

26 September, 2024

India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA)

Context: India and Australia trade ministers recently reviewed progress on full FTA talks, 20 months after ECTA.

➤ Overview:

- Commerce Minister, co-chaired the India-Australia Joint Ministerial Commission, emphasized strengthening trade ties to achieve the shared goal of \$100 billion in bilateral trade by 2030.
- Since the early harvest deal, Australian exports to India neared \$30 billion, boosting agricultural exports significantly.

Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) is the first Free Trade Agreement (FTA) India has signed with a major developed country in over a decade. About the Agreement :

- 1. Comprehensive Scope:** The agreement spans areas such as:
 - ✓ **Trade in Goods:** Rules of Origin ensure products benefiting from preferential tariffs are genuinely produced in the member countries.
 - ✓ **Trade in Services,** including technical barriers, sanitary, and phytosanitary measures.
 - ✓ **Movement of Natural Persons:** Includes provisions for extended post-study work visas for Indian STEM graduates and working holidays for young Indians.
 - ✓ **Tariff Lines:** India gains preferential market access to 100% of Australia's tariff lines, benefiting labor-intensive sectors like gems and jewelry, textiles, leather, etc.
- 2. Job Creation:** It is estimated that the agreement will result in the creation of around 1 million jobs in India.
- 3. People-to-People Ties:** The agreement reinforces India's long-standing people-to-people ties with Australia through expanded opportunities in employment, work visas, and collaboration across sectors like yoga and cuisine.
- 4. India's Offer:** India offers preferential access on over 70% of its tariff lines, primarily raw materials such as coal, mineral ores, and wines, important for Australia.

➤ Significance for Bilateral Relations:

- The ECTA reinforces the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between India and Australia, initiated during the India-Australia Leaders' Virtual Summit in 2020. This agreement builds upon the shared democratic values, Commonwealth ties, and expanding economic engagement between the two nations.
- India and Australia are also partners in key strategic initiatives, such as:
 - ✓ **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI)** with Japan, aimed at enhancing supply chain resilience in the Indo-Pacific region.

- ✓ **QUAD** (India, Australia, US, Japan), focusing on cooperation in several domains of common concern like maritime security and regional stability.

➤ Trade Relations:

- Bilateral Trade:** In June 2024, India recorded a \$253 million trade deficit with Australia, exporting \$873 million and importing \$1.13 billion. Key exports included petroleum products, electric machinery, drug formulations, iron and steel products, and clothing. Major imports were coal, gold, minerals, pulses, and iron and steel.
- Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA):** The tenth round of CECA negotiations took place in Sydney from August 19-22, 2024. The next round of negotiations is expected to take place in November 2024. The CECA aims to include new areas such as competition policy, agriculture technology, and critical minerals.
- India-Australia Agri Tech Forum (IAATF):** Australia is proposing to hold the first meeting of the IAATF in New Delhi on September 23, 2024. The forum will explore opportunities for technology transfer and knowledge sharing in agriculture and horticulture.
- Australia India Business Exchange (AIBX):** The Australian Government launched AIBX to support Australian businesses entering and establishing operations in India.

Lokayukta

Context: Recently, the Special Court in Bengaluru assigned the Lokayukta to investigate Karnataka's CM in the MUDA scam.

➤ Overview:

- Karnataka court orders Lokayukta probe against Siddaramaiah over alleged irregularities in the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) land scam case.
- MUDA had allotted plots under a 50:50 ratio scheme in lieu of 3.16 acres of land, where MUDA developed a residential layout



The **Lokayukta** serves as the Indian Parliamentary Ombudsman, established by state governments to investigate grievances and allegations against public servants.

➤ Genesis of Lokpal and Lokayukta

- Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC)**
Recommendation: In the 1960s, the ARC suggested creating specialized authorities to address citizens' grievances about corruption.

