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**Date:** 14 March 2024

# ASI TO CONDUCT A SURVEY IN BHOJSHALA COMPLEX

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "ASI TO CONDUCT A SURVEY IN BHOJSHALA COMPLEX". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "HISTORY" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

## WHY IN THE NEWS?

The Indore Bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court has directed the Archaeological Assessment of India (ASI) to perform a scientific assessment of the Bhojshala Temple-Kamal Maula Mosque complex to demystify its character.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

- **Origin:** The Bhojshala Temple-Kamal Maula Mosque complex dates back to the 11th Century AD when it was erected as a temple dedicated to the goddess Sarasvati by Paramara King Bhoja.
- **Dual Heritage:** Despite being converted into a mosque, remnants of the original temple's architectural elements endure within the structure. Additionally, inscribed slabs in Sanskrit and Prakrit hint at its illustrious past.

## PATRONAGE OF KING BHOJA:

- **Cultural Legacy:** King Bhoja's legacy extends beyond architecture; he is revered as a great supporter of arts and literature, with the establishment of the renowned Bhojashala serving as a testament to his contributions.
- **Shared Worship:** Through an agreement with the ASI, Hindus conduct puja ceremonies at the temple every Tuesday, while Muslims offer Namaz every Friday, highlighting the shared cultural significance of the site.

## ARCHITECTURAL STORY OF THE BHOJSHALA TEMPLE-KAMAL MAULA MOSQUE COMPLEX

The Bhojshala Temple-Kamal Maula Mosque complex in Dhar, Madhya Pradesh, presents a **fascinating blend of architectural elements, reflecting its layered history**. This section delves into the key features that speak volumes about the monument's evolution.

### PILLARS:

- The complex boasts **numerous sandstone pillars**, each a testament to the craftsmanship of the 11th and 12th centuries. These pillars, with their **unique designs**, offer a glimpse into the earlier architectural style of the monument.
- **During the construction of the mosque, some of these pillars were repurposed.** Stacked upon each other, they served to **elevate the ceiling, mirroring practices** seen in the Ajmer Sharif Dargah and the Qutb Minar complex in Delhi. This technique highlights the pragmatic approach taken during the mosque's construction.

### DOMES:

- The complex features domes constructed **using a trabeate style.** This technique involves horizontal beams supporting the roof, likely reflecting the influence of earlier Hindu temple architecture.
- These domes are further adorned with **intricate cusped decorations and lotus motifs**, adding a touch of elegance. The presence of these domes hints at a possible shift in the monument's purpose over time.

### MIHRAB AND MINBAR:

- The inclusion of a mihrab, a **prayer niche indicating the direction of Mecca**, and a minbar, a raised pulpit, are clear markers of Islamic influence.
- These elements, believed to have been added in the **14th century by the Malwa Sultanate rulers**, provide evidence of a later phase in the monument's history.

### DISPUTE AND LEGAL PROCEEDINGS:

- **Debated Origins:** The central contention revolves around the original status of the site as a temple, with claims that the Bhojshala and Vagdevi temples were razed to construct the mosque.
- **Legal Challenges:** Challenges to the lawsuit's admissibility have been raised, citing the **principle of res judicata**, indicating prior dismissal of similar petitions by the High Court's Principal Bench in 2003.

### JUDICIAL INTERVENTION

- **Mandate for Clarity:** Acknowledging the enigmatic nature of the temple's history, the High Court mandated a comprehensive scientific survey by the ASI to determine its true character.
- **Scientific Endeavour:** The ASI was tasked with employing advanced methods like GPR-GPS and carbon dating for excavation and investigation within the Monument Act's framework.

### METHODS EMPLOYED BY ASI FOR EXCAVATION

#### INVASIVE TECHNIQUES:

- **Stratigraphic Excavation:** Utilising stratigraphic principles, archaeologists excavate layers to reconstruct the site's history, albeit at the cost of destruction.
- **Data Interpretation:** While invasive methods yield direct insights, they simultaneously erase invaluable historical layers.

### NON-INVASIVE APPROACHES:

- **Active Methods:** Injecting energy into the ground allows for the measurement of material properties, aiding in identifying subsurface structures.
- **Passive Techniques:** These methods measure existing physical properties without disturbing the site, offering insights into hidden features.

