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News: Geographical Indication (GI) Tags

- The traditional **crochet lace craft of Narasapur in Andhra Pradesh** receives a **Geographical Indications (GI) tag** to preserve its unique identity amidst competition from machine-made lace from China.
- Similarly, **Majuli masks and manuscript painting in Assam** gain GI recognition, enhancing their cultural significance and safeguarding against decline.

Narasapur Crochet Lace Craft

- The **crochet lace craft originated in 1844 and endured challenges like the Indian famine (1899) and the Great Depression (1929)**. By the **early 1900s, more than 2,000 women were involved in lace crafting in the Godavari region, highlighting its cultural importance.**
- The **craft involves transforming thin cotton threads into intricate artefacts using delicate crochet needles of varying sizes.**
- **Artisans use a single crochet hook to create loops and interlocking stitches, forming delicate lace patterns.**
- **Narasapur's hand-made crochet industry produces a diverse range of products made of lace— garments, home furnishings and accessories including Doilies,**

Pillow covers, Cushion covers, Bedspreads, Table-runners, Table cloths, Hand purses, Caps, Tops, Stoles, Lampshades, and Wall hangings.

- Narsapur's crochet lace products find their way to global markets, with exports reaching destinations such as the UK, USA, and France.

Majuli Masks

- Majuli masks are intricately crafted masks made by hand using traditional techniques made in Assam.
- The handmade masks are traditionally used to depict characters in bhaonas (a traditional form of entertainment, with religious messages), 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.
- Made from a variety of materials including bamboo, clay, dung, cloth, cotton, and wood, the masks can vary in size from covering just the face to encompassing the entire head and body of the performer.

- Traditional practitioners are modernizing Majuli mask-making by moving beyond the confines of sattras (Monastery) to embrace contemporary contexts.
- Sattras were founded by Srimanta Sankardev and his disciples to serve as centres of religious, social, and cultural reform.