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MCQs

THE HINDU

FCRA Bill 2026, a threat to civil society organisations

Prelims: General Paper 1

Current events of national and international importance.

Mains: General studies 2

Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Why in Focus?

- The **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026** is back on the legislative agenda, reviving concerns over tighter control on NGOs and foreign funding.

Key Highlights:

- India has regulated foreign funding since **FCRA (Foreign Contribution Regulation Act), 1976**, due to concerns over **external influence on democratic processes**.
- The law was updated through **FCRA, 2010**, focusing on preventing foreign funding in **politics and governance sectors**.
- It restricts foreign contributions to **candidates, political parties, legislators, media persons, judges, and public servants**.
- NGOs must obtain **registration/certification** to receive foreign funds for **social, cultural, educational, religious, or economic activities**.
- The **2026 Amendment Bill** strengthens provisions on **cancellation of registration**

and introduces stricter control over funds and assets.

- On cancellation, **all foreign funds and assets (even partly funded)** will vest in a **designated authority**, which can transfer or dispose of them, with proceeds going to the **CFI (Consolidated Fund of India)**.
- The Bill allows cancellation based on a broad **"public interest" clause** and provides **discretionary exemption powers** to the government.

Implications:

- The vague term **"public interest"** gives **wide discretionary powers** to the executive, raising concerns of **arbitrariness**.
- NGOs dependent on foreign funding may face **closure and loss of assets**, affecting **service delivery in welfare sectors**.
- Provisions related to **religious conversion allegations** can be misused, especially against **minority organisations**.
- Selective exemptions may violate **Article 14 (Equality before Law)** due to lack of clear criteria.
- The Bill may create a **chilling effect** (discouragement of legitimate activities due to fear of legal consequences or state action) on civil society, reducing **foreign aid, global collaboration, and grassroots initiatives**.



Way Forward:

- Clearly define **“public interest”** to ensure **transparency and limit arbitrary action**.
- Introduce **judicial or independent review mechanisms** before cancellation of registration.
- Follow the **Doctrine of Proportionality** to balance **national security with freedom of association**.
- Strengthen **compliance systems** through audits, disclosures, and digital monitoring instead of harsh penalties.
- Ensure **stakeholder consultation** with NGOs and civil society for inclusive and balanced policymaking.

Mains Question:

“While regulating foreign contributions is necessary for national security, excessive control can weaken democratic institutions. Critically analyse in the context of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026.” (15 marks, 250 words)

India's theatre reform needs a readiness framework

Prelims: General Paper 1

Current events of national and international importance.

Mains: General studies 3

Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate.

Why in Focus?

- India is moving towards **theatre-isation of armed forces**, a major structural reform, raising concerns about its impact on **military readiness during transition**.

Key Highlights:

- Theatre-isation** (integration of Army, Navy, and Air Force under unified theatre commands) is being adopted to improve **jointness and efficiency in modern warfare**.
- India plans to merge **17 single-service**

commands into a few integrated theatre commands, aligning with global practices of the **USA, UK, and China**.

- The reform focuses on **better coordination, faster decision-making, and optimal use of resources**.
- It involves deep **structural and organisational changes**, unlike simple equipment upgrades, hence may take **years to fully stabilise**.
- New command layers like **CDS (Chief of Defence Staff)** and **VCDS (Vice Chief of Defence Staff)** reshape the military hierarchy.
- Experiences from **China (2016 reforms)** and the **USA (Goldwater-Nichols Act, 1986)** show **initial disruption but long-term gains**.
- India currently lacks a formal **military readiness framework** (system to measure and maintain war preparedness).

Implications:

- The transition may cause a **temporary dip in operational readiness**, especially under a **two-front threat (China and Pakistan)**.
- Theatre commanders may face a **knowledge gap** due to limited experience across all three services.
- Differences in **service culture, rank structure, and career progression** may affect morale and cohesion.
- Additional layers in command may lead to **slower decision-making in crisis situations**.
- Focus remains on **inputs (money, manpower, machines)** rather than actual **combat capability and outcomes**.
- Risks in **logistics integration, data sharing, and joint operations** may emerge sharply during conflict.

Way Forward:

- Develop a **Military Readiness Framework** with clear standards for **unit readiness, force readiness, and sustainability**.
- Create institutional mechanisms like a **Defence Readiness Council** for continuous monitoring and coordination.
- Implement reforms in a **phased and calibrated manner** to avoid disruption in operational capability.



- Maintain **reserve forces outside the new structure** to manage short-term conflicts during transition.
- Enhance **joint training, interoperability, and leadership development** to build trust and integration among services.

Mains Question:

“Theatre-isation of India’s armed forces is a necessary reform for modern warfare, but it may affect military readiness in the short term. Critically analyse.” (15 marks, 250 words)

Behind China’s AI gift, a constraint

Prelims : General Studies Paper I

Indian Polity and Governance-Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.

Mains: General Studies 2

Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India’s interests, Indian diaspora.

Why in Focus?

- **China** is increasingly promoting **open-weight AI models** as part of its global **AI diplomacy**, positioning itself as an alternative to the **United States’ proprietary AI ecosystem**.

Key Highlights

- China has described **AI as a global public good** and **called for greater international cooperation** at the 9th World AI Conference in Shanghai.
- Chinese AI companies such as DeepSeek, Qwen, and Moonshot release **open-weight AI models that are more flexible** than the **closed-source models of OpenAI, Google, and Anthropic**.
- The flexibility allows users to **download, modify, customise, and deploy AI models locally**, allowing countries to keep their data within national borders.
- The **U.S. imposed export controls on advanced AI chips and semiconductor technology**, influencing China’s AI strategy.