### GROUND-PENETRATING RADAR (GPR) AND CARBON DATING:

- **GPR Utilisation:** ASI employs GPR to create a 3-D model of buried structures, though interpreting the data requires expertise due to potential false images.
- **Carbon Dating:** By measuring carbon content, archaeologists can estimate the age of organic materials, providing crucial insights into the site's timeline.

### LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES:

- **Ambiguity in Data:** Similar responses from different materials can lead to confusion, complicating the identification of archaeological targets.
- **Interpretational Hurdles:** Complex structures and heterogeneous materials pose challenges in accurately interpreting survey data, necessitating meticulous analysis.
- **Influence of Bias:** Emotional and political factors can influence interpretations and decisions, particularly in contentious cases involving religious sites, adding layers of complexity to the investigation.

### CONCLUSION:

The endeavour to unveil the true heritage of the Bhojshala Temple-Kamal Maula Mosque complex stands as a testament to the intersection of history, culture, and modern scientific inquiry. Through meticulous excavation and analysis, the ASI endeavours to reconcile the past with the present. It will shed light on a site shrouded in historical ambiguity and cultural significance.

**Himanshu Mishra**

## INDIA – EFTA TRADE AND ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

**SOURCE – THE HINDU AND PIB.**

**GENERAL STUDIES – INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, DEVELOPMENT OF INDIAN ECONOMY, INDIA AND EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION TRADE AND ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT, TRADE FACILITATION, EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS, TRADE AND**

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, INVESTMENT PROMOTION, MAKE IN INDIA PROGRAM AND SELF - RELIANT INDIA .

### WHY IN THE NEWS ?



- Recently on March 10, 2024, India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) have signed a Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA).
- EFTA is an intergovernmental organization which was established in 1960.
- Its objective is to promote free trade and economic integration to benefit its four member countries.
- India has been working on a Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) with EFTA countries, which include Switzerland, Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein.
- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister of India has approved the signing of TEPA with the EFTA countries.
- It is a balanced and free trade agreement that reflects the aspirations of emerging India and new global value chains with two-way trade in goods, services, investment, innovation.
- This is the first trade agreement of its kind for India through which India has entered into a trade agreement with any group of western countries.
- Work on this agreement was going on since 2008, but after the departure of the UPA government, it went out of the main agenda of the Government of India.
- This agreement facilitates and facilitates access to the European market for Indian service companies with easier visa regulations.



**INDIA-EFTA TRADE  
& ECONOMIC  
PARTNERSHIP  
AGREEMENT  
UNDERLINES OUR  
COMMITMENT TO  
BOOSTING ECONOMIC  
PROGRESS AND CREATE  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
OUR YOUTH: PM**



प्रधानमंत्री श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी ने आज 'भारत-ईएफटीए व्यापार और आर्थिक साझेदारी समझौते' पर हस्ताक्षर किए जाने की सराहना की।

भारत-ईएफटीए व्यापार और आर्थिक साझेदारी समझौता आर्थिक प्रगति को बढ़ावा देने एवं हमारे देश के युवाओं के लिए अवसर सृजित करने की हमारी प्रतिबद्धता को रेखांकित करता है: प्रधानमंत्री

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION :**

- EFTA is an intergovernmental organization formed in 1960 to promote free trade and economic integration for the benefit of its four member countries, Switzerland, Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein.
- EFTA is an important regional grouping with ever-increasing opportunities to increase international trade in goods and services. EFTA is one of three important economic blocs in Europe (the other two being the EU and the UK). Among the EFTA countries, Switzerland is India's largest trading partner, followed by Norway, which is also a major trading partner of India.
- TEPA is a modern and ambitious bilateral trade agreement.
- India, for the first time, is signing an FTA with one of the four developed countries in Europe, an important economic bloc that offers significant economic opportunities and promotes free trade and economic integration.

### **INTRODUCTION TO FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (FTA) :**

- A free trade agreement is an agreement made between two or more countries to reduce barriers to import and export.
- Under a free trade policy, any goods and services can be bought and sold across international borders with little or no government customs duties or quotas or subsidies.
- The concept of free trade is the opposite of trade protectionism or economic isolationism.

