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1. GI tag for Majuli masks and Majuli Manuscript Painting of Assam

Why in News?



Adding to their growing national and international recognition, the traditional Majuli masks in Assam were given a Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Centre. Majuli manuscript painting got the GI label.

A GI tag is conferred upon products originating from a specific geographical region, signifying unique characteristics and qualities. Essentially, it serves as a trademark in the international market.

About Majuli 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. Today, many of its traditional practitioners are working to take the art out of their traditional place in sattras, or monasteries, and give them a new, contemporary life.

What are these masks?

The handmade masks are traditionally used to depict characters in bhaonas, or theatrical performances with devotional messages under the neo-Vaishnavite tradition, introduced by the 15th-16th century reformer saint Srimanta Sankardeva. The masks can depict gods, goddesses, demons, animals and birds — Ravana, Garuda, Narasimha, Hanuman, Varaha Surpanakha all feature among the masks.

Why is the art practised in monasteries?

Sattras are monastic institutions established by Srimanta Sankardev and his disciples as centres of religious, social and cultural reform. Today, they are also centres of traditional performing arts such as borgeet (songs), xattriya (dance) and bhaona (theatre), which are an integral part of the Sankardev tradition.

Majuli has 22 sattras, and the patent application states that the mask-making tradition is by and large concentrated in four of them — Samaguri Sattra, Natun Samaguri Sattra, Bihimpur Sattra and Alengi Narasimha Sattra.



The masks are made of bamboo, clay, dung, cloth, cotton, wood and other materials available in the riverine surroundings of their makers.

What is Majuli manuscript painting, which also received the GI tag?



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.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Economics

Source: The Indian Express

2. Union Cabinet approves IndiaAI Mission with 10,372 cr outlay

Why in news?

India has made the first move to address a key shortcoming it currently has in unlocking opportunities around generative artificial intelligence (AI) — that of computing hardware.

The Union Cabinet approved the IndiaAI Mission with an outlay of Rs 10,372 crore for the next five years, under which the government will allocate funds towards subsidising private companies looking to set up AI computing capacity in the country, among other things.

Computing capacity, or compute, is among the most important elements of building a large AI system, apart from algorithmic innovation and data sets. It is also one of the most difficult elements to procure for smaller businesses looking to train and build such AI systems, given the high costs.

For example, Nvidia's A100 chip — considered to be the most cutting edge for AI applications — costs around \$10,000, which means that a data centre of 10,000 such graphics processing units (GPUs) could cost at least \$100 million (more than Rs 8,000 crore).

What is India's plan for setting up AI computing capacity?

Under the IndiaAI Mission, the government will look to establish a computing capacity of more than 10,000 GPUs and also help develop foundational models with a capacity of more than 100 billion parameters trained on datasets covering major Indian languages for priority sectors like healthcare, agriculture, and governance.

While the infrastructure is being set up, priority will be placed on selecting the most advanced GPUs.

The implementation of this AI compute infrastructure will be done through a public-private partnership model with 50 per cent viability gap funding. If the compute prices come down, the private entity will have to add more compute capacity within the same budgeted amount to meet increased demand. Of the total outlay, Rs 4,564 crore has been earmarked for building computing infrastructure.

Are there proposals beyond hardware too?

The Cabinet has approved the financing by the government of deeptech startups at various levels of growth. Of the total outlay, roughly Rs 2,000 crore has been earmarked towards this. As part of the programme, an IndiaAI Datasets Platform will be set up, which will look at leveraging the quality, access, and use of non-personal datasets for AI innovation. The platform will be tasked with hosting identified "high-quality" AI-ready datasets.

Together, these proposals cover two of the most crucial elements of building large language models: the hardware and access to high-quality datasets.

The government will also set up the IndiaAI Innovation Research Centre, which will undertake the development and deployment of large foundational models, with focus on indigenous

Large Multimodal Models and domain-specific foundational models. Close to Rs 2,000 crore has been earmarked for this centre. There is a plan to financially support 4,000 BTech, 400 Mtech, and 600 PhD candidates who will focus on AI in premier educational institutions.

