



**VAJIRAM & RAVI**  
Institute for IAS Examination

# The Analyst

**CURRENT AFFAIRS** Handout

**17th July 2026**

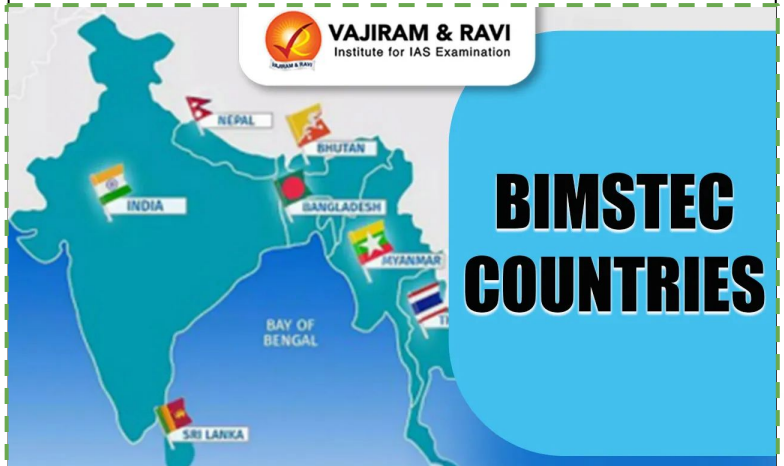


**CONTEXT:** India hosted the BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs' Meeting in New Delhi, where member countries pledged to strengthen cooperation in counter-terrorism, maritime security, etc.

## What is BIMSTEC?

- The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a regional organization connecting South and Southeast Asia.
- Established on **June 6, 1997**, through the '**Bangkok Declaration**'.
- **Seven** member states:
  - Bangladesh (HQ - Dhaka)
  - Bhutan
  - India
  - Myanmar
  - Nepal
  - Sri Lanka
  - Thailand

- Together, these nations represent about **1.7 billion** people (22% of the world population) and a combined GDP of **\$5 trillion**.



## WHY IS BIMSTEC IMPORTANT FOR INDIA?



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>A</b> BRIDGE BETWEEN SOUTH ASIA & SOUTHEAST ASIA<br> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Connects India's <b>Neighbourhood First Policy</b> with its <b>Act East Policy</b>.</li></ul> | <b>B</b> STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF BAY OF BENGAL<br> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bay of Bengal carries major global shipping routes and is central to India's <b>Indo-Pacific vision</b>.</li></ul> | <b>C</b> ALTERNATIVE TO SAARC<br> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unlike SAARC, BIMSTEC excludes Pakistan, allowing <b>greater cooperation</b> on regional issues.</li></ul>                                                           | <b>D</b> SUPPORTS ACT EAST POLICY<br> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhances connectivity with <b>Myanmar</b> and <b>Thailand</b>.</li></ul>                                                        |
| <b>E</b> STRENGTHENS NEIGHBOURHOOD FIRST POLICY<br> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deepens engagement with <b>Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal</b> and <b>Sri Lanka</b>.</li></ul>          | <b>F</b> MARITIME SECURITY<br> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Joint efforts against <b>piracy, illegal fishing</b> and <b>maritime crimes</b> in the Bay of Bengal.</li></ul>                        | <b>G</b> COUNTERING CHINA'S INFLUENCE<br> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides an <b>alternative regional platform</b> amidst China's growing influence in the Indian Ocean through the <b>Belt and Road Initiative</b>.</li></ul> | <b>H</b> DEVELOPMENT OF NORTHEAST INDIA<br> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project</b></li><li>• <b>India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway</b></li></ul> |



BIMSTEC strengthens India's **regional leadership**, promotes **connectivity**, ensures **security**, and supports **inclusive growth** in the Bay of Bengal region.



**CONTEXT:** India hosted the BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs' Meeting in New Delhi, where member countries pledged to strengthen cooperation in counter-terrorism, maritime security, etc.

## Why is BIMSTEC Important for India? Areas of Cooperation under BIMSTEC

- **Security Cooperation**
  - Joint efforts against:
    - Terrorism, Organized crime
    - Human & Drug trafficking
    - Recent Eg: BIMSTEC Security Chiefs' Meeting (2026).
- **Maritime Security**
  - Cooperation on:
    - Maritime law enforcement
    - Search & Rescue (SAR)
    - Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)
- **Connectivity**
  - Eg: India-Myanmar-Thailand Highway
  - Kaladan Project
- **Disaster Management**
  - Eg: Joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Guidelines adopted during the recent meeting.
- **Trade & Economic Cooperation**
  - Eg: Negotiations on the BIMSTEC Free Trade Agreement (FTA).
- **Energy Cooperation**
  - Eg: BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection initiative.

