

**05– 04 – 2022**

**News: India Australia Bilateral Trade Agreement**

- Recently, **India signed a historic trade agreement with Australia, the India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (Ind- Aus ECTA).**

**India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (Ind- Aus ECTA)**

- Ind- Aus ECTA is the **first Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that India has signed with a major developed country in over a decade.**
- In February, **India signed an FTA with the UAE and is currently working on FTAs with Israel, Canada, UK and the European Union.**
- The Agreement encompasses cooperation across the entire gamut of bilateral economic and commercial relations between the two friendly countries, and covers areas like **Trade in Goods, Rules of Origin, Trade in Services, Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures, Dispute Settlement, Movement of Natural Persons, Telecom, Customs Procedures, Pharmaceutical products, and Cooperation in other Areas.**

- ECTA provides for an **institutional mechanism to encourage and improve trade** between the two countries.
- The ECTA between India and Australia **covers almost all the tariff lines dealt in by India and Australia respectively.**
- India will **benefit from preferential market access provided by Australia** on 100% of its tariff lines.
- This includes all the labour-intensive sectors of export interest to India such as **Gems and Jewellery, Textiles, leather, footwear, furniture** etc.
- On the other hand, **India will be offering preferential access to Australia on over 70% of its tariff lines**, including lines of export interest to Australia which are primarily raw materials and intermediaries such as coal, mineral ores and wines etc.
- Under the agreement, **Indian graduates from STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)** will be granted extended post-study work visas.
- Australia will also set up a programme **to grant visas to young Indians looking to pursue working holidays in Australia.**

## Significance of the Agreement

- The agreement will provide zero duty access to 96% of India's exports to Australia including shipments from key sectors such as engineering goods, gems and jewellery, textiles, apparel and leather.
- It will boost bilateral trade in goods and services to USD 45-50 billion over five years, up from around USD 27 billion, and generate over one million jobs in India, according to a government estimate.
- It will also give about 85% of Australia's exports zero-duty access to the Indian market, including coal, sheep meat and wool, and lower duty access on Australian wines, almonds, lentils, and certain fruits.

## News: UNEP Report on Noise Pollution

- Recently released **United Nations Environment Programme** report titled **Annual Frontiers Report 2022** became **controversial** on account of the mention of a single city, Moradabad of Uttar Pradesh.

## **Annual Frontiers Report 2022**

- The Annual Frontiers Report 2022 **studies about noise levels in several cities around the world and illustrates a subset of 61 cities and the range of dB (decibel) levels that have been measured.**
- **Delhi, Jaipur, Kolkata, Asansol and Moradabad** are the five Indian cities mentioned in this list.
- Moradabad in Uttar Pradesh was shown as having a dB range from 29 to 114.
- At a **maximum value of 114, it was the second-noisiest city in the list.**
- While road traffic, industry and high population density are well-known factors associated with high dB levels, **the inclusion of Moradabad appeared strange because similar studies in the past had never suggested it to be an unusually noisy city.**
- The **first was Dhaka, Bangladesh at a maximum value of 119 dB.**

## Significance of the report

- **Fulfill the WHO Guidelines:** The latest 2018 World Health Organization guidelines established a health protective recommendation for road traffic noise levels of 53 dB.
- **Adverse Effects on Public Health:** The Frontiers report compiled a host of evidence, including the adverse effects of noise on public health, which range from mild and temporary distress to severe and chronic physical impairment.
- Estimates suggest that in Europe 22 million and 6.5 million people suffer from chronic noise annoyance and sleep disturbance, respectively.
- The elderly, pregnant women and shift workers are among those at risk of noise induced sleep disturbance.
- Noise induced awakenings can trigger a range of physiological and psychological stress responses because sleep is necessary for hormonal regulation and cardiovascular functioning.
- Traffic noise exposure is a risk factor for the development of cardiovascular and metabolic disorders such as elevated blood pressure, arterial hypertension, coronary heart disease and diabetes.
- Long-term exposure to environmental noise contributes to 48,000 new cases of ischemic heart disease and causes 12,000 premature deaths annually in Europe.

## **India in controlling noise pollution**

- The **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** is mandated to track noise levels, set standards as well as ensure, via their State units, that sources of excessive noise are controlled.
- The agency has a **manual monitoring system** where sensors are installed in major cities and few cities have the facility to track noise levels in real time.

## **Laws related to Noise Pollution in India**

- Noise pollution is **regulated separately under the Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000.**
- Earlier, noise pollution and its sources were addressed under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.
- Additionally, **noise standards for motor vehicles, air conditioners, refrigerators, diesel generators and certain types of construction equipment are prescribed under the Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986.**
- Noise emanating from industry is regulated by State Pollution Control Boards / Pollution Control Committees (SPCBs/PCCs) for states / Union territories under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.