



13 MARCH 2024

ASSAM MAJULI MASKS

CONTEXT: The traditional Majuli Maks of Assam were given Geographical indication (GI) Tag by the Centre.

ABOUT GI TAG

- Geographical Indication Tag is given to products originating from a specific geographical region, signifying unique characteristics and qualities.
- It serves as a trademark in the international market

MAJULI RIVER ISLAND

- Majuli the largest river island in the world and the seat of Assam's neo-Vaishnavite tradition, has been home to the art of mask-making since the 16th century.

ABOUT THE MASKS

- These are handmade masks traditionally used to depict characters in bhaonas, or theatrical performances with devotional messages under the neo-Vaishnavite tradition
- It was introduced by the 15th-16th century reformer saint Srimanta Sankardeva.
- Material used: The masks are made of bamboo, clay, dung, cloth, cotton, wood and other materials available in the riverine surroundings of their makers

MAJULI PAINTING

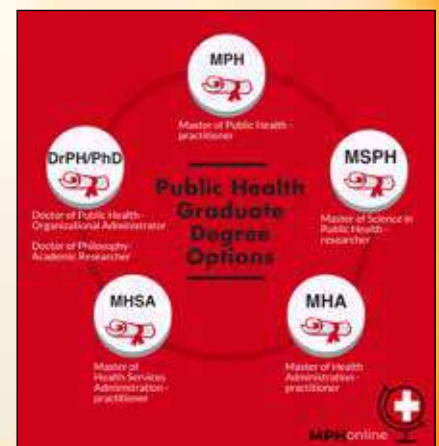
- It is a form of painting — also originating in the 16th century — done on sanchi pat, or manuscripts made of the bark of the sanchi or agar tree, using homemade ink.
- The earliest example of an illustrated manuscript is said to be a rendering of the Adya Dasama of the Bhagwat Purana in Assamese by Srimanta Sankardev.
- This art was patronised by the Ahom kings.
- It continues to be practised in every sattra in Majuli.

GLOBAL RANKINGS FOR SCHOOLS OF PUBLIC HEALTH

CONTEXT: In the first global rankings for schools of public health, the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) has secured an impressive second place, surpassing Harvard.

ABOUT PHFI

- The PHAR is the first international bibliometric university ranking system designed for academic public health
- The project was funded by the Institute of Global Health, University of Geneva.
- It has established six institutes in different regions of India to promote multidisciplinary education and research which



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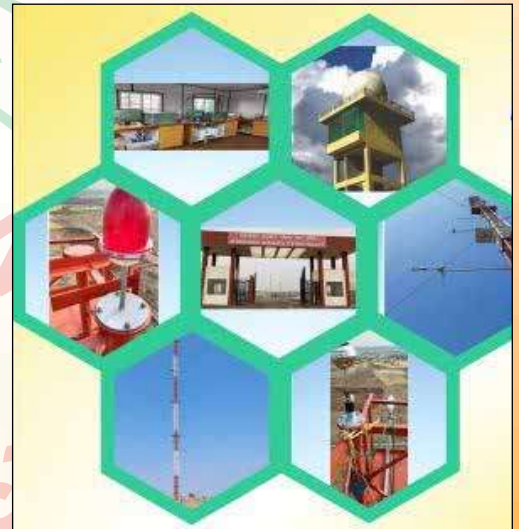
can inform and assist multi-sectoral policies and programmes for protecting people's health.

ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH TESTBED IN CENTRAL INDIA (ART-CI)

CONTEXT: Minister of Earth Sciences virtually inaugurated the first phase of the Atmospheric Research Testbed in Central India (ART-CI) in Sehore district, located about 50km northwest of Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh.

ABOUT ART-CI

- It is equipped with high-end instruments to record several vital parameters that will be fed into improving the weather models besides facilitating advanced studies on the Indian monsoons.
- It will help better understand the cloud systems, land-atmospheric systems and tracking of the low pressure systems and depressions.
- With climate change, rainfall associated with these systems during the monsoon season have been becoming erratic.
- Data obtained from the testbed facility will be assimilated and used to improve the forecasts.



TRENDS IN INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS, 2023 REPORT

CONTEXT: According to a new report 'Trends in International Arms Transfer 2023, India continues to be the world's top arms importer.

ABOUT THE REPORT

- Published by – Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).
- Study period – 2019-2023.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Export regime – The 5 largest exporters were the United States, France, Russia, China and Germany.
- For the 1st time, France became the 2nd biggest arms exporter after the USA.
- Imports – The 5 largest arms importers were India, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Ukraine and Pakistan.
- India – Its arms imports increased by 4.7% between 2014–2018 and 2019–2023.



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- Russia is India's main-arms-supplier, accounting for 36 % of its arms imports.

ABOUT SIPRI

An independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.

- Established in – 1966, in Stockholm, Sweden
- Role – It provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public.

REVAMPED PHARMACEUTICALS TECHNOLOGY UPGRADATION ASSISTANCE (RPTUAS) SCHEME

CONTEXT: Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers announces the Revamped Pharmaceuticals Technology Upgradation Assistance (RPTUAS) Scheme recently.

ABOUT THE SCHEME

- The revamped Pharmaceutical Technology Upgradation Assistance Scheme (PTUAS) extends the scheme's scope to include any pharmaceutical manufacturing unit with a turnover of less than Rs. 500 crore.
- It entails financial assistance to drug companies to help them upgrade their facilities to produce medicines conforming to Revised Schedule-M & WHO-GMP standards.
- It also introduces more flexible financing options, emphasising subsidies on reimbursement basis, over traditional credit-linked approach.



PHARMACEUTICAL TECHNOLOGY UPGRADATION ASSISTANCE SCHEME (PTUAS)

- It is a credit-linked scheme aims to help small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) meet national and international regulatory standards.

PERSONAL INTELLIGENCE (PI)

- Pi is the 1stemotionally intelligent AI chatbot with which one can have deep and meaningful conversations.
- It is launched by Inflection AI, a California-based AI startup founded by former co-founders of DeepMind and LinkedIn.
- It is designed to understand natural language, generate relevant, engaging responses, and handle a wide range of topics.

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