighted that in contemporary markets, counterfeiting presents a serious challenge. Buyers increasingly demand verifiable authenticity. Without authorised user certification and proper documentation, products risk losing credibility.

She underscored that GI must be integrated with authenticity verification systems and proper certification processes to ensure sustained trust in both domestic and international markets.

Concluding Note

Dr. Mou Sen's address reinforced key themes emerging from the Inaugural Session - particularly the transition from registration to implementation, and from symbolic recognition to structured economic impact. Her intervention provided a departmental perspective on the procedural and policy dimensions of GI, emphasizing facilitation, certification, and authenticity as the pillars of a sustainable GI ecosystem.

4.2. Address by Dr. Mahuya Hom Choudhury

Senior Scientist & Nodal Officer, Patent Information Centre Technology Development & Adaptation Centre, West Bengal State Council of Science & Technology Patent & Trademark Attorney



Dr. Mahuya Hom Choudhury addressed the gathering with a focused intervention on the intellectual property (IPR) dimensions of Geographical Indications and the procedural safeguards necessary for protecting community-based products.

At the outset, she contextualized GI within the broader framework of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), explaining that while patents, trademarks, and copyrights protect individual innovation or enterprise identity, GI functions differently. It protects collective heritage linked to geography and traditional knowledge systems. Therefore, GI must be understood not as a private right but as a community right grounded in origin and historical continuity.

GI Within the IPR Framework

Dr. Mahuya clarified that GI operates within a statutory framework that requires:

- Clear demarcation of geographical boundaries
- Documentary evidence linking product characteristics to geography
- Identification of stakeholders and producer groups
- Registration of authorised users

She emphasized that IPR compliance is not merely procedural but foundational to protecting producers from misuse, imitation, and market dilution. In the absence of structured documentation and proper registration, products remain vulnerable to counterfeiting and misrepresentation.

Importance of Documentation and Evidence

A key aspect of her intervention focused on documentation rigor. She highlighted that GI registration requires:

- Historical evidence
- Scientific or production-based validation
- Description of unique attributes
- Proof that the product cannot be replicated outside the defined geographical region

She indicated that many potential GI products face delays not due to lack of merit but due to insufficient documentation and improper procedural compliance.

Authorised User Certification as Legal Shield

Reinforcing the themes emerging from the Inaugural Session and Dr. Mou Sen's address, Dr. Mahuya stressed that authorised user registration provides legal standing. Without authorised certification, producers cannot effectively enforce their GI rights.

She noted that in the current market environment, where counterfeit and look-alike products are common, legal defensibility becomes critical. Authorised user status strengthens traceability and enhances consumer trust.

Institutional Support and Capacity Building

Dr. Mahuya underscored the role of institutional mechanisms such as the Patent Information Centre and the West Bengal State Council of Science & Technology in:

- Providing guidance on GI applications
- Assisting in documentation and procedural steps
- Building awareness among producer groups
- Facilitating knowledge dissemination on IPR compliance

She emphasized that awareness-building at the grassroots level remains essential. Many artisans and producer groups are unaware of the procedural safeguards required post-registration.

4.3. Concluding Perspective

Dr. Mahuya Hom Choudhury's address brought a technical and legal depth to the session. While earlier speakers emphasized policy direction and authorised user expansion, her intervention clarified the structural and procedural backbone necessary for sustaining GI protection. She reinforced that GI must be supported by documentation, legal compliance, traceability systems, and institutional handholding to translate into durable economic advantage.

5. EXHIBITION PROCEEDINGS & PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

5.1 Exhibition Overview

The exhibition segment of GI Mahotsav 2026 was conducted over three days from 26th to 28th February 2026 and served as the central interface between producers, institutions, and markets. A total of 24 stalls participated in the exhibition, representing artisans, producer groups, cooperative societies, Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs), Self Help Groups (SHGs), and enterprises working across a wide range of Geographical Indication (GI) and traditional product sectors.

The exhibition recorded a footfall of over 500 visitors, including buyers, institutional stakeholders, sector professionals, and members of the general public. The participating stalls collectively reported sales in the range of INR 18–20 lakhs, reflecting strong market interest in GI and traditional products when presented through a structured and curated platform.

The exhibition functioned as a direct market connect platform, enabling retail engagement, exploratory bulk procurement discussions, and knowledge exchange. Artisans and producer representatives actively interacted with visitors, explaining the production processes, origin-based distinctiveness, and the significance of GI-linked authenticity.