## Major Challenges Before BIMSTEC

- **Slow Project Implementation**
  - Eg: Delayed completion of connectivity projects.
- **Political Instability**
  - Eg: Myanmar's internal conflict affects regional cooperation.

- **Limited Intra-Regional Trade**
  - Eg: Trade among BIMSTEC members remains far below potential.
- **Financial Constraints**
  - Eg: Limited institutional funding compared to ASEAN.
- **China's Expanding Presence**
  - Eg: Growing Chinese investments in Bay of Bengal countries.
- **Institutional Weaknesses**
  - Eg: Limited capacity of the BIMSTEC Secretariat.



# Relevance of BIMSTEC



**CONTEXT:** India hosted the BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs' Meeting in New Delhi, where member countries pledged to strengthen cooperation in counter-terrorism, maritime security, etc.

## Way Forward

- **Accelerate Connectivity Projects**
  - Eg: Complete Kaladan Project and Trilateral Highway at the earliest.
- **Strengthen Maritime Cooperation**
  - Eg: Joint patrols, maritime domain awareness and information sharing.
- **Enhance Counter-Terrorism Cooperation**
  - Eg: Real-time intelligence sharing among security agencies.
- **Expand Economic Integration**
  - Eg: Early conclusion of BIMSTEC Free Trade Agreement.

- **Strengthen Institutional Capacity**
  - Eg: Empower the BIMSTEC Secretariat with greater financial and technical resources.
- **Promote People-to-People Connectivity**
  - Eg: Academic exchanges, tourism and cultural cooperation.

## Mains Practice Question

Examine the strategic significance of BIMSTEC for India's Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific vision. Also discuss the challenges limiting its effectiveness.

(10 marks, 150 words)



# Child Marriages in India

**CONTEXT:** Despite legal prohibition, child marriage continues to persist in several parts of India, particularly in rural and socio-economically disadvantaged regions.

## Status of Child Marriage in India

**Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006 :**  
**Girl (18 years) & Boy (21 years)**

**Women married before the age of 18 years :**  
**2006 (47%) v. 2021 (23%)**

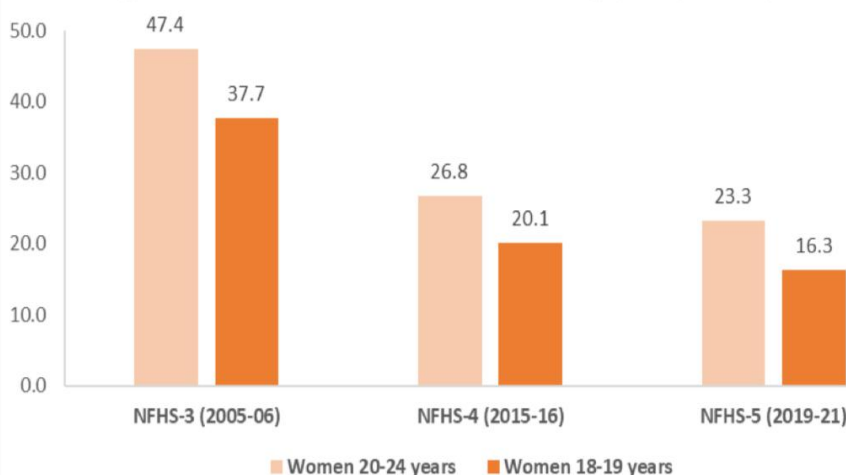
**India : Home to 223 million child brides :**  
**33% of Global total**

**17% Men married before age of 21 years**

**Highest Prevalence : 41% in Bengal**  
**Lowest Prevalence : 0.1% in Kerala**

**High Prevalence States:**  
**WB, BH, JH, AS & RJ**

Fig 1: % of Women Married Before 18 Years of Age, India, NFHS-3, 4 & 5



## Causes of Child Marriage

- **Poverty**
  - Poor families perceive early marriage as reducing financial burden.