- China aims to project itself as a **responsible and cooperative global AI leader** by **promoting AI as a global public good and sharing its benefits**.
- China aims to **position itself as an open alternative to the U.S.** by promoting international AI cooperation and open-weight AI models.

Implication

- Since 2022, the **U.S. and its allies have imposed export restrictions on China** to limit its access to advanced semiconductor chips.
- China can **develop advanced AI models** but **lacks the computing hardware needed for large-scale deployment** due to **shortages of advanced AI chips**.
- China may eventually tighten overseas access to its most advanced AI models due to **national security considerations**.
- AI competition among major powers **may divide the world into separate technology systems**.

Way Forward

- Promote **international cooperation** for safe, secure, and inclusive AI development.
- Encourage **open, transparent, and interoperable AI ecosystems** while balancing innovation and security.
- Strengthen **domestic semiconductor manufacturing** and AI infrastructure to reduce technology dependence.
- Develop global frameworks for **responsible AI governance**, ensuring equitable access while addressing security concerns.

Open-weight AI models allow anyone to download, inspect, modify, and run them on their own systems.

Closed proprietary AI refers to AI models whose code, training data, and model weights are kept private by the developing organization.



Mains Question

“Artificial Intelligence has emerged as an important arena of geopolitical competition.” Discuss how open-weight AI models and semiconductor export controls are reshaping global AI governance and technological competition. (250 Words)

KEYWORDS

Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (IACS)

- IACS was established on **29 July 1876** by **Dr. Mahendralal Sircar** in **Kolkata**.
- IACS is **India's oldest institute** dedicated to **fundamental research** in the **basic sciences**, promoting **scientific education** and **scientific self-reliance**.
- It provided **Indian scientists** with a platform for **original scientific research** during **colonial rule**.
- It played a key role in the **scientific renaissance** during the **Bengal Renaissance**.
- **C. V. Raman** discovered the **Raman Effect** at IACS, earning the **1930 Nobel Prize in Physics**.
- It laid the foundation for **India's modern scientific research ecosystem**.
- It continues to be a premier **scientific research institution** under the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)**.

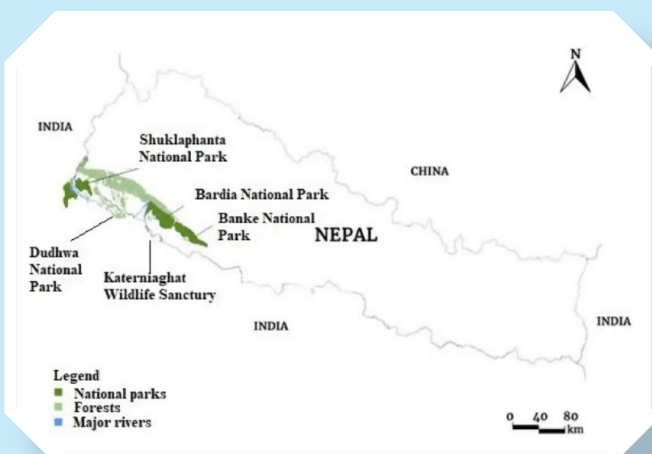
Virtual Magnet

- **Virtual magnets** replace **rare-earth permanent magnets** with **electromagnets (copper coils)** controlled by **software**.
- The software **regulates the electric current** through the **electromagnets**, controlling the **strength** and **direction** of the **magnetic field**. It **does not create magnetism** by itself.
- Unlike **permanent magnets**, **electromagnets** require a **continuous supply of electricity** to generate the magnetic field.
- The technology aims to **reduce dependence on rare-earth magnets**, which are widely used in **electric vehicle (EV) motors**.
- Electromagnet-based motors suffer from magnetic losses, copper resistance losses, and switching losses, making them generally **less efficient than permanent magnet motors**.

Places in News

Bardia National Park

- **Bardia National Park** was highlighted on **International Tiger Day** as **Nepal's tiger population rose 20% to 429**, with the park hosting **112 tigers**, though this has **increased human-wildlife conflict** nearby.
- It is the **largest and most undisturbed national park** in **Nepal's Terai region**, bounded by the **Siwalik Hills (north)**, **Karnali River (west)**, and **bisected by the Babai River**.



- Along with **Banke National Park**, it forms a **Tiger Conservation Unit** and is linked to India via the **Khata Corridor**, enabling **transboundary movement** of **tigers, rhinos, and elephants**.
- Vegetation is dominated by **sub-tropical forests**, especially **Sal trees (about 70%)**, along with **alluvial grasslands** and **riverine forests**.
- Key fauna include **Royal Bengal Tiger**, **Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros (relocated from Chitwan)**, **Asian Elephants**, and the **critically endangered Gharial** in the **Karnali and Babai rivers**.

Kumamoto

- **Kumamoto** is in the news after a **magnitude 7.1 earthquake**, causing **18 deaths, 60+ injuries**, and **major rescue operations**.
- It is a **city and prefecture in Kyushu**, the **southernmost** of Japan's four main islands.
- The region hosts **Mount Aso**, one of the **world's largest active volcanoes**, shaping a **porous volcanic landscape**.
- It is associated with **Minamata disease**, a **mercury poisoning-induced neurological disorder**, which led to the **UN Minamata Convention on Mercury**.
- Kumamoto is known for **sustainable water management**, sourcing **100% of tap water from groundwater aquifers**, earning the **UN 'Water for Life' Award**.