5.2 Product-wise Participation

The exhibition featured participation from artisans, producer groups, cooperatives, and enterprises representing a diverse range of Geographical Indication-linked and traditional products. The stalls showcased products across handloom textiles, handicrafts, traditional paintings, agricultural produce, specialty food items, and tea products, reflecting the breadth of the GI ecosystem and its linkage with rural livelihoods, cultural heritage, and regional value chains.

Handloom Textiles

The handloom segment featured traditional weaving clusters from West Bengal as well as textile crafts from other states.

- **Nabadwip Baishnabpara Tantubay Samabay Samity Ltd.**, represented by **Tapas Ch. Saha and Pantu Saha** – Santipur and Tangail sarees.
- **Shantipur Prkalpadin Tantushilpi Samabay Samity Ltd.**, represented by **Chandana Ghosh and Subhra Nath Chatterjee** – Santipur and Tangail sarees.
- **Samaspur Union Cooperative Weaver Society Limited**, represented by **Binoy Bhusan Laha** – Handloom textiles.

These stalls represented the renowned Santipur handloom cluster of Nadia district, known for its fine cotton weaving traditions and distinctive weaving techniques.

From outside West Bengal:

- **Mahin SHG**, represented by **Nazia Bee and Moh. Rizwan** – Bherugarh Batik print textiles from Madhya Pradesh.

Bherugarh Batik is known for its traditional wax-resist dyeing technique, producing intricate patterns and vibrant designs on fabric.

Traditional Metal Craft

- **Beriapur Dokra**, represented by **Ramchandra Karmakar** – Dokra metal craft.
- **Dariyapur Dokra Artisan Cooperative Industrial Society Ltd.**, represented by **Shri Suresh Karmakar and Shri Shibshankar Karmakar** – Dokra craft.

These stalls highlighted the traditional lost-wax metal casting technique practiced by artisan communities in eastern India and reflected the continued relevance of indigenous craft traditions.

Traditional Painting and Folk Art

- **Jarano Patachitra**, represented by **Seramuddin Chitrakar and his wife** – Traditional Patachitra scroll paintings depicting mythological narratives and folk traditions.

- **Arif Pattachitra**, represented by **Amiruddin Chitrakar** – Patachitra paintings reflecting Bengal’s scroll painting heritage.

Patachitra is a traditional storytelling art form from Bengal that combines visual narratives with folk traditions, often depicting mythological stories, social themes, and local cultural heritage through painted scrolls.

From outside West Bengal:

- **Jan Jagran Kendra**, represented by **Santu Kumar and Manish Kumar** – Sohrai paintings from Jharkhand.

Sohrai painting is a traditional tribal art form from Jharkhand created using natural pigments and inspired by motifs drawn from nature, animals, and rural life.

Rural Craft and SHG-led Enterprises

- **Bhagabanpur-I Deshapran FPCL**, represented by **Soumyasish Maity** – Bamboo and mat-based products crafted by rural artisan groups using locally sourced natural fibres.
- **Sutirtha Global Producer Company Ltd.**, represented by **Nurunnesha Begum and SK Altap Ali** – Kantha stitch products.
- **Mashumpur Maa Anandamayee SHG (Paschim Medinipur & Jhargram)**, represented by **Kalyani Rani Das Maity and Anjana Mandal** – Madhurkatti products.

These stalls highlighted the role of rural producer groups and women-led Self Help Groups in sustaining traditional craft practices while generating livelihood opportunities at the grassroots level.

Agricultural GI Products and Specialty Produce

Agricultural products constituted a significant component of the exhibition, showcasing GI-linked rice varieties and specialty produce from different regions.

- **Paushtik Life**, represented by **Ruth Chattopadhyay** – GI rice varieties including Tulaipanji, Kalonunia, and Gobindobhog.
- **AMALFARM Solution Private Limited** – Agricultural GI products including Gobindobhog Rice, Kalonunia Rice, Tulaipanji Rice, Radhunipagal Rice, Katarni Rice, Kalanamak Rice, Sikkim Large Cardamom, Lakadong Turmeric, Waigaon Turmeric, Mithila Makhana, and Vengurla Cashew.

These stalls demonstrated the growing importance of GI recognition in strengthening agricultural branding, regional identity, and market differentiation.

