

Madur mats get National Handicraft award

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In news— Recently, two women from Sabang in Paschim Medinipur district West Bengal have been given the National Handicraft Award in recognition of their outstanding contribution to the development of crafts.

Key updates

- The announcement of national crafts awards for Gauri Rani Jana and Gauri Bala Das was made this Independence Day for their skills in making Madur floor mats that are unique to West Bengal.
- The national award to the women weavers of Madur is in recognition of their craft and also empowers women of the region.

About Madur mats-

- Madur mats are **made of natural fibres called Madur Kathi** which is a sedge of the family Cyperaceae.
- Madurkathi is a rhizome-based plant (Cyperus tegetum or Cyperus pangorei) found abundantly in the alluvial tracts of Purba and Paschim Medinipur.
- These mats are an intrinsic part of the Bengali lifestyle.
- Madhurkathi was awarded the Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Geographical Indication Registry in April 2018.
- The Madur Kathi cultivation is done at the swampy land.
- The Madur Kathi sapling is planted around the month of April-May.
- When the reed grows up to 4 to 5 feet it is cut just above the ground leaving a tiny part of it for its re-growth.

- 80% to 90% of the entire workforce engaged in this traditional craft are women.
- **Masland or Mataranchi, a fine quality Madur mat**, takes weeks to weave.
- During the 18th century, Masland mats flourished under royal patronage.
- In 1744, Nawab Alibardi Khan issued a charter to land-owning jagirdars in this regard, and as a result, it was obligatory to supply Masland mats for use in the Collectorate.

About the National Handicraft Award-

- The National Awards for craftsmen was introduced during the year 1965 and later the same was extended to weavers also.
- National Awards are being conferred to the Craftspersons and weavers in recognition of their outstanding contribution, craftsmanship & development of craft.
- There shall be a maximum of 40 National awards and 40 National Merit certificates in a year.
- The main objective of this award is to give recognition to the outstanding craftspersons in the Handicraft sector.
- This award is amongst the highest award for the handicrafts artisans of India.
- The award is presented by the President of India, along with Shilp Guru Awards to Master Craftspersons and Sant Kabir Award to master weavers.