- **Gender Inequality**
  - Girls are often viewed as an economic liability. Eg: Preference for investing in boys' education over girls.
- **Lack of Education**
  - School dropouts increase vulnerability to early marriage.
  - Absence of Awareness about Rights
- **Social & Cultural Norms**
  - Traditional beliefs encourage early marriage.
  - Concept of "Paraya Dhan"
- **Safety Concerns**
  - Early marriage used as a perceived means of "protecting" daughters from sexual harassment or violence..
- **Weak Enforcement of Laws**
  - Illegal marriages often continue due to poor implementation.
  - Eg: Mass child marriages reported during festivals like Akshaya Tritiya.



**CONTEXT:** Despite legal prohibition, child marriage continues to persist in several parts of India, particularly in rural and socio-economically disadvantaged regions.



## IMPACTS OF CHILD MARRIAGE



### (A) HEALTH IMPACTS

Early pregnancy increases:

- Maternal mortality
- Infant mortality
- Malnutrition
- Anaemia



#### Example

Adolescent mothers face significantly higher pregnancy-related complications.

### (B) EDUCATIONAL LOSS

Marriage often leads to girls dropping out of school.



#### Example

Reduced female literacy and lower workforce participation.

### (C) ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES

Lower education results in:

- Lower earnings
- Inter-generational poverty



#### Example

Women married early are less likely to participate in formal employment.

### (D) GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Child brides are more vulnerable to:

- Domestic violence
- Marital rape
- Emotional abuse



### (E) DEMOGRAPHIC CONSEQUENCES

Longer reproductive span increases fertility rates.



#### Example

Higher population growth in regions with high child marriage prevalence.

### (F) VIOLATION OF CHILD RIGHTS

Violates rights to:

- Education
- Health
- Dignity
- Equality



Child marriage robs children of their childhood and limits their future.

End child marriage, build a better future!



## Constitutional & Legal Framework

73,000 child marriages prevented in 2023-24 through community engagement & legal interventions

**Section 10 & 11 :** Performs, conducts, abets child marriage : Imprisonment upto 2 years & fine of ₹1 Lakh

**Section 16 :** Appointment of Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPOs) to prevent CM & counsel Parents

**Section 12 :** Child marriage involving minors taken or enticed away is automatically void

**Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006**

**Section 3 :** Declaration of Child Marriage as Voidable : file petition upto 2 years after attaining majority

**Section 4 :** Mandatory maintenance & residence for the female who leaves a child marriage

- **Article 14**
  - Equality before law.
- **Article 15(3)**
  - Special provisions for women and children.
  - Eg: Political reservations
- **Article 21**
  - Right to life and dignity.
- **Article 39(f)**
  - Protection of childhood.
- **Article 45**
  - Early childhood care and education.
- **POCSO Act, 2012**
  - Protects children from sexual offences.

# Child Marriages in India

**CONTEXT:** Despite legal prohibition, child marriage continues to persist in several parts of India, particularly in rural and socio-economically disadvantaged regions.

## Government Initiatives



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**Schemes/Policies for Preventing Girl Child Marriages**

**Sukanya Samridhi Yojana:** Promotes financial savings for a girl's education and marriage.

**Balika Samridhi Yojana:**

- Supports enrollment and retention of girls in schools.
- Focuses on education for vulnerable sections.

**Beti Bachao Beti Padhao:**

- Advocates for girl child safety and education.
- Promotes women empowerment and inclusive ecosystems.

Balika Samridhi Yojana

बेटी बचाओ - बेटी पढ़ाओ  
Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao

- **Mission Shakti**
  - Women's safety and empowerment.
- **Mission Vatsalya**
  - Child protection and welfare.
- **Poshan Abhiyaan**
  - Improves nutrition among adolescent girls and mothers.

## Way Forward

- **Universal Secondary Education**
  - Ensure girls complete at least Class XII.
- **Economic Empowerment of Families**
  - Conditional cash transfer schemes linked to girls' education.
- **Strengthen Law Enforcement**
  - Improve monitoring through

Child Marriage Prohibition Officers.

- **Community Participation**
  - Engage Panchayats, Self-Help Groups, and religious leaders.
- **Skill Development & Employment**
  - Vocational training for adolescent girls to enhance economic independence.
- **Behavioural Change Campaigns**
  - Mass awareness through schools, media, and civil society organizations.

## Mains Practice Question

Despite legislative measures, child marriage continues to persist in India. Examine the socio-economic factors responsible and suggest a comprehensive strategy to eliminate the practice.

(10 Marks, 150 words)



Newspaper: Indian Express, Page No. 12

### Use in GS-III (Science & Technology)

- Topic: Role of Biotechnology in India's Development
- Biotechnology is emerging as the 4th Industrial Revolution sector.
- Shift from "Pharmacy of the World" → "Biotechnology Innovation Hub".
- Proposed ₹50,000 crore BioEconomy Growth Fund to bridge the "lab-to-market" financing gap.

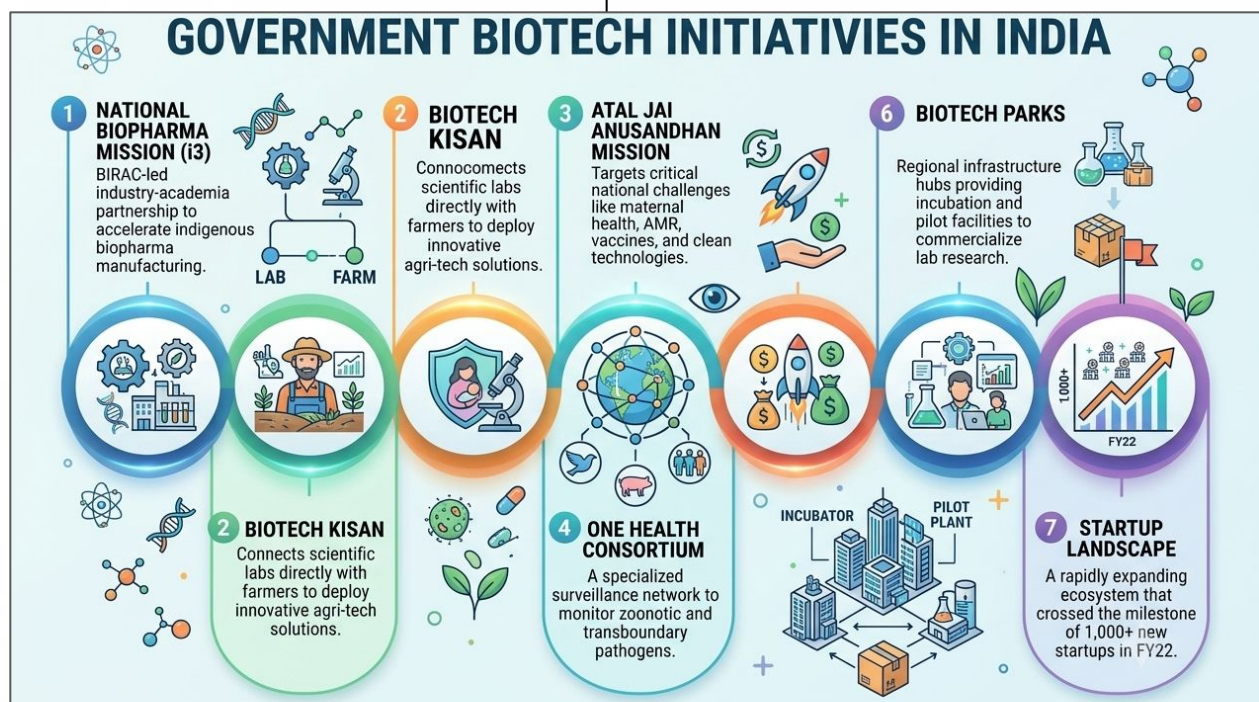
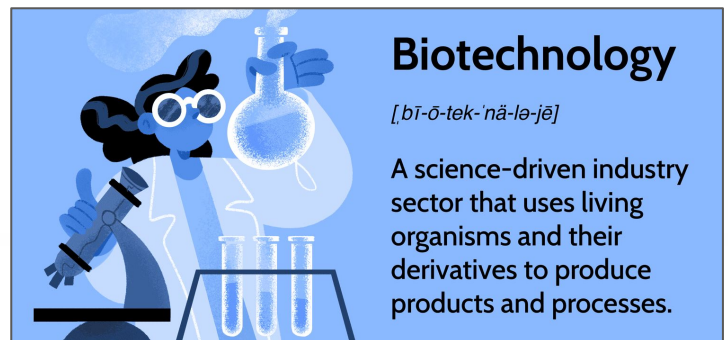
### Use in Agriculture Answers

- Topic: Second Green Revolution
- Biotechnology can help achieve:
  - Climate-resilient crops