



**Mains Marathon**  
**Compilation**

**26<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2022**

## Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of December, (Fourth Week) 2022

1. **The concept of a centralized electricity market sounds sensible in theory but is likely to be unworkable in practice. Discuss in the light of the One Nation, One Grid initiative.**
2. **After a decade of eschewing free trade deals, India has embarked on an FTA-signing spree that is quickly transforming the country into one of the most FTA-engaged countries in the world. Elaborate and discuss the factors promoting FTAs in India.**
3. **Discuss the factors contributing to the increasing number of doctors in India. Also, highlight the implications of this development.**
4. **Comment on the need and methods to equip IAS officers to become much more effective in dealing with the manufacturing sector as well as other areas of development.**
5. **The India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement is the most strategic pact between the two countries that will bolster bilateral ties. Discuss.**
6. **Suggest some measures to control the increasing ransomware attacks in India.**

**Q.1) The concept of a centralized electricity market sounds sensible in theory but is likely to be unworkable in practice. Discuss in the light of the One Nation, One Grid initiative.**

**Live Mint, Business Standard**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain some significance of One Nation, One Grid initiative. Also write some issues.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

The One Nation, One Grid initiative is based on the **market-based economic dispatch (MBED)** mechanism. It is part of the National Electricity Policy of 2021 which proposes to double the penetration of short-term power markets by 2023-24. Under this mechanism the power ministry is planning to set up a central scheduling and pooling system.

**Significance:**

- This system will **allocate power at a favourable price** by prioritizing the least-cost and most efficient generators and removing more expensive ones.
- This system will **reduce consumers' power-purchase cost** initially by 5 percent and will help in the distribution of cheap power across the country.
- This system will also replace the existing decentralised and voluntary system which operates through a network of load dispatch centres.
- It will lead to a **"uniform clearing price"**. Sellers and buyers will be able to bid for the day ahead of the market leading to market clearing price. This in turn will help to generate savings for consumers.

**Issues:**

- Generators use their capacity under long-term power-purchase agreements (PPAs) up to 25 years with state distribution companies (discoms) at negotiated prices. Therefore, it is unclear how MBED will work in these long-term PPAs in its "lowest-cost" pricing.
- The inclination of states to **offer power to politically sensitive groups** below actual cost will impose **burden on discoms**. This has already made the financial conditions of discoms bad and their dues on states stand at Rs 1.3 trillion.
- As per a recent study by the RBI, a bailout of discoms in 18 large states is likely to impose a burden equivalent to around 2.3 per cent of the GSDP of these states.
- **Regulatory issues** in the eastern part of India have halted the progress of the project.
- **Small companies** were given the project they could not complete. The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) was also writing off the contracts and seek new bids.
- The matter regarding various statutory approvals for laying natural gas pipelines is under the purview of the state governments or other central ministries.

Power lies in the concurrent list of the Constitution and centralising pricing and supply decisions can take away the autonomy of states. The ministry should evolve a project monitoring mechanism in which all stakeholders may be brought, and the project can be monitored and implemented in a time-bound manner.

**Q.2) After a decade of eschewing free trade deals, India has embarked on an FTA-signing spree that is quickly transforming the country into one of the most FTA-engaged countries in the world. Elaborate and discuss the factors promoting FTAs in India.**

**We Forum, Business Standard**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain how India is one of the most FTA-engaged countries in the world. Also write the factors promoting FTAs in India.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

FTA is an arrangement between two or more countries under which they agree to end tariffs and non-tariff barriers on a large value of imports from partner countries. The focus of an FTA is primarily on economic benefits and encouraging trade between the countries by making it more efficient and profitable. But FTAs may also have political or strategic benefits.

**One of the most FTA-engaged countries in the world:**

- At the turn of the century, the country negotiated several FTAs, which included deals with Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, Korea, and the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian nations). These FTAs were greatly encouraged by the **Look East Policy (LEP)** and undoubtedly expanded India's trade and investment links with Southeast and East Asia.
- On 18 February 2022, a **comprehensive economic partnership agreement (CEPA) with the UAE** was concluded within 90 days of commencement of negotiations and has been in force since 1 May 2022.
- In addition, an **Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) with Australia** also concluded on 2 April 2022.
- The next highly-anticipated Free Trade Agreement in the works is **with the UK**. Free Trade Agreement discussions are also on the fast track with **Canada, the EU, as well as with the Gulf Cooperation Council** (GCC – Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE) and Israel.