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF INDIA AND EUROPEAN FREE TRADE ASSOCIATION TRADE AND ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT :**



- **The India and European Free Trade Association Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement mainly consists of 14 chapters. Therefore, the main features of India and European Free Trade Association Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement are as follows -**

#### **TO PROMOTE INVESTMENT WITH THE AIM OF CREATING DIRECT EMPLOYMENT :**

- EFTA will bring 100 billion dollars of investment and 10 lakh direct investment in India in the next 15 years. The target has been set to create jobs or create direct employment.
- This historic commitment underpins a binding agreement to promote goal-oriented investment and job creation, a first in the history of the FTA. Which provides significant economic opportunities and promotes free trade and economic integration.
- This investment does not include foreign portfolio investment.

#### **PROVIDING MARKET ACCESS AND TARIFF CONCESSIONS :**

- EFTA is offering 92.2 percent of its tariff lines covering 99.6 percent of India's exports. IFTA's market access proposal includes 100 percent tariff concession on non-agricultural products and processed agricultural products (PAP).
- India is offering 82.7 percent of its tariff lines covering 95.3 per cent of EFTA exports of which over 80 per cent comprises gold imports. It has been considered not to impose import duty on gold.

#### **ENSURING REGIONAL COMMITMENTS :**

- India provides access to 105 sub-regions to EFTA and ensures commitments in various sectors, including 128 from Switzerland, 114 from Norway, 107 from Liechtenstein and 110 from Iceland.

- This takes into account the sensitivities related to PLI in sectors like pharma, medical devices and processed food etc. Whereas proposals from some sectors like dairy, soya, coal and sensitive agricultural products have been kept out of it.

### **ENCOURAGING EXPORT OF SERVICES AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (IPR):**

- This trade agreement (TEPA) will encourage exports of key strengths or areas of interest such as IT services, business services, personal, cultural, sports and recreational services and other education services and audio-visual services.
- The commitments related to intellectual property rights in TEPA are at the TRIPS level. The IPR chapter with Switzerland, where there are high standards for IPR, reflects our strong IPR regime. India's interests in generic medicines and the concerns related to the specific aspects of patent law and international trade law involved in the process of evergreening of patents have been fully addressed.

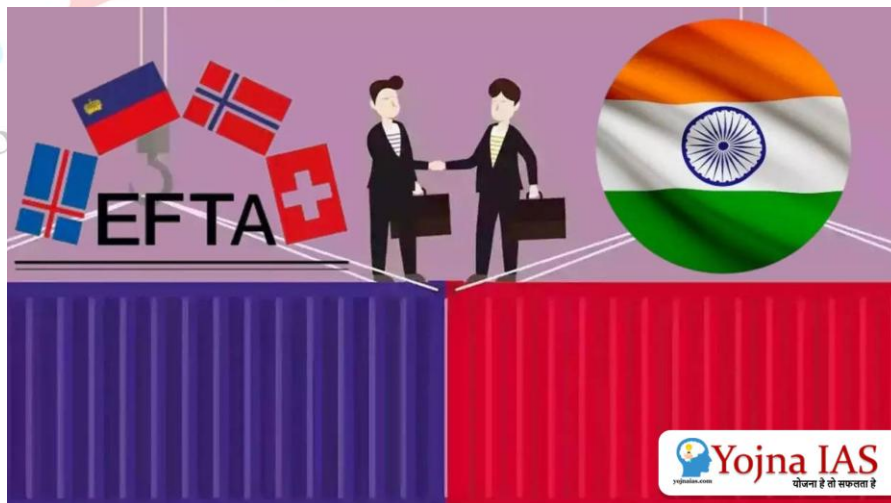
### **ENCOURAGING DIGITAL DELIVERY OF SERVICES :**

- EFTA's service offering includes improved accessibility through digital delivery of services, commercial presence and improved commitments and certainty for the entry and temporary stay of key personnel.

### **PROVISION FOR MUTUAL RECOGNITION IN PROFESSIONAL SERVICES :**

- TEPA also includes provisions for mutual recognition agreements in professional services such as nursing, chartered accountants, architects etc.

### **INDIA'S COMMITMENT TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION :**



- Under TEPA, India is resolute in its commitment towards sustainable development, inclusive growth, social development and environmental protection.



