Madras HC: Bangladesh plea against 'Tangail Saree' GI is maintainable

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News

The Madras High Court on 20 November 2026 agreed to hear a petition by the Deputy Commissioner of Tangail district, Bangladesh, seeking cancellation or rectification of the Geographical Indication (GI) 'Tangail Saree of Bengal' granted for West Bengal. Justice P.B. Balaji dismissed an application by the GI proprietor, the West Bengal State Handloom Weavers Co-operative Society, to reject the petition at the threshold. Holding the petition maintainable and saying the cancellation/rectification plea needs a full inquiry, he directed both sides to file affidavits of admission and denial of documents; the case was listed for 7 December. The Society had argued that the Deputy Commissioner is not a 'person aggrieved' under Section 27 of the GI Act, 1999. It also said the Bengal saree does not come from Tangail in East Bengal but is a Shantipur–Dhaka–Tangail hybrid developed after Partition by weavers who settled in Shantipur, especially Fulia. The Society applied in September 2020 and received its registration certificate from the GI Registry in Chennai on 2 January 2024; Bangladesh obtained a separate GI for 'Tangail Sari' under its own law in 2024. UNESCO inscribed Bangladesh's Tangail saree weaving art on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in December 2025.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Court	Madras High Court – Justice P.B. Balaji

Point	Details
Date	20 November 2026; next hearing 7 December
Petitioner	Deputy Commissioner of Tangail, Bangladesh
GI proprietor	West Bengal State Handloom Weavers Co-op Society
GI name / date	'Tangail Saree of Bengal' – 2.1.2024
Provision	GI Act, 1999 – Section 27 (removal/rectification)
Order	Plea to reject dismissed; petition maintainable
Bangladesh	Own GI in 2024; UNESCO ICH, Dec 2025

Background

- History: Tangail is a district in the Dhaka division of present-day Bangladesh. After the 1947 Partition, many weaver families moved to Nadia district of West Bengal and continued weaving at Shantipur–Fulia.
- Law: a Geographical Indication is an intellectual property right showing that a product's quality and reputation come from its place of origin. In India registration is valid for 10 years and can be renewed repeatedly. Until 2021 rectification pleas went to the Intellectual Property Appellate Board (IPAB); after its abolition they go to High Courts.
- International angle: the same name being a GI in two countries is not new in South Asia – India and Pakistan have a similar dispute over Basmati rice. Bangladesh's Jamdani weaving art was inscribed by UNESCO in 2013.

Tamil Nadu link: Because India's only GI Registry is in Chennai, cases on its registrations come to the Madras High Court; the abolished IPAB was also headquartered in Chennai. Tamil Nadu's handloom GIs include Kanchipuram silk and Madurai Sungudi; Sungudi's tie-and-dye art was brought by the Saurashtrian community who migrated from Gujarat (Development Commissioner (Handicrafts)).

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

The Madras High Court on 20 November 2026 agreed to hear a petition by the Deputy Commissioner of Tangail district, Bangladesh, seeking cancellation or rectification of the Geographical Indication (GI) 'Tangail Saree of Bengal' granted for West Bengal.

What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Court: Madras High Court – Justice P.B. Balaji; Date: 20 November 2026; next hearing 7 December; Petitioner: Deputy Commissioner of Tangail, Bangladesh; GI proprietor: West Bengal State Handloom Weavers Co-op Society.

What is the background to this news?

History: Tangail is a district in the Dhaka division of present-day Bangladesh. After the 1947 Partition, many weaver families moved to Nadia district of West Bengal and continued weaving at Shantipur–Fulia.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. Which body, abolished in 2021, earlier heard GI rectification cases that now go to High Courts?

A) NCLAT

B) COMPAT

C) IPAB

D) TDSAT

Answer: C – Explanation: The Intellectual Property Appellate Board (IPAB) – headquartered in Chennai; abolished by the 2021 Tribunals Reforms Ordinance/Act.

2. Tamil Nadu's GI-tagged 'Madurai Sungudi' saree is known for which technique?

A) Ikat weaving

B) Tie-and-dye

C) Block printing

D) Zari brocade

Answer: B – Explanation: Tie-and-dye – an art brought by the Saurashtrian community who migrated from Gujarat to Madurai.

3. Which Bangladeshi weaving art was inscribed on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2013?

A) Baluchari

B) Kantha

C) Muslin

D) Jamdani

Answer: D – Explanation: Jamdani weaving (2013). Tangail saree weaving joined the same list in December 2025. Baluchari is a West Bengal silk saree.

4. For how many years is a Geographical Indication (GI) registration valid in India?

A) 5 years

B) 7 years

C) 10 years

D) 20 years

Answer: C – Explanation: 10 years; it can be renewed again and again for 10 years each. A patent lasts 20 years and cannot be extended.

5. Fulia and Shantipur, West Bengal's centres of 'Tangail' weaving, are in which district?

A) Nadia

B) Murshidabad

C) Hooghly

D) Bankura

Answer: A – Explanation: Nadia – weavers from East Bengal settled here after Partition. Bankura is known for Baluchari and terracotta.