Traditional Food Products

- **Bardhaman Sita Bhog & Mihidana Traders Welfare Association**, represented by **Promod Kumar Singh** – Sita Bhog and Mihidana.

These traditional sweets from Bardhaman represent a significant part of Bengal’s culinary heritage and demonstrate the importance of GI protection in the food sector.

Tea

- **STG Tea** – Tea products sourced from the Darjeeling region of West Bengal.

Darjeeling tea holds the distinction of being the **first Geographical Indication (GI) product registered in India** and is internationally recognised for its distinctive aroma, flavour profile, and unique agro-climatic cultivation conditions in the Himalayan foothills.

Handicrafts and Handloom from Other States

- **Dhalapathar Parada Producer Company Ltd.**, represented by **Debraj Sahoo and Janarddan Behera** – Handicraft and handloom products from Odisha reflecting the state’s long-standing tradition of weaving and craft production.





5.3 Market Response, Outreach and Institutional Engagement

The exhibition generated strong market engagement over the three-day period. The presence of a diverse range of GI-linked products attracted both retail buyers and institutional stakeholders. In addition to physical engagement, the exhibition achieved notable digital visibility through social media outreach, particularly through posts shared by institutional partners including NABARD, which highlighted the participating artisans, products, and exhibition activities. Screenshots of these social media posts are included in this report as reference documentation.

The exhibition also facilitated several institutional visits and high-level interactions. Ms. Barbara Voss, Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Republic of India, Kolkata, visited the exhibition and interacted with participating artisans. Similarly, Ms. Sabrin Chowdhury, First Secretary (Commercial), Bangladesh Deputy High Commission, Kolkata, visited the stalls and engaged with producers to discuss potential future collaboration opportunities and project engagements related to traditional crafts and GI-linked products.

The platform also enabled important B2B and institutional linkages. Discussions were initiated with Biswabangla regarding potential collaboration for the promotion and marketing of GI and traditional products. Bulk buyers such as Earth Story Farms Pvt. Ltd. visited the exhibition and explored wholesale procurement possibilities across several product categories including textiles, traditional paintings, rice varieties, turmeric, and other food products showcased at the Mahotsav.

Members of the BCC&I Secretariat, past presidents of the Chamber, and institutional representatives also engaged with participating artisans during the exhibition. These interactions led to discussions on potential corporate procurement of GI products for

institutional gifting and mementoes, thereby opening avenues for future bulk orders and sustained engagement.

An important logistical linkage also emerged through interaction with DTDC, which expressed interest in developing a logistics support framework for participating artisans. This initiative aims to support product shipment, supply chain management, and distribution for future orders and wider market access.

Officials from the Department of MSME & Textiles, Government of West Bengal, were also present at the exhibition and interacted with artisans to understand challenges related to licensing, GI tagging, certification, administrative procedures, and market access. These discussions helped identify key issues faced by producers and enabled connections to be established for follow-up support and institutional facilitation.

5.4 Exhibition Significance

The three-day exhibition demonstrated the breadth and commercial potential of the GI ecosystem across multiple sectors including handloom textiles, Dokra metal craft, traditional painting forms, rice and agri-based GI products, spices and inter-state GI commodities, SHG-based craft enterprises, traditional sweets, and tea products.

The structured co-location of diverse GI categories provided stakeholders with a comprehensive view of how geography-linked products can transition from recognition to market presence. Beyond retail sales, the exhibition served as a platform for policy dialogue, institutional convergence, business networking, and international engagement.

Overall, the exhibition reinforced the central objective of GI Mahotsav 2026—strengthening the linkage between authenticity, institutional support, and commercial viability for GI-linked producers and traditional enterprises.

5.5 Digital Outreach and Promotional Visibility

As part of the promotional activities for GI Mahotsav 2026, a series of digital outreach initiatives were undertaken through the official social media platforms of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce & Industry. These promotional posts highlighted the event, participating stakeholders, and the role of supporting institutions including NABARD as the **Title Partner**.

