

INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE, HISTORY**Chaukhandi Stupa declared to be “of national importance”**

An ancient Buddhist site in UP's Sarnath known as Chaukhandi Stupa has been declared to be “of national importance” by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

Chaukhandi Stupa

- Chaukhandi Stupa was built to mark the place where Buddha met his first disciples Panchavargiya Bhikshus (Buddha's five companions) who had previously deserted him at Rajgir, as he traveled from Bodhgaya to Sarnath.
- The stupa got its name 'Chaukhandi' because of its four armed plan.
- It is a lofty mound of brick whose square edifice is surrounded by an octagonal tower.
- The stupa is an ancient Buddhist site which evolved from burial mounds and served as a shrine for a relic of Buddha.
- It appears to be in ruins and was originally constructed in 5th Century AD.
- It also finds mention in account of Hiuen Tsang, celebrated Chinese traveler of 7th century AD.
- The Chaukhandi Stupa is said to be originally a terraced temple during the Gupta period (4th to 6th century).
- Govardhan, the son of Todarmal altered and modified the Chaukhandi Stupa to its present shape.
- He built an octagonal tower to commemorate the visit of Humayun, the great Mughal ruler.

Architecture

- The current structure of the stupa is a high earthen mound covered with brickwork, to which stands atop a terraced rectangular plinth and it is capped by an octagonal Mughal tower.
- Some images of Buddha, such as the image of Buddha in Dharmachakra Pravartana Mudra and other statues found during excavations at this Stupa are believed to be rare artifacts and classic examples of art from Gupta period.

CONSTITUTION AND POLITY**E-Foreigner Tribunal (e-FT)**

The Centre has approved setting up of e-Foreigner Tribunal (e-FT) in Assam.

E-FT System

- Aim: To maintain a statewide bio-metric and biographic data and to capture the illegal migrants' data to computerize data flow for all the stakeholders.
- The proposed integrated e-FT IT system will be implemented across Assam for effective monitoring and resolution of cases registered with Foreigner Tribunal.
- The main objective of the project is to maintain a statewide bio-metric and biographic data, to capture the illegal migrants' data to computerize data flow for all the stakeholders.
- It will also help in the legalization of eligible beneficiaries for welfare schemes.
- The new IT system will not only strengthen the Judiciary in the disposal of cases but also help Police organization in faster detection, prosecution and detention.
- This will enhance the transparency of case disposal process. It will also help in legalization of eligible beneficiaries for welfare schemes.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS**Kimberley Process Certification Scheme**

The Intersessional meet of Kimberley Process (KP) will be hosted by India

Kimberley Process Certification Scheme

- The Kimberley Process is a joint initiative involving Government, international diamond industry and civil society to stem the flow of Conflict Diamonds.
- Conflict Diamonds means rough diamonds used by rebel movements or their allies to finance conflict aimed at undermining legitimate governments.
- It is also described in United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions.

Why need KPCS?

- In 1998, certain rebel movements in Africa (Sierra Leone, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia) were selling, among other things, illegally obtained diamonds.
- These were known as Conflict Diamonds – to fund their wars against legitimate governments.
- With a view to find ways to stop trade in Conflict Diamonds, world's diamond industry, UN, Governments and leading NGOs came together and in November 2002 at Interlaken, Switzerland.
- There the final draft of the Kimberley Process measures was ratified by more than fifty countries.
- The KPCS came into effect from 1st January, 2003 and evolved into an effective mechanism for stopping the trade in Conflict Diamonds.
- At present, KPCS has 55 members representing 82 countries including EU with 28 members.

India and the KPCS

- India is one of the founder members of Kimberley Process Certification Scheme.
- It is the Chair of Kimberley Process for the year 2019 with Russian Federation as Vice Chair.
- India had earlier chaired KPCS in the year 2008.

Rough diamond trading under the KPCS

- As per the Scheme, each shipment of rough diamonds being exported and imported by crossing an international border be transported in a tamper proof container and accompanied by a validated Kimberley Process Certificate.
- The shipment can only be exported to a co-participant country in the KPCS.
- No uncertified shipments of rough diamonds are permitted to enter a participant country.

INDIAN ECONOMY**UNCTAD World Investment Report**

In the recently released United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) World Investment Report 2019, Investment in India rose by 6% to \$42 billion.

What's the trend?

- India attracted over 77% of the total foreign direct investments that came to the South Asian region.
- Sectors of Inflow: Manufacturing, communication, financial services and cross-border merger and acquisition activities.
- Cross-border mergers and acquisitions (M&As) grew in 2018 from a year ago, due to transactions in retail trade, which includes e-commerce and telecommunication.
- Acquisition of Flipkart by Walmart and telecommunications deals by Vodafone with Idea are few examples.

Why has the inflow increased?

- The model concession agreement on public-private partnerships in the port sector was amended.
- Rules on inward investment in several industries, including single-brand retail trading, airlines and power exchanges were liberalized.

How is Outbound FDI (ODI) performing?

- India may break into the league of top 20 countries for outbound foreign direct investment (ODI) by the end-2019.
- In 2018, ODI of India was \$11 billion.
- Change in Geographical spread of ODI:
- According to the India Brand Equity Foundation
 - Up to 2010, ODI were directed to resource-rich countries, such as Australia, the UAE and Sudan.
 - Post 2010 was channeled into countries providing higher tax benefits such as Mauritius, Singapore, British Virgin Islands, and the Netherlands.
- Steps to improve ODI:
 - India can use its expertise in space, heavy engineering and software for a favourable treatment to its investments in foreign countries.

- Asia, Africa and Latin America countries could be priority regions for this.

Which factors attract FDI?

- A large market with high import duties.
- Tax incentives.
- Relaxed labour laws.
- High Ease of doing business.
- Easy repatriation of money.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE ETC

ISRO plans to launch a space station

Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) is planning to launch its own space station.

The Indian Space Station

- A space station is an artificial satellite placed in orbit and is used as a long-term base for manned operations in space.
- The Indian space station would be stationed at an altitude of 400 kilometres from Earth.
- The proposed Indian space station would be similar to the International Space Station (ISS) but smaller in size weighing about 20 tonnes and would take another 5 to 7 seven years to construct.
- India would be the fourth country to launch a space station as the US and Russia has already launched their space stations and China is planning to launch its in 2020.

About the ISS

- The International Space Station, which launched its first piece in 1998, is a large spacecraft which orbits around the Earth and is home to the astronauts.
- The ISS is currently the only active space station in the earth's orbit.
- The first crew on the space station arrived on November 2, 2000.
- The space station is home to minimum of six astronauts, with two bathrooms, a gymnasium, and a big bay window.
- It is a joint project between five participating space agencies -NASA (USA), Roscosmos (Russia), JAXA (Japan), ESA (Europe), and CSA (Canada).

NASA's OSIRIS-Rex

The US space agency NASA has announced that its asteroid probe OSIRIS-REx set a new record for the closest-ever orbit of a planetary body made by a man-made spacecraft. The recent maneuver has placed the spacecraft into an orbit 680 meters above the asteroid Bennu's surface for about seven weeks.

About the mission:

- OSIRIS-Rex stands for Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, Security-Regolith Explorer.
- OSIRIS-REx is the third mission in NASA's New Frontiers program, which previously sent the New Horizons spacecraft zooming by Pluto and the Juno spacecraft into orbit around Jupiter.

Why was Bennu chosen?

- Bennu was selected for a the OSIRIS-REx mission from over 500,000 known asteroids, due to it fitting a number of key criteria. These include:
- Proximity to Earth: In order for OSIRIS-REx to reach its destination in a reasonable timeframe, NASA needed to find an asteroid which had a similar orbit to Earth.
- Size: Small asteroids, those less than 200m in diameter, typically spin much faster than larger asteroids, meaning the regolith material can be ejected into space. Bennu is around 500m in diameter, so rotates slowly enough to ensure that the regolith stays on its surface.
- Composition: Bennu is a primitive asteroid, meaning it hasn't significantly changed since the beginning of the Solar System (over 4 billion years ago). It is also very carbon-rich, meaning it may contain organic molecules, which could have been precursors to life on Earth.

- Additionally, Benu is of interest as it is a Potentially Hazardous Asteroid (PHA). Every 6 years, Benu's orbit brings it within 200,000 miles of the Earth, which means it has a high probability of impacting Earth in the late 22nd Century.

MISCELLANEOUS**Global Peace Index 2019**

Global Peace Index is released by Australian think tank Institute for Economics & Peace. The GPI was founded by Steve Killelea, an Australian technology entrepreneur and philanthropist. The report covers 99.7 per cent of the world's population and uses 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators from highly respected sources to compile the index. This year's report includes new research on the possible effects of climate change on peace. It ranks countries according to their level of peacefulness based on three thematic domains:

- The level of societal safety and security.
- The extent of ongoing domestic and international conflict.
- The degree of militarization.

Performance of India:

- India's rank has slipped five places to 141 this year.
- India's neighbours: In South Asia, Bhutan topped the index with 15th rank, followed by Sri Lanka 72, Nepal 76 and Bangladesh 101. The neighbouring country Pakistan has been ranked 153rd on the index.
- India together with Philippines, Japan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, China, Indonesia, Vietnam and Pakistan are the nine countries with the highest risk of multiple climate hazards. The country has the 7th highest overall natural hazard score.
- India, the US, China, Saudi Arabia, and Russia are the top five countries with the largest total military expenditure.
- According to the report, South Asia's score for every indicator in ongoing conflict is less peaceful than the global average, with four out of six deteriorating last year. Only deaths from internal conflict improved, with fewer fatalities in Pakistan, Afghanistan and India than the year prior.
- The score for internal conflicts fought had the highest rating at five in both India and Pakistan. China, Bangladesh, and India, score in the bottom half of the GPI and have significant exposure to climate hazards, with 393 million people in high climate hazard areas.

Performance of other countries:

- Iceland remains the most peaceful country in the world, a position it has held since 2008.
- It is joined at the top of the Global Peace Index (GPI) by New Zealand, Austria, Portugal, and Denmark.
- Afghanistan is now the least peaceful country in the world, replacing Syria, which is now the second least peaceful. South Sudan, Yemen, and Iraq comprise the remaining five least peaceful countries.

Key observations:

- While global peacefulness improved for the first time in five years, as per the index findings, the world remains less peaceful than a decade ago.
- Since 2008 global peacefulness has deteriorated by 3.78 per cent.
- State sponsored terror has declined markedly over the last decade, with 62 countries improving their scores while only 42 deteriorated. However, incarceration shows the opposite trend with 95 countries increasing the incarceration rate compared to 65 that improved.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Strength doesn't come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns: What are the factors that attract FDI in real terms? How the inflow of FDI can be beneficial for the Indian Economy? Justify.

Ans. A foreign direct investment is an investment in the form of a controlling ownership in a business in one country by an entity based in another country. It is thus distinguished from a foreign portfolio investment by a notion of direct control. The factors that determent the flow of FDI are a large market with high import duties, Tax incentives, Relaxed labour laws, High Ease of doing business, Easy repatriation of money etc. .Whether FDI actually contributes to economic growth is dependent on multiple factor such as :

- Whether FDI is concentrated in export oriented sector or focuses on domestic market instead,
- Whether it focuses on R&D activity in the host nation,
- Its impact on net investment income,
- Whether FDI crowds out or crowds in domestic investment,
- Its impact on employment.

In the recently released United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) World Investment Report 2019, Investment in India rose by 6% to \$42 billion which is a good sign for the Indian Economy.

Advantages of foreign direct investments in India:

1. Promotion of investment in key areas: By allowing FDI, we can promote investment in key areas such as infrastructure development as a result of which there will be more production of capital goods. For example, investment in power generation can generate more electric power which will enable the growth of more industries.
2. New technologies: FDI can bring in more new technologies which were not adopted in the country till now. Examples are the recent developments in the Communications System. The launching of satellites with the help of other countries has enabled the growth of communication system in the country. Nokia has come to India for promoting India's communication system.
3. Increase in Capital inflow: FDI promotes more capital inflow into the country especially in key and core sectors. We have a shortage of capital not only in the form of money but also in the form of material. FDIs will bridge this gap by which there will be speedy economic growth in the country.
4. Increase in Exports: With the help of FDI, the exports of many underdeveloped countries have increased. The creation of Economic Zones and promotion of 100% export oriented units have helped FDIs in increasing their exports from other countries. Certain consumer products produced by them have world-wide markets. There is a change in the composition of exports and direction of exports with the presence of FDI.
5. Promotion of Employment opportunities: The advent of FDI in developing countries has promoted the service sector. This has resulted in a change in the advertising and marketing technologies. This provides more scope for employment opportunities. Educated unemployment to some extent is reduced by the FDI as they could absorb some of Indian work force.
6. Promotion of financial services: FDI strengthens financial services of a country by not only entering its banking industry but also by extending other activities such as merchant banking, portfolio investment, etc., which has resulted in the promotion of more new companies. It has also helped the capital market in the country.
7. Exchange rate stability: Reserve Bank of India has been maintaining the exchange rate in the country through its exchange control measures. But the constant and continuous supply of foreign exchange is a must for continuing exchange rate stability. With more FDIs coming into the country, this is made possible and today RBI is having a comfortable foreign exchange reserve position of more than 1 billion dollars.
8. Development of backward areas: Foreign direct investments are in a way responsible for the development of backward areas. There are so many industries started by them in far reaching and backward areas, as a result of which these areas have developed into industrial centres. Some of the backward regions have utilized the services of FDIs for starting industries in backward areas. Examples are Hyundai and Ford car units started at Sriperumbadur and Maraimalaiagar in India.
9. Utilization of natural resources: The natural resources in the country is put to better use by the FDIs which otherwise would have remained un utilised. The examples are Saint Gobain glass company and manufacture of paper and newsprint.
10. Change in the lifestyle of people: The presence of FDIs has no doubt changed the life-style pattern of people. The purchase of consumer goods such as TV, fridge, automobiles are made possible as these goods are made available through hire purchase system. The increasing number of automobiles in most of the cities is a standing example for the change in the life-style.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS BASED MCQS

1. Which of the following statements is/are correct about the Chaukhandi Stupa ?
 1. It is a Buddhist site situated in Sarnath of UP.
 2. Hiuen Tsang had mentioned about his in his accounts of India.
 3. Recently it was declared as a UNESCO world Heritage Site.
 Select the correct answer from the codes given below.
 (a) **1 and 2**
 (b) 1 and 3
 (c) 2 and 3
 (d) 1, 2 and 3
2. E-Foreigner Tribunal is to be set up in which of the following states?
 (a) **Assam**
 (b) West Bengal
 (c) Arunachal Pradesh
 (d) Both (a) and (b)
3. Consider the following statements w.r.t Kimberley Process Certification Scheme.
 1. It aims to curb illegal trade of Diamond and other luxurious metals.
 2. India is one of the founder members of the scheme
 3. This scheme is mentioned in the UNSC resolutions.
 Which of the statements are correct?
 (a) 1 and 2
 (b) 1 and 3
 (c) **2 and 3**
 (d) 1, 2 and 3
4. Which of the following would include Foreign Direct Investment in India?
 1. Subsidiaries of companies in India
 2. Majority foreign equity holding in Indian companies
 3. Companies exclusively financed by foreign companies
 4. Portfolio investment
 Select the correct answer using the codes given below:
 (a) 2 and 4
 (b) 1 and 3
 (c) **1, 2 and 3**
 (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4
5. Which of the following factors do not contribute in attracting Foreign Direct Investment in India?
 1. Low import duties.
 2. Tax incentives.
 3. Stringest labour laws.
 4. High Ease of doing business.
 5. Easy repatriation of money
 Select the correct answer using codes given below
 (a) 1, 2, 4 and 5
 (b) 2, 4 and 5
 (c) **1 and 3**
 (d) 1, 3 and 5
6. Which of following countries have jointly participated in the International Space Station project?
 1. Russia
 2. Japan
 3. Canada
 (a) 1 and 2
 (b) 1 and 3
 (c) 2 and 3
 (d) **1, 2 and 3**
7. Which of the following statements is/are correct w.r.t to Global Peace Index, 2019?
 1. It is published by the UNO
 2. India has been ranked 141.
 3. Denmark remains the most peaceful country.
 Select the correct answer from the codes given below
 (a) 1 and 2
 (b) **2 only**
 (c) 2 and 3
 (d) 1, 2 and 3