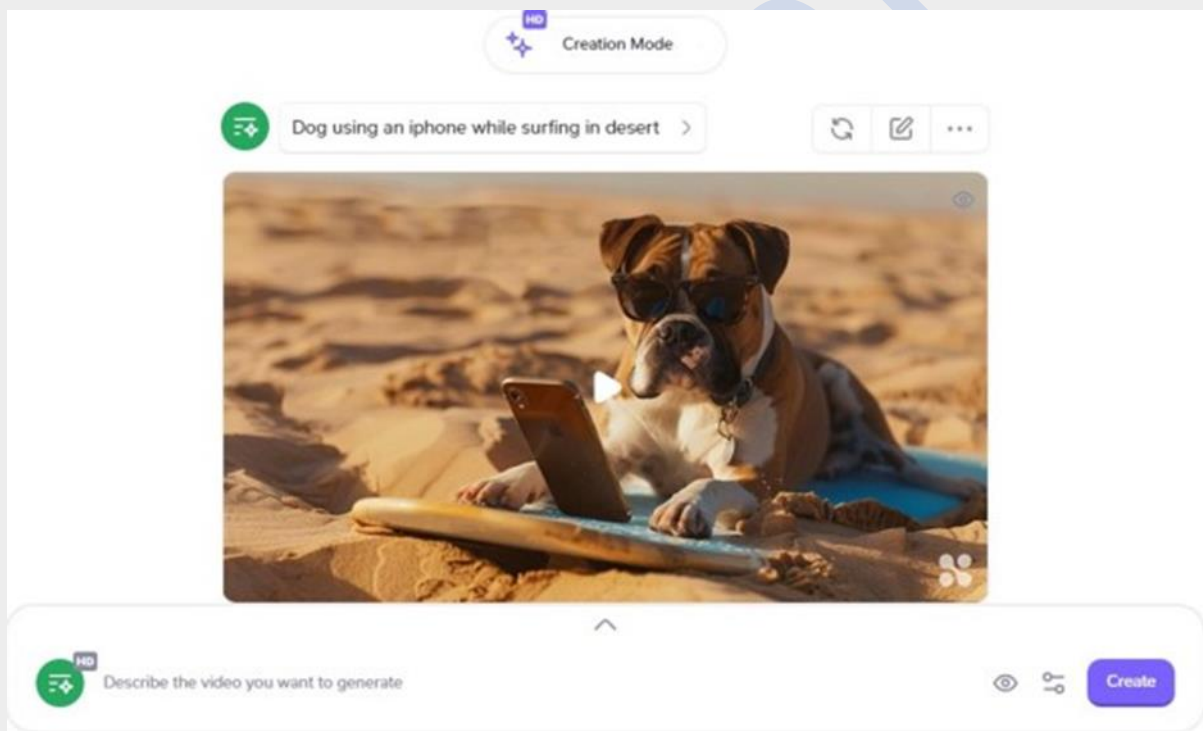
Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

Source: Indian Express

3. Haiper, the text-to-video model created by Google DeepMind, TikTok alumni

Why in News?

The race to bring out the best text-to-video AI model seems to be intensifying. Haiper — a company founded by former members of Google DeepMind, TikTok, and top labs from research academia — introduced a new text-to-video model. The announcement came just weeks after the launch of OpenAI's AI model Sora, which is capable of generating one-minute high-definition videos from text prompts.



According to Haiper, its model is a powerful perceptual foundation model-driven AI that has been designed for a "new path towards AGI" (artificial general intelligence, an AI software with human-like intelligence and the ability to self-learn).

What is Haiper and who is backing it?

Haiper is an all-in-one visual foundation model that allows everyone, with or without technical training, to generate high-quality video content with ease.

Released by DeepMind alumni, Yishu Miao and Ziyu Wang, the model comes with the company's own proprietary AI model underneath. According to reports, Miao had previously worked at TikTok's Global Trust & Safety team, while Wang worked as a research scientist for Google and DeepMind. Both Miao and Wang also have PhDs in Machine Learning from Oxford

University. The duo reportedly began working on their venture sometime in 2021 in London and it was formally incorporated in 2022.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Science & Technology

Source: The Indian Express

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