Two key promotional posts related to the Mahotsav generated substantial engagement and visibility. One promotional post featuring the event announcement and highlighting NABARD's association with GI Mahotsav 2026 recorded **11,746 views**, while another promotional visual campaign promoting the event generated **11,403 views**. These posts collectively contributed to expanding awareness about the Mahotsav and its objectives among a wider digital audience. The digital promotion emphasized the role of NABARD in supporting rural enterprises, farmer producer organizations, and value chain development linked to Geographical Indication products. Through these promotional campaigns, NABARD's association with GI Mahotsav 2026 received significant visibility among online audiences, including stakeholders from agriculture, handicrafts, rural development, and entrepreneurship ecosystems.

The strong viewership generated through these posts demonstrates the effectiveness of digital communication in amplifying the reach of institutional partnerships and promoting GI-related initiatives beyond the physical event venue. The promotional activities also contributed to

strengthening public awareness about the importance of GI products and the role of institutions such as NABARD in supporting rural livelihoods and traditional industries.

Screenshots of the promotional posts and engagement metrics are included in this report as reference documentation.



6. CONCLUSION

GI Mahotsav 2026 brought together policymakers, financial institutions, industry representatives, IPR experts, artisan cooperatives, SHGs, and producer companies onto a common platform with the objective of strengthening the Geographical Indication ecosystem in West Bengal and beyond.

Across the Inaugural and Technical Sessions, a consistent theme emerged: **GI registration alone does not ensure economic transformation.** While West Bengal has witnessed significant growth in GI registrations - increasing from 7 in 2011 to 36 at present, with additional applications in process - the discussions highlighted that the true value of GI lies in post-registration implementation.

Speakers repeatedly emphasized that the expansion of **Authorised User certification** is critical. Without authorised users, GI remains a symbolic recognition rather than a functional economic instrument. In a marketplace increasingly affected by counterfeiting and unverified claims, authorised certification becomes essential for establishing authenticity and consumer trust.

The Technical Session reinforced that GI must be supported by rigorous documentation, clear geographical demarcation, evidence-based applications, and structured institutional facilitation. GI operates within a legal framework and must therefore be backed by procedural compliance and awareness at the grassroots level.

The exhibition, conducted from 26–28 February 2026 and attended by over 150 visitors, demonstrated the breadth of the GI ecosystem across handloom, metal craft, traditional painting, agri-based GI products, spices, sweets, and SHG-led enterprises. It provided tangible evidence that GI-linked products possess both cultural value and commercial potential,

provided they are systematically supported through market linkage and authenticity mechanisms.

The Mahotsav therefore established a clear policy direction: GI must move from recognition to realization, from registration to revenue, and from documentation to distribution.



7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the deliberations and stakeholder interactions during GI Mahotsav 2026, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Time-Bound Expansion of Authorised Users

A structured, time-bound target may be established for increasing Authorised User registrations across all existing GIs in West Bengal. Expanding authorised user certification is central to translating GI recognition into economic benefit. District-wise monitoring mechanisms may be instituted to track progress.

2. Post-GI Facilitation Mechanisms

Dedicated facilitation mechanisms may be strengthened at the district or cluster level to assist producer groups with:

- Documentation
- Authorised user application processes
- Legal compliance
- Renewal and procedural updates

Such structured support would reduce procedural barriers for artisans and weavers.

3. Integration of GI with Traceability Systems

To address concerns related to counterfeiting and authenticity, integration of traceability tools such as QR-based verification systems may be explored. This would enhance consumer confidence and provide verifiable product identity in both domestic and international markets.

4. Strengthening Cluster-Based Interventions

GI products may be integrated into cluster development frameworks under MSME and related departments to support:

- Design improvement
- Packaging standardization
- Branding development
- Infrastructure strengthening

This would enable value addition beyond registration.

5. Institutional Convergence

A structured convergence mechanism between:

- Department of MSME & Textiles
- NABARD
- Patent Information Centre / IPR authorities
- Industry bodies such as BCC&I

may be formalized to ensure coordinated GI promotion, financing support, documentation assistance, and market facilitation.

6. Market Linkage & Procurement Platforms

Future GI-focused platforms may incorporate:

- Structured B2B sessions
- Institutional procurement dialogues
- Export-oriented buyer interactions

The exhibition component demonstrated strong potential for institutionalized market engagement.

7. Awareness & Capacity Building at Grassroots Level

Focused awareness programmes may be undertaken to educate artisans, SHGs, FPOs, and producer groups on:

- GI significance
- Authorised user registration
- Legal protection mechanisms
- Branding and marketing strategies

Sustained capacity building would ensure long-term GI sustainability and economic impact.