### **TO CREATE A BUSINESS FRIENDLY AND INVESTMENT ENVIRONMENT FOR INDIAN EXPORTERS :**

- TEPA will empower Indian exporters to access specialized inputs and create a business friendly and investment environment. This will boost exports of manufactured goods in India and at the same time provide the service sector an opportunity to reach more markets.

### **TO PROMOTE TRANSPARENCY, EFFICIENCY, SIMPLIFICATION, HARMONY AND CONSISTENCY OF BUSINESS PROCESSES :**

- TEPA promotes transparency, efficiency, trade simplification, coherence and consistency of trade processes between India and the European Free Trade Association.

### **PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES TO INTEGRATE INTO EU MARKETS :**

- TEPA offers the opportunity to integrate into EU markets.
- More than 40 percent of Switzerland's global services exports go to the European Union.
- Indian companies can look to Switzerland as a base to expand their market access to the EU.
- This provides the opportunity to integrate into EU markets, particularly through Switzerland, which serves as a basis for access to EU markets.

### **PROMOTING DOMESTIC MANUFACTURING AND EMPLOYMENT GENERATION :**

- TEPA promotes "Make in India" and self-reliant India by encouraging domestic manufacturing in various sectors such as infrastructure, pharmaceuticals and transportation.
- It will accelerate job creation for India's youth workforce over the next 15 years and facilitate technology collaboration and access to leading technologies.

### **TO FACILITATE COLLABORATION AND ACCESS TO WORLD LEADING TECHNOLOGIES IN INNOVATION AND R&D :**





- TEPA will accelerate the creation of a large number of direct jobs for India's young aspiring workforce along with improved facilities for vocational and technical training over the next 15 years in India. TEPA also facilitates technology collaboration and access to world leading technologies in precision engineering, health sciences, renewable energy, innovation and R&D.

## CONCLUSION / PATH TO SOLUTION :



- Despite the limited benefits that India gets under this Free Trade Agreement, this Free Trade Agreement of India with these four European Union nations is very important for bilateral trade.
- This modern and ambitious agreement marks India's first free trade agreement (FTA) with four developed countries in Europe, providing significant economic opportunities and promoting free trade and economic integration.
- The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) is an important regional organization that offers many possibilities for improving the global exchange of goods and services. India's bilateral free trade agreement with the European Union (EU) and the United Kingdom (UK), a major economic unit within Europe, will prove to be a "milestone" for India's fast-growing economy, with EFTA.
- After the start of free trade, there will be a reduction in the prices of goods coming to India from these countries, because under this free trade agreement, these countries will reduce their import duties. There will also be a reduction in import duty on goods exported from India. For example – Swiss chocolate, watches and biscuits from Switzerland are sold more in the Indian market. In such a situation, this bilateral trade agreement will reduce their prices.
- This will facilitate negotiation and signing of trade agreements at regional and global levels.
- It provides access to the markets of its member countries. It facilitates trade and investment opportunities, and it implements tariff reductions and concessions to promote trade liberalization.
- The EFTA agreement also marks the first time that India has agreed to include non-trade issues such as labour, human rights, environment and gender in an economic agreement. It is debatable

whether these issues are necessary to be included in trade agreements, but it is a positive sign for potential partners like the EU that see them as so important.

**PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PRELIMINARY EXAM :**

**Q.1. Consider the following statements regarding India and European Free Trade Association Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement.**

1. EFTA is an intergovernmental organization which was established in 1990.
2. The concept of free trade is the opposite of trade protectionism or economic isolationism.
3. The President of India has approved the signing of TEPA with the EFTA countries.
4. EFTA countries include Switzerland, Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein.

**Which of the above statement / statements is/are correct?**

- (A) Only 1 and 3
- (B) Only 2 and 4
- (C) Only 1 and 4
- (D) Only 2 and 4

**Answer - (D)**

**PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM :**

**Q.1. Highlighting the key provisions of the India and European Free Trade Association Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement, Discuss how this Free Trade Agreement will strengthen bilateral trade and boost domestic manufacturing sector and employment generation ? Give a logical explanation.**



**Akhilesh kumar shrivastav**