**Factors promoting FTAs in India:**

- India's **active participation in global value chains (GVCs)** is essential. Today, 70 percent of the global goods and services exports come from GVCs. GVCs require close trade cooperation, lower duties, and efficient customs administration, which can be ensured by an FTA.
- The **inclusion of new-age areas** like digital trade in FTAs will enhance cooperation and transform GVCs by lowering entry barriers, increasing transparency, and facilitating collaborative networks.
- India aims to achieve a **\$2 trillion trade target by 2030**, while it wants to achieve \$500 billion merchandise exports by 2022-23 and to achieve these goals would require preferential access to Indian exports in major markets through Free Trade Agreements.
- The conventional **markets are slowing down**. There has been a slowdown in the US and Europe. So, there is a **need to diversify** and go to as many economies as one can to expand market presence.

For the industry to grow and become globally competitive, integration into the global value chain is inevitable. Ultimately, all trade deals are a game of 'win some, lose some' and a balanced outcome is what all trade partners should be looking for.

**Q.3) Discuss the factors contributing to the increasing number of doctors in India. Also, highlight the implications of this development.**

**Times of India**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain some factors contributing to the increasing number of doctors in India. Also, write some implications of this development.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

To achieve a modest doctor-to-population ratio of 1:1,000, India will need 2.07 million more doctors by 2030, according to a study published in the Indian Journal of Public Health. India has increased its number of medical colleges and MBBS seats and it is closer to the target of one doctor per 1,000 population on aggregate.

The following factors are contributing to the increasing number of doctors in India:

- Between 1980 and 2010, **private colleges** mushroomed while government investment slowed down. In this period, 144 private medical colleges came up, compared to just 55 government ones.
- Since 2011, a **large number of new government colleges** have been opened, especially in the southern and western states and Uttar Pradesh.
- The **number of UG (undergraduate) seats has increased** from 51,348 before 2014 to 91,927 seats as on date.
- The government has **relaxed the norms** for setting up medical colleges in terms of the requirement for faculty, staff, bed strength and other infrastructure.
- The government has taken **several initiatives** to improve the doctor-population ratio such as a **centrally sponsored scheme** for the establishment of new medical colleges by upgrading district/referral hospitals.

**Implications:**

- The increase in the number of colleges comes at the price of **poor-quality teaching and training** and hence **poorly equipped doctors** as more MBBS seats do not mean greater accessibility.
- Moreover, MBBS graduates treating people **without proper training** is injustice to the citizens as they are expected to take charge in primary health centres to get initial training.
- While the number of doctors has risen from 0.5 in 2000 to 0.9 per thousand, close to the WHO yardstick, the **distribution is skewed**. E.g. north and northeast India facing shortage while south and west India have the highest concentration.
- The shortage of trained doctors has led to a **proliferation of unqualified quacks**. These quacks are usually trained in alternative remedies, such as homeopathy, but advertise themselves as qualified medical professionals to patients desperately seeking help.

Medical institutions should motivate the upcoming doctors to provide their education and services in rural parts of the country as well as remind them that the profession revolves around saving lives. Rural areas should have access to easy travel and help patients get to hospitals for betterment and cure. For this, more spending on healthcare is needed.

**Q.4) Comment on the need and methods to equip IAS officers to become much more effective in dealing with the manufacturing sector as well as other areas of development.**

**Indian Express**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain need and methods to equip IAS officers to become much more effective in dealing with the manufacturing sector as well as other areas of development.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

Recently, India became the **world's fifth largest economy by overtaking the United Kingdom**. Now, the United States, China, Japan, and Germany are the only nations with economies larger than India's.

**Need to equip IAS officers in developmental areas:**

- There has been **policy related issues** that are blocking rapid growth of the manufacturing sector.
- **To become an attractive destination** for manufacturing investment, India needs to solve the issues, which is making it a difficult country to manufacture and do business.
- The development of manufacturing is only possible if the concerned civil servants in the ministries have **good manufacturing domain knowledge**.
- IAS officers need to know how to add to or reduce the costs of manufacturing, create demand for enabling industry to achieve economies of scale, and generation of profits and internal resources for growth.

**Methods to equip IAS officers:**

- It requires **reforms in our system** of human resource development and bringing it in line with the best global practices.
- A **new wing** should be created in the Department of Personnel & Training, and its counterparts in the states. This wing should be responsible to select officers on the basis of aptitude from the IAS and other services, and train them. It should report directly to the Prime Minister to insulate it from pressures from various quarters.
- The **selection of officers** could be made after they have completed around 10 years of service. Thereafter, selected officers would need to be trained and given postings to gain more knowledge and experience.
- For knowledge and experience, a **temporary appointment to selected private companies** should be made. It would acquaint officers to market based competition and select companies in different manufacturing sectors could be able to trust the government officers.
- The **Japanese model** was to de-link salary scales from job responsibilities. It means the most suitable person for the job will be posted for higher responsibilities. However, her/his pay scale will not change due to this.

