DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 30-01-2024

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Hampi temples

Syllabus: GS-1; Art and Culture

Context

- *Tourists in short clothes get 'panche' and towel at Hampi temple to maintain 'decorum'*

About

- *Hampi or Hampe also referred to as the Group of Monuments at Hampi, is a* **UNESCO World Heritage Site** *located in Hampi (City), Ballari district now Vijayanagara district, east-central Karnataka, India.*
- *Hampi predates the* **Vijayanagara Empire;** *it is mentioned in the Ramayana and the Puranas of Hinduism as Pampa Devi Tirtha Kshetra.*
- *Hampi was the capital of the Vijayanagara Empire from 1336 to 1565, when it was abandoned.*
- *By 1500 CE, Hampi-Vijayanagara was the world's second-largest city, after Beijing, and probably India's richest at that time, attracting traders from Persia and Portugal.*

Some of the famous temples in Hampi

Virupaksha Temple

- *This temple is dedicated to Lord Virupaksha, an avatar of Shiva. It's been a pilgrimage center for centuries, and is still a place of worship for Lord Shiva.*
- *The Virupaksha Temple in Hampi, Karnataka was built by Lakkan Dandesha, a chieftain under the Vijayanagara Empire ruler Deva Raya II.*

Vittala Temple

- *This 15th-century temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu and is known for its architecture and musical pillars. It also has a stone chariot that's a symbol of Hampi.*
- *The Vittala Temple, also known as the Vijaya Vittala Temple, was built in the 15th century by King Devaraya II, a ruler of the Vijayanagara Empire. The temple is dedicated to Vittala, who is said to be an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.*

Prasanna Virupaksha

- *This temple is built around the 7th century and is located on the banks of the Tungabhadra river. It has several Lord Shiva temples, and the entrance is adorned with a three-headed Nandi idol.*

Achyuta Raya Temple

- *This temple was built in 1534 and is located between the Matanga hills and Gandhamadana. It's an example of the Vijayanagara style of temple architecture.*
- *Achyutaraya temple was built by Salakaraju Tirumaladeva, in a large complex. He was an officer of King Achyutaraya.*

Hazara Rama Temple

- *This temple is located in the Royal Enclosure and is known for its bas-relief sculptures that depict important events from the Ramayana.*
- *The Hazara Rama Temple in Hampi, Karnataka was built in the early 15th century by Devaraya II, the King of Vijayanagara.*

Other famous sites in Hampi include:

- *Vijaya-Vittala Temple*
- *Lotus Mahal*
- *Monolithic Bull*
- *Elephant Stables*
- *Pushkarani*
- *Palace Of Vira Harihara*

Vijayanagara style of temple architecture

- *Vijayanagara temples are surrounded by strong enclosures and feature ornate pillared* **kalyanamandapas** *(marriage halls).*
- *The temples also have tall* **rayagopurams** *(carved monumental towers) at the entrance.*
- *These towers are made of wood, brick, and stucco in the Chola style and are decorated with life-sized figures of gods and goddesses.*
- *Vijayanagara architecture is a blend of* **Dravidian and Deccan Islamic styles,** *with some Hindu and Rajput features.*
- *Some common features of Vijayanagar architecture include:*
    - *Stone carvings*
    - *Intricate detail work*
    - *Brightly colored tiles*
    - *Ornate pillared kalyanamandapas*
    - *Tall rayagopurams*
    - *Life-sized figures of gods and goddesses*
- *Vijayanagara architecture is also known as* **Provida style**. *It replaced soft stone with hard stones and included temples, monolithic sculptures, palaces, official buildings, cities, irrigation, step wells, and tanks.*

Appointment of High Court judge

Syllabus: GS-2: Judiciary.

Context:

- *Recently, President appoints judges to various High Courts.*

Appointment of High Court Judges:

Article 217 of the Constitution:

- *The President, in consultation with the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and the Governor of the State, appoints Judges of a High Court.*
- *In the case of appointing a Judge other than the Chief Justice, consultation with the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court is essential.*

Consultation Process:

- *High Court judges are recommended by a Collegium consisting of the CJI and the two most senior judges.*

- *The initiation of the proposal is carried out by the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court, consulting with two senior-most colleagues.*
- *The recommendation is then forwarded to the Chief Minister, who advises the Governor to send the proposal to the Union Law Minister.*
- *The policy of appointing Chief Justices from outside the respective States is followed.*

Collegium Decision-Making:

- *The Collegium, comprising the CJI and senior judges, makes the final decision on elevations.*

Ad-hoc Judges:

- *Article 224A of the Constitution allows the Chief Justice of a High Court to request a person who has held the office of judge to act as a judge for that State with the President's consent.*
- *Recently, the Supreme Court advocated the appointment of retired judges to address the backlog of cases in High Courts.*
- *The Court outlined prospective guidelines for the appointment and functioning of ad-hoc judges.*

Collegium System:

- *This system for appointing and transferring judges has evolved through judgments of the Supreme Court, not through an Act of Parliament or a provision of the Constitution.*

Evolution of the System:

- **First Judges Case (1981):** *Declared that the CJI's recommendation on judicial appointments and transfers could be refused only for "cogent reasons," giving Executive primacy for 12 years.*
- **Second Judges Case (1993):** *Introduced the Collegium system, emphasizing that "consultation" means "concurrence," and decisions are institutional, not individual.*
- **Third Judges Case (1998):** *Expanded the Collegium to a five-member body, including the CJI and four senior-most colleagues, particularly for the transfer of High Court judges, in response to a reference from the President.*

Issues Involved:

1. Cumbersome Process:

- *Inordinate delays in appointing High Court judges.*
- *Depleting numbers in the higher judiciary pose a threat to the justice delivery mechanism.*

2. Lack of Transparency:

- *Absence of formal criteria raises concerns.*
- *No structured process to investigate potential conflicts of interest for recommended judges.*

3. Improper Representation:

- *Collegium system tends to favor specific sections of society.*
- *Lack of representation of the population it aims to serve.*

4. Vacancy in High Courts:

- *Total sanctioned strength: 1,098 judges; Working strength: 645 judges.*
- *Shortfall of 453 judges impacts judicial efficiency.*

5. High Pendency of Cases:

- *Total pendency of cases across India's courts is approximately 3.7 crores.*
- *Demands a more efficient and improved judicial system.*

Attempts of Reform:

- *The attempt to replace the Collegium with the 'National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC)' in 2014 through the 99th Constitutional Amendment Act.*
- *Aimed to enhance transparency in appointing judges from High Courts and the Supreme Court.*
- *Proposed commission with members from the judiciary, legislature, and civil society.*

Challenges and Rejection:

- *NJAC declared unconstitutional in 2015 by the Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court.*
- *Violation of the Basic Structure of the Constitution, threatening the independence of the judiciary.*

Way Forward:

- *Advocate for the establishment of a permanent, independent body to institutionalize the appointment process with adequate safeguards.*
- *Preserving judiciary independence while guaranteeing judicial primacy, not exclusivity.*
- *Ensuring independence, reflecting diversity, and demonstrating professional competence and integrity.*
- *Shift from selecting a specific number of judges against vacancies to providing a panel of potential names to the President in order of preference and other valid criteria.*

AIIB

Syllabus: GS-3: International Organisations.

Context:

- *AIIB invests Rs 4.86 billion into India's largest renewable energy InvIT.*

AIIB Investment in SEIT:

- *AIIB invested Rs 4.86 billion in the Sustainable Energy Infra Trust (SEIT).*
- *SEIT is India's largest renewable energy infrastructure investment trust.*
- *Jointly sponsored by Mahindra Susten Private Limited and Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan.*

SEIT Overview:

- *SEIT owns eight operational solar power generation assets in India.*
- *Cumulative capacity of 1.54 GWp.*
- *Assets strategically located across India.*

Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)

- **Multilateral development bank:** *Established in 2016, the AIIB focuses on financing infrastructure projects in Asia.*
- **Mission:** *Improve economic and social outcomes in Asia through sustainable infrastructure development.*
- **Headquarters:** *Beijing, China*
- **Membership:** *109 member countries as of January 2024, including 42 in Asia, 26 in Europe, and 22 in Africa. Open to all members of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) or the World Bank.*
- **Capitalization:** *US$100 billion, making it the world's second largest multilateral development bank after the World Bank.*

Key Functions:

- *Provide loans and equity investments for infrastructure projects, prioritizing energy, transportation, water, urban development, and other sectors.*
- *Offer technical assistance and knowledge sharing to member countries.*

- *Promote regional cooperation and integration through infrastructure development.*
- *Uphold high environmental and social standards in its projects.*

Significance:

- **Fills a financing gap:** *The AIIB's establishment addressed a perceived need for additional resources for infrastructure development in Asia, complementing existing institutions like the ADB and World Bank.*
- **China's role:** *Proposed by China, the AIIB is seen as a sign of China's growing economic influence and its ambition to play a greater role in global governance.*
- **Governance structure***: The AIIB aims for a more balanced and inclusive governance structure compared to existing institutions, with voting power based on capital subscriptions and regional representation.*
- **Challenges:** *Critics raise concerns about the AIIB's transparency, accountability, and environmental standards. The bank is also navigating its relationship with existing institutions and managing potential competition.*

Recent Developments:

- **Climate Action Plan:** *Launched in 2024, the plan outlines the AIIB's commitment to supporting sustainable development and climate action through its investments.*
- **India's role:** *India is the second-largest shareholder in the AIIB and a major beneficiary of its financing, with projects spanning energy, water, and transportation sectors.*
- **Record-breaking bond issuance:** *In January 2024, the AIIB raised USD 3 billion through its largest ever sustainable development bond issuance.*

Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM)

Syllabus: GS-3: Science and Technology – Space.

Context:

- *The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) has successfully re-established communication with its Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM), following a week of silence after the spacecraft's groundbreaking lunar landing.*

Mission Overview:

- *The Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM) is a Japanese lunar lander mission developed by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA).*
- *Launched in September 2023, it successfully touched down on the Moon's Sea of Nectar in January 2024, making Japan the fifth nation to achieve a lunar landing.*

Key Objectives:

- **Pinpoint Landing:** *Demonstrate high-precision landing technology within a 100-meter target area, paving the way for future missions to specific lunar sites.*
- **Compact and Efficient Design:** *Optimize lander size and weight to reduce costs and enable future exploration of resource-scarce celestial bodies.*
- **Lunar Origin Investigation:** *Analyze the composition of olivine rocks on the lunar surface to gain insights into the Moon's formation and history.*
- **Technology Advancement:** *Test autonomous navigation, hazard detection, and low-gravity operation systems for future deep space missions.*

Mission Highlights:

- **Pinpoint Landing Success:** *SLIM achieved a landing accuracy within 50 meters of its target, surpassing its initial goal.*
- **Lunar Night Survival:** *The lander successfully went through its first lunar night, relying on internal heating to maintain critical functions.*
- **Scientific Data Collection:** *SLIM has begun transmitting valuable data about the lunar surface composition, including the detection of magnesium-rich olivine, potentially offering clues about the Moon's early mantle.*

INSAT-3DS

Syllabus: GS-3; Science and Technology

Context

- *The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has said that the INSAT-3DS satellite has been flagged off to the launch port at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.*

About

- *INSAT-3DS is designed as a* **successor to the existing in-orbit satellites INSAT-3D and INSAT-3DR, aiming to provide uninterrupted services and significantly improve the overall capabilities of the INSAT system.**
- *INSAT stands for the* **Indian National Satellite System** *that provides various services, including* **telecommunications, broadcasting, meteorology, and search and rescue operations.**

- *The INSAT-3DS satellite was recently flagged off to the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR in Sriharikota on January 25 2024, following the successful completion of assembly, integration, and testing at the U R Rao Satellite Centre in Bengaluru.*
- *This mission is a user-funded project in collaboration with the Ministry of Earth Science (MoES), and it showcases the substantial contributions made by Indian industries in its development.*

WHAT WILL INSAT-3DS CARRY TO SPACE?

- *Built around ISRO's reliable I-2k bus platform, INSAT-3DS has a lift-off mass of 2,275 kg and is equipped with cutting-edge payloads for enhanced meteorological observation.*
- *The satellite's sophisticated instruments include a* **6-channel Imager and a 19-channel Sounder,** *which are meteorological payloads designed to monitor land and ocean surfaces.*
- *These tools will provide critical data for accurate weather forecasting and early warning systems for natural disasters, thereby bolstering India's preparedness and response strategies.*
- *INSAT-3DS carries communication payloads such as the* **Data Relay Transponder (DRT)** *and the* **Satellite Aided Search and Rescue (SAS&R) transponder**.
- *The DRT will receive data from automatic Data Collection Platforms and Automatic Weather Stations (AWS), enhancing the country's weather forecasting capabilities. The SAS&R transponder is a vital component for global search and rescue operations, as it is designed to relay distress signals and alert detections from beacon transmitters.*

Significance

The satellite also boasts improvements like:

- *Night-time imaging*
- *Accurate sea surface temperature estimation*
- *Higher spatial resolution*