

SAFFRON CROP IS STAGE FOR TOURIST SHOTS

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Around 30,000 families living in as many as 226 villages in J&K, about 90% of them in Pampore, are associated with the spice business.

“We started to collect the saffron flowers early in the morning. It will be followed by separation of petals and sticks. Thereby, we are sun-drying it till the stigmas attain a particular shape,” Ibrahim Nabi, a lawyer by profession, said.

Mr. Nabi is joined by his sister who is a student, and his mother, a house-wife, to pick the flowers, like hundreds of other landowners in the Pampore region. After facing moisture stress, disease-ridden saffron corms, nutrient depletion and delayed stigma separation in the past, there is hope this year that the yield will see a 15% increase compared to last year, according to the agriculture department.

Saffron is one of the world’s most costly spices by weight. Around 75,000 saffron blossoms produce a single pound of saffron spice and the cost varies between Rs. 2 and Rs. 3 lakh per kilogram.

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