

The Hindu EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

9th May 2025

**PREPARE FOR BANK (PO/ CLERK), SSC, UPSC,
State PSC, CAT, CTET, RAILWAY EXAMS, CDS,
TET, NDA/AIRFORCE, NET and all Govt.
Exams**

1. Arcane (गूढ़)

- **Meaning:** Understood by few; mysterious or secret.
- **Synonyms:** Obscure, esoteric, enigmatic
- **Antonyms:** Obvious, clear, well-known
- **Example:** The inspector cited an arcane rule that required a snake-pit in the office building.

2. Flagging (कमज़ोर होता हुआ)

- Meaning: Becoming weaker or less dynamic.**
- Synonyms: Declining, weakening, fading**
- Antonyms: Growing, strengthening, thriving**
- Example: The FTA is expected to revive India's flagging foreign direct investment levels.**

3. Elbowed out (बाहर कर दिया गया)

- **Meaning:** To be pushed out of a position or opportunity, usually through competition.
- **Synonyms:** Ousted, displaced, excluded
- **Antonyms:** Included, welcomed, retained
- **Example:** Indian farmers fear being elbowed out of the market due to cheap imports.

4. Cahoots (साठगांठ)

- **Meaning:** Colluding or conspiring together secretly.
- **Synonyms:** Alliance, collaboration (in a negative sense), conspiracy
- **Antonyms:** Opposition, disunity, independence
- **Example:** The extortion attempt appeared to be in cahoots with the local police.

5. Up in arms (आक्रोशित)

- **Meaning:** Very angry or protesting vigorously.
- **Synonyms:** Agitated, outraged, furious
- **Antonyms:** Calm, satisfied, passive
- **Example:** Indian farmer groups are up in arms over tariff reductions on foreign agricultural imports.

6. Amenable (आज्ञाकारी)

- **Meaning:** Open and responsive to suggestion; easily persuaded or controlled.
- **Synonyms:** Obedient, compliant, acquiescent
- **Antonyms:** Uncooperative, resistant, defiant
- **Example:** The new employee was amenable to feedback and quickly adapted to the company's working style.

7. Abysmal (बहुत खराब)

- **Meaning:** Extremely bad or appalling.
- **Synonyms:** Terrible, dreadful, appalling.
- **Antonyms:** Excellent, commendable, admirable.
- **Example:** The abysmal state of primary healthcare in urban areas is concerning.

8. Debunking (भंडाफोड़ करना / मिथक तोड़ना)

- **Meaning:** Exposing the falseness or hollowness of a belief, myth, or idea.
- **Synonyms:** Exposing, discrediting, refuting, disproving
- **Antonyms:** Confirming, validating, supporting
- **Example:** The report focused on debunking the myth that FTAs always benefit the Indian economy.

9. Frittering (बर्बाद करना / अपव्यय करना)

- **Meaning:** Wasting time, money, or energy on unimportant matters.
- **Synonyms:** Squandering, wasting, dissipating
- **Antonyms:** Conserving, saving, utilising
- **Example:** Instead of making real reforms, the government is frittering away its resources on token measures.

10. Pettifogging (नन्हें-मुन्ने तर्क करने वाला)

- **Meaning:** Involving trivial or minor details, often in a way that is petty or evasive, typically in an attempt to delay or avoid important issues.
- **Synonyms:** Nitpicking, trivial, quibbling, pedantic
- **Antonyms:** Significant, substantial, important, straightforward
- **Example:** The lawyer's pettifogging arguments did little to address the core issues of the case.

VOCABULARY

One-word substitute:

1. Ecophobia

Meaning – Fear of home or the environment

2. Zoophobia

Meaning – Fear of animals

3. Claustrophobia

Meaning – Fear of confined or small spaces

4. Hydrophobia

Meaning – Fear of water

VOCABULARY

Phrasal Verbs:

1. Slip up

Meaning: Make an error

2. Steal up

Meaning: Approach quietly or secretly

3. Tip over

Meaning: Spill, make something fall on its side

4. Doze off

Meaning: Fall asleep

VOCABULARY

Idioms & Phrases

1. Talk a blue streak

Meaning: talk a lot

2. The lion's share

Meaning: the largest part of something

3. Tie the knot

Meaning: get married

VOCABULARY

4. Under the table

Meaning: concealed or by secret

5. A hot potato

Meaning: a controversial issue or situation

Article for Reading

**Caution and
optimism: On India's
FTA with the United
Kingdom**

The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and the United Kingdom marks a strong step towards securing India's bilateral ties in an increasingly fragmented global trade environment. The key highlight for India is that 99% of its exports will attract no duties. Apart from being hailed by business leaders, industry associations representing sectors such as engineering goods, apparel, and gems and jewellery — each among the top Indian exports to the U.K. — have expressed strong optimism for future trade growth. Engineering exports, for example, are expected to nearly double to \$7.55 billion by 2029-30, according to the Engineering Exports Promotion Council of India. Overall bilateral trade is expected to double to \$120 billion by 2030. The other major win is that Indian workers temporarily working in the U.K. and their employers will be exempt from making social security contributions for three years. This is likely to ease the hiring of Indian workers in the U.K.

The FTA also eases the movement of professionals and investors, which should go some way in reviving India's flagging foreign direct investment levels. On the flip side, India has agreed to cut its tariffs on 90% of the tariff lines imported from the U.K., with 85% of these to be reduced to zero tariff within a decade. While the reduction in automotive tariffs is unlikely to meaningfully change the price-conscious behaviour of Indians, the slashing of import duties on whiskey and gin will increase competition in India and perhaps slow the ongoing premiumisation trend. Although the Modi government has been quick to criticise the FTAs signed by the UPA for putting India at a disadvantage, some of its own FTAs have faced the same issue. The India-UAE CEPA (2022), for example, has seen India's trade balance worsen over the years. The FTA with Australia, too, has not resulted in gains for Indian exports. Indian farmer organisations — opposed to the U.K. FTA since talks began — are up in arms over the reduced tariffs on lamb and salmon and other edible products.

Here, too, the government must act to ensure that India's farmers, already in a low-income, low-margin situation, are not elbowed out. Then, there is the fact that trade experts agree that the India-U.K. FTA will be the template for future agreements with the EU and the U.S. India must be careful here. While the U.K. is a relatively small trading partner, the EU and the U.S. deals — when they happen — will have a more significant impact. India has already cut import duties on several food and auto products in line with U.S. demands. With a less than 2% contribution to global exports, Indian manufacturing needs to be helped, not undermined.

Summary

The passage discusses the recently signed Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and the United Kingdom, highlighting its benefits and concerns. Key positives include zero duties on 99% of Indian exports, expected doubling of engineering exports and bilateral trade by 2030, and social security exemptions for Indian workers in the U.K., which will support mobility and hiring. The deal also allows greater movement for professionals and investors, potentially reviving foreign direct investment. However, India will reduce tariffs on 90% of U.K. imports, raising concerns over increased competition, especially from imports like whiskey, gin, lamb, and salmon, which could harm local farmers and small producers. The passage also reflects on past FTAs (e.g., with UAE and Australia), noting limited gains or worsening trade balances, urging the government to tread cautiously, especially with future deals involving the EU and U.S. It concludes by emphasizing the need to protect Indian manufacturing, which has a limited share in global exports.

Tone of the Passage:

The tone is balanced and analytical — it acknowledges the positives of the India-U.K. FTA while also highlighting potential drawbacks and cautioning against repeating past mistakes. There is a cautiously optimistic undertone mixed with a critical assessment of trade policy implications.

Reading Comprehension

Based on the above passage, answer the following questions:

Question 1:

What is the primary benefit of the India-U.K. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) for Indian exporters?

- A. Direct government subsidies for key export industries**
- B. Abolition of visa requirements for Indian professionals**
- C. Duty-free access for the vast majority of Indian exports**
- D. Guaranteed doubling of exports by 2029**
- E. None of the above**

Question 2:

According to the passage, what concern does the FTA raise for Indian farmers?

- A. Restrictions on export of Indian agricultural produce to the U.K.**
- B. Exclusion of agricultural products from the duty-free list**
- C. Forced compliance with U.K. food safety standards**
- D. Reduced import tariffs on specific U.K. food products**
- E. None of the above**

Question 3:

What lesson does the passage suggest India must learn from past FTAs like those with the UAE and Australia?

- A. Bilateral FTAs should only focus on agriculture and energy**
- B. Every FTA signed by the UPA was flawed**
- C. FTAs must be structured to ensure India's export gains**
- D. India should not sign FTAs with developed economies**
- E. None of the above**

Article for Skimming

**The road to
regulatory reform**

India is unique among emerging economies, as its growth has been driven primarily by services rather than manufacturing. If you take a cross-section of the Indian economy from 1980 until now, the share of manufacturing in India's gross value added has crept up marginally, from 16% to 17.5%. The share of services, however, has gone up dramatically, from 33% to 55% of India's gross value added. What accounts for this unique feature of the Indian economy? The answer is that the brunt of economic regulation has fallen on manufacturing, as the factory — rather than the call centre or software firm — is seen as the archetype of industry. Services, by contrast, have been less exposed to regulatory attention. That, however, is changing, as the growth of services brings them into the limelight. To recount some experiences in this regard: a few years back, an inspector visited a modern office of a service sector company run by one of us and demanded to see the snake-pit (meant to trap snakes). Arcane regulations mandate that all establishments have one.

Recognising that hardly any observe this stipulation in practice, he indicated that the demand could be made to go away for a consideration. On another occasion, when the second floor of an authorised office was being fitted out, a consultant assured us there would be no problem if we installed electric connections. When we did so, however, the same consultant arrived with the police, wanting to arrest the owner for violating regulations. It was evident this was an extortion ring run in cahoots with local authorities. Multiple similar incidents point to the hazards of doing business in India. When deregulation became the theme for the 2025 Budget, and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced setting up a high-level committee for regulatory reform, that was indeed the right priority. To curb regulatory cholesterol, the regime of inspections, checks, and no-objection certificates (NOCs) should be replaced by self-certification-based approvals and renewals, at least in low-risk activities. The validity of licences and approvals can be extended by the States in line with best-in-class practices in India and Southeast Asia.

Certified third parties can be brought in to provide a range of approvals, such as building plans, labour, fire safety, and lift — speeding up the process. For ease of doing business that helps entrepreneurs on the ground, factor markets such as land and labour need to be reformed. Land should be made available for industrial use by lifting restrictions and easing regulations around land acquisition, change of land use, zoning, and building byelaws. Further, full transparency should be legally mandated on documentation, NOCs, and checklists needed for all approvals and inspections. Deviations from the official procedure made available online should not be permitted. A joint inspection with prior notice should be mandated with a common checklist and harmonised documentation, taking place not more than once a year. Technology should also be introduced for automated approvals and NOCs. For example, buildings not in flight paths or below a certain height can get an automatic NOC from the Airports Authority of India based on geotagged location.

Question 4:

Which of the following incidents in the passage exemplifies collusion between private agents and public officials?

- A. Inspector demanding to see outdated infrastructure like a snake-pit**
- B. Consultant collaborating with police to extort a service firm**
- C. Arrest of a business owner for failing to show GST registration**
- D. Land acquisition delays in manufacturing zones**
- E. None of the above**

Question 5:

According to the passage, which structural reform is proposed to improve ease of doing business for low-risk activities?

- A. Mandatory NOCs issued by local authorities only**
- B. Deregistration of factories employing fewer than 10 workers**
- C. Shift to self-certification-based approvals and renewals**
- D. Complete exemption from inspections for IT and service firms**
- E. None of the above**

Today's Descriptive Question

Precis Writing:

Original Text:

In the digital age, cybersecurity threats pose significant risks to individuals, businesses, and governments, as cybercriminals exploit vulnerabilities in technology to gain unauthorized access, steal sensitive data, or disrupt systems. These threats include malware, phishing, ransomware, denial-of-service (DoS) attacks, data breaches, and insider threats. As businesses and financial transactions shift online, the need for robust cybersecurity measures has become more critical than ever. One of the most common cybersecurity threats is phishing, where attackers trick users into revealing personal information through deceptive emails or websites. Malware and ransomware infect computer systems, encrypting data and demanding payment for its release. Data breaches expose sensitive information, leading to financial losses and reputational damage. Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS) attacks overwhelm servers with excessive traffic, causing website crashes and service disruptions.

Insider threats, where employees misuse their access to compromise security, also pose serious risks. Overcoming cybersecurity threats requires a multi-layered security approach. Organizations must implement strong firewalls, antivirus software, and intrusion detection systems to prevent unauthorized access. Regular software updates and patch management help fix vulnerabilities that hackers could exploit. Employee awareness training on recognizing phishing attempts and handling sensitive data securely is essential. Using strong, unique passwords and enabling multi-factor authentication (MFA) add an extra layer of security. As cyber threats continue to evolve, constant vigilance, investment in cybersecurity infrastructure, and proactive risk management are necessary to safeguard personal and organizational data. A comprehensive cybersecurity strategy not only protects against financial losses but also ensures trust and security in the digital world.

Precis

Cybersecurity threats, including phishing, malware, ransomware, and data breaches, endanger individuals, businesses, and governments by compromising sensitive information and disrupting digital systems. Cybercriminals exploit vulnerabilities, leading to financial and reputational losses.

To combat these threats, organizations must adopt firewalls, antivirus software, encryption, and multi-factor authentication. Regular software updates, employee training, and data backups enhance security. A zero-trust model and strong regulatory policies are crucial for long-term protection. As cyber threats evolve, proactive cybersecurity measures are essential to ensuring digital safety and trust.

- You had earlier lodged a complaint regarding poor internet service. Write an email following up on the status of your complaint.

To:@gmail.com

Subject: Follow-up on Internet Service Complaint – [Complaint Reference Number]

Dear [Service Provider's Name/Customer Support Team],

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to follow up on the complaint I lodged regarding poor internet service on [date of complaint]. The issue has been causing significant inconvenience, and I have yet to receive a resolution or an update on its status.

For your reference, my complaint reference number is [complaint number], and the issue pertains to [briefly describe the issue, e.g., frequent disconnections, slow speed, complete outage].

Despite my previous communication, the problem persists, affecting my work and daily activities.

I would appreciate it if you could provide an update on the status of my complaint and the estimated timeline for resolution. If any further information is required from my end, please let me know.

Looking forward to your prompt response.

**Best regards,
[Your Name]
[Your Contact Number]**

Match the column

- 1. Talk a blue streak**
- 2. The lion's share**
- 3. Tie the knot**
- 4. Under the table**
- 5. A hot potato**

- A. get married**
- B. talk a lot**
- C. a controversial issue or situation**
- D. the largest part of something**
- E. concealed or by secret**

Answer:

1-b

2-d

3-a

4-e

5-c

Vocabulary

1. Arcane:
2. Flagging:
3. Elbowed out:
4. Cahoots:
5. Up in arms:
6. Amenable:
7. Abysmal:
8. Debunking:
9. Frittering:
10. Pettifogging:

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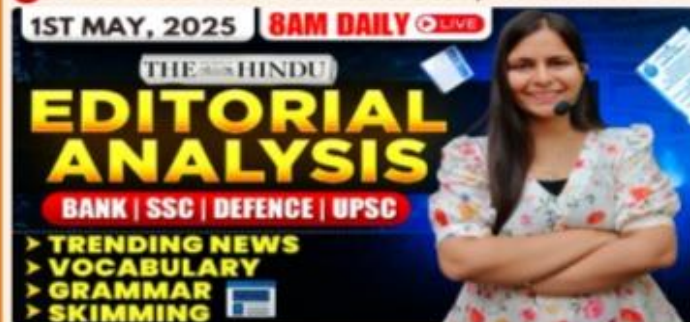


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Rc ans

1.

Ans: C

Explanation:

The passage clearly states:

“The key highlight for India is that 99% of its exports will attract no duties.”

This is the central benefit discussed across multiple sectors like engineering, apparel, and gems.

Incorrect Options:

A. No mention of subsidies.

B. Visas are eased, not abolished.

D. Exports are expected to double, not guaranteed.

2.

Ans: D

Explanation:

“Indian farmer organisations... are up in arms over the reduced tariffs on lamb and salmon and other edible products.”

This suggests greater foreign competition in the Indian market, posing a threat to local farmers.

Incorrect Options:

A. Export restrictions are not mentioned.

B. These products are included, not excluded.

C. No reference to U.K. standards being imposed.

3.

Ans: C

Explanation:

The passage mentions:

“The India-UAE CEPA... has seen India’s trade balance worsen... The FTA with Australia... has not resulted in gains for Indian exports.”

Thus, learning from these to protect export interests is the implied message.

Incorrect Options:

A. Too narrow; the passage supports broader FTAs.

B. Government criticized UPA deals but its own deals had similar issues.

D. The U.K., Australia, and UAE are all developed, but FTA is not dismissed as a concept.

4.

Ans: B

Explanation:

This situation is explicitly described in the passage:

“It was evident this was an extortion ring run in cahoots with local authorities.”

Incorrect options:

A. Though absurd, this case implies individual corruption, not collusion.

C. Not mentioned in the passage at all.

D. Land-related reform is suggested, but collusion is not implied.

5.

Ans: C

Explanation:

The passage proposes:

“...should be replaced by self-certification-based approvals and renewals, at least in low-risk activities.”

Incorrect options:

- A. The goal is to reduce dependence on authorities for NOCs.
- B. Deregistration of factories is not mentioned.
- D. No complete exemption is proposed; reforms are across sectors.