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- **Influence of the Ombudsman Concept:** The idea was inspired by the Ombudsman system first introduced in Sweden in 1809.
- **Coining of Terms:** Dr. L. M. Singhvi coined the terms Lokpal and Lokayukta in 1963.
- **Anna Hazare Movement:** In 2011, the grassroots campaign led by Anna Hazare for an effective anti-corruption body revitalized efforts.
- **Legislation Passed:** The Lokpal and Lokayukta Bill was ultimately passed into law in 2013.

➤ Appointment

- The Lokayukta is appointed by the state Governor in consultation with the Chief Justice of the state High Court and the Leader of the Opposition.
- Most states set a term of 5 years or until age 65, with no eligibility for reappointment.

➤ Key Provisions of the Lokpal and Lokayukta Act, 2013

- **Selection Committee:** Comprising the Prime Minister, Speaker of Lok Sabha, Leader of Opposition, Chief Justice of India (or a nominated judge), and an eminent jurist appointed by the President.
- **Jurisdiction:** Covers the Prime Minister, Ministers, Members of Parliament, and government employees across various grades (A, B, C, D).
- **Composition:** Includes a Chairperson and a maximum of eight members, ensuring diversity by mandating representation from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, minorities, and women.
- **Superintendence:** The Lokpal can direct investigative agencies, including the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), on cases referred to it.
- The Act mandates states to establish Lokayukta institutions within 365 days of its enactment.

➤ The Lokpal and Lokayuktas (Amendment) Act, 2016

- **Assets and Liabilities:** The 30-day deadline for public officials to report assets was removed; reporting now follows government timelines.
- **Selection Committee:** The leader of the largest opposition party can join the Lokpal selection committee if there's no recognized Leader of Opposition.
- **NGO Reporting:** Trustees of NGOs with over Rs. 1 crore in government grants or Rs. 10 lakh in foreign funding must report their assets to the Lokpal..

➤ Current Governance Framework Against Corruption

- **Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988:** The primary law addressing corrupt practices among public servants.
- **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI):** The main agency investigating corruption cases.
- **Central Vigilance Commission (CVC):** Addresses citizens' grievances regarding corruption.
- **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC):** Allows citizens to file complaints for rights violations.

- **Conduct Rules:** Regulations prohibiting government employees from compromising their integrity.

Indus Valley Civilization

Context: 2024 marks 100 years since the discovery of the Indus Valley Civilization.

➤ Overview:

- The Illustrated London News revealed groundbreaking news about the Indus Valley Civilization, influencing South Asia for decades.

➤ The civilization

- **Timeframe:** ~2500 BCE
- **Region:** Indus Valley (modern Pakistan & Western India)
- **Significance:** One of the earliest urban civilizations, alongside Egypt, Mesopotamia, and China.
- **Discovery:** Major excavations in the 1920s revealed cities like Harappa and Mohenjodaro.

➤ Phases of IVC

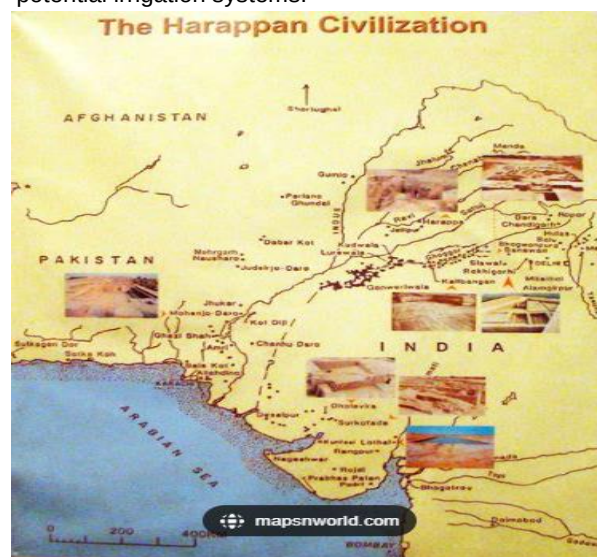
- **Early Harappan (3300 - 2600 BCE):** Urbanization, trade networks, agriculture.
- **Mature Harappan (2600 - 1900 BCE):** Peak urban development (Harappa, Mohenjodaro).
- **Late Harappan (1900 - 1300 BCE):** Signs of decline and urban abandonment.