While the political leadership lays down the vision, the responsibilities for translating these into ground realities are that of IAS officers.

**Q.5) The India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement is the most strategic pact between the two countries that will bolster bilateral ties. Discuss.**

**PIB, Outlook**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Explain how ECTA will bolster bilateral ties.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

India and Australia signed an **Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA)**. Currently, Australia is the **17<sup>th</sup> largest trading partner of India** and India is Australia's 9<sup>th</sup> largest trading partner. The ECTA is expected to increase trade between the two sides to \$45-50 billion over five years, from the current estimate of \$27 billion.

**How ECTA will bolster bilateral ties?**

- There is a lot of potential for **exporting finished goods** to Australia, since Australia is largely a raw material and intermediate producing country.
- We will get **cheaper raw materials** which will not only make us more competitive globally but also enable us to serve Indian consumers better; enabling us to provide more **quality goods at more affordable prices**.
- The Agreement will also **eliminate Double taxation on IT services** which were making us less competitive and less profitable in IT sector.
- Indian goods on all tariff lines to get access to Australian market with **zero customs duty**. India will benefit from **preferential market access** provided by Australia on 100% of its tariff lines, including all the **labour-intensive sectors** of export interest to India, such as Gems and Jewellery, Textiles, leather, Automobiles etc.
- India will be offering **preferential access to Australia on over 70% of its tariff lines**, including primarily raw materials and intermediaries such as coal, mineral ores and wines.
- Both sides have also agreed to a separate Annex on Pharmaceutical products under this agreement, which will enable **fast-track approval for patented, generic and biosimilar medicines**.
- It is estimated that an **additional 10 lakh jobs would be created in India** under ECTA.
- **Indian Yoga teachers and chefs** are set to gain with the annual visa quota. Over 1 lakh Indian students would benefit from post-study work visa (for 18 months to 4 years) under the ECTA.
- ECTA will further boost India's partnership with Australia along with Japan in trilateral **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) and QUAD** Grouping along with U.S.A. and Japan.

ETCA will further cement the already deep, close and strategic relations between the two countries. It will significantly raise living standards, and improve the general welfare of the peoples of the two countries.

**Q.6) Suggest some measures to control the increasing ransomware attacks in India.**

**ToI**

**Introduction:** Contextual introduction.

**Body:** Write some measures to control the increasing ransomware attacks in India.

**Conclusion:** Write a way forward.

Ransomware is a type of **malicious software**, used by cyber criminals, to infect a computer system by blocking access to the stored data by encrypting the files. A ransom is then demanded from the owner in exchange for the decryption key. **CERT-In's India Ransomware Report** for the first half of 2022 said that there's been a **51% year-on-year increase in ransomware incidents**. A majority of attacks are on datacentres.

**Measures to control the increasing ransomware attacks in India:**

- **A national cyber security strategy:** This will be a guiding document to motivate and monitor the preparedness of cyber readiness of institutes and also enhance capacity on many fronts including forensics, accurate attribution and cooperation.
- **Increased budget for cyber security measures:** Significant budgets have to be allocated by various ministries to ensure cyber security measures.
- **Capacity enhancement:** The capacity enhancement for the National Critical Information Infrastructure Centre (NCIIPC) and CERT-In has to be undertaken to address the emerging sophisticated nature of threats and attacks. Further, **sectoral CERTs have to be set up** for many areas including health.
- **International cooperation:** This will help India to gain more knowledge and power. For this, India has to move beyond the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) meetings and the US-led Counter Ransomware Initiative (CRI) of 37 countries and the European Union.
- **Purpose limitation in collecting data** by all regulated entities needs to be strictly enforced as sweeping in more data than required on flimsy pretexts increases risks manifold.
- Highly sensitive data such as biometrics are collected by different government organisations who may not all have high standards of cybersecurity. **Collection of biometrics needs to be limited.**
- Given data's non-rivalrous quality, offering a regulator too much leeway protects a regulated entity at the expense of potential victims. So **narrow down the discretion enjoyed by a regulator.**

Proper cyber risk management should be followed. This includes not only preventing breaches but also placing guidelines regarding the process to be followed once there is a cyberattack. This will help minimise financially and mitigate reputational damage when a breach occurs.