➤ Urban Planning and Architecture

- **Structure:** Citadels and lower towns with grid layouts.
- **Drainage:** Advanced systems; every house often had a bathroom.
- **Materials:** Use of burnt bricks, differing from contemporaneous dried brick constructions.

➤ Agriculture

- **Crops:** Wheat, barley, peas, sesame, and cotton.
- **Farming Techniques:** Evidence of oxen for plowing; potential irrigation systems.



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➤ Economy

- **Trade:** Extensive trade networks for metals, textiles, and goods; barter system utilized.
- **Navigation:** Coastal navigation in the Arabian Sea; trading colonies in Afghanistan.

➤ Trade Partners:

- **Mesopotamia:** The IVC traded with ancient civilizations like Sumer, evidenced by seals and artifacts found in both regions.
- **Persia:** Interactions with the Persian Gulf region facilitated the exchange of goods.
- **Central Asia:** Trade routes extended to regions such as Afghanistan and further into Central Asia.

➤ Crafts and Industries

- **Metallurgy:** Proficiency in bronze; use of copper and tin.
- **Textiles:** Evidence of cotton production; pottery with a glossy finish.

➤ Governance and Society

- **Lack of Written Records:** Limited understanding of political structure; no temples found.
- **Theories:**
 - ✓ Merchant class potentially ruled.
 - ✓ Possible egalitarian society with multiple leaders.

➤ Religion

- **Deities:** Fertility symbols and animal worship; terracotta figurines and seals depict rituals.
- **Key Symbols:** Three-headed god, possibly linked to later Hindu deities.

➤ Decline Factors

- **Timeline:** Decline around 1800 BCE.

• Theories:

- ✓ **Natural Causes:** Geological shifts, climate changes, river course alterations.
- ✓ **Invasion Theories:** Possible invasions by Indo-European tribes.

Important Sites of IVC

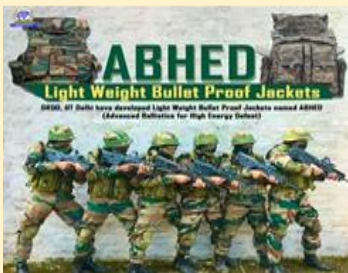
Site	Excavated By	Location	Key Findings
Harappa	Daya Ram Sahni (1921)	River Ravi, Punjab (Pakistan)	Statues, granaries, bullock carts
Mohenjodaro	R.D. Banerjee (1922)	River Indus, Larkana (Pakistan)	Great Bath, bronze dancing girl, seals
Dholavira	R.S. Bisht (1985)	Rann of Kachchh, Gujarat	Water harnessing, reservoirs
Lothal	R. Rao (1953)	Bhogva River, Gujarat	First manmade port, dockyard
Kalibangan	Ghose (1953)	Ghaggar River, Rajasthan	Fire altar, wooden plough
Surkotada	J.P. Joshi (1964)	Gujarat	Horse bones, beads

➤ Recent discoveries of Harappan sites in India:

- **Morodharo:** A fortified settlement near Dholavira, Gujarat, named for its potable water.
- **Padta Bet:** A 5,200-year-old Harappan site in Kutch, Gujarat, featuring artifacts like lithic tools and grinding stones.
- **Rakhigarhi:** Excavations revealed house structures, lanes, a drainage system, thousands of earthen pots, seals, and jewelry, along with DNA samples from two skeletons.

NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

ABHED



Recently, the Defence Research and Development Organisation has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Indian Institute of Technology, IIT Delhi to develop Advanced Ballistics for High Energy Defeat.

About ABHED:

- ABHED (Advanced Ballistics for High Energy Defeat) is a Light Weight Bullet Proof Jacket.
- The primary purpose of ABHED is to create Light Weight Bullet Proof Jackets that provide enhanced protection for armed forces personnel.
- The jackets are made from polymers and indigenous boron carbide ceramic material, ensuring durability and strength.
- These jackets are lighter than the maximum weight limits specified by the Indian Army's General Staff Qualitative Requirement (GSQR), making them easier to wear and maneuver.
- Jackets have been designed to meet the highest threat levels, offering superior protection against ballistic threats.

Mankidia Tribes



Recently, the Mankidia were granted habitat rights under the Forest Rights Act, 2006, becoming the sixth PVTG in Odisha to receive such recognition.

About Mankidia Tribes:

- The Mankidia tribe is an Austro-Asiatic community, constitute a semi-nomadic section of the Bihor tribe.
- Members of the Mankidia tribe primarily speak a form of Munda language, with some individuals also conversant in Odia.
- They are known for their traditional skills in rope making and trapping, and they also consume monkeys, which they are often employed to catch when these animals damage crops.
- They live in temporary makeshift settlements known as tandas, which consist of dome-shaped

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	leaf huts referred to as Kumbhas. - Historically, the ancestors of the Mankidia tribe have depended on forest resources for their livelihood and cultural practices. - The Mankidia primarily inhabit areas in the Mayurbhanj district of Odisha, along with Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal.
Digital Arrest 	Recently, over 4,700 MGNREGS workers in West Bengal urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to resume the scheme, suspended since December 2021. About Digital Arrest: - Digital arrest is a type of cyber scam where criminals pose as law enforcement officers to trick victims into paying money. - Criminals may simulate legal proceedings, often via video calls, to convince victims to transfer money. - They manipulate victims into believing they have committed serious crimes, leading to a sense of urgency to comply with their demands. - Criminals may use artificial intelligence (AI) to mimic the voices of family members to scare victims. - Preventive measures against digital arrest include practicing cyber hygiene by regularly updating passwords and enabling two-factor authentication, as well as avoiding phishing attempts by not clicking on suspicious links. - Additionally, securing devices with antivirus software, using trusted VPNs for encrypted internet connections and employing encryption techniques for secure communication are essential steps.
Personality in News Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya 	Recently, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya was remembered on his 108th birth anniversary. Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya (25 September 1916 - 11 February 1968) Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay, known by the epithet Panditji, was an Indian politician was born in Nagla Chandrabhan, which is now called Deendayal Dham, located in Mathura District, Uttar Pradesh. Contributions: - Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya introduced the concept of "Integral Humanism" in 1965, which became the official political doctrine of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. - He founded the monthly publication Rashtra Dharma in the 1940s to propagate Hindutva ideology. - He also started the weekly Panchjanya and the daily Swadesh, both of which played important roles in spreading the ideals of cultural nationalism. Honours: - In 2015, the Ministry of Rural Development renamed the existing Aajeevika Skills programme under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) to Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-NRLM as a tribute to his contributions. - Major schemes named after Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya include Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana (poverty alleviation), Deendayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (rural youth skill development), Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (rural electrification), Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Shramev Jayate Karyakram (industrial skill training) and Deendayal Upadhyaya Swaniyojan Yojana (promoting rural self-employment).

POINTS TO PONDER

- Which organization hosted the fifth edition of the Goa Maritime Symposium 2024? - **Indian Navy**
- What initiative was launched by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting in collaboration with the Media & Entertainment Association of India? - **WAVES Anime & Manga Contest (WAM!)**
- Which initiative was launched by the QUAD countries (India, United States, Australia, and Japan)? - **Cancer Moonshot Initiative**
- Recently, what new name has been approved for Pune Airport by the Maharashtra government? - **Jagadguru Sant Tukaram Maharaj Pune International Airport**
- What is the name of the scheme launched by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, to enhance urban greenery? - **Nagar Van Yojana (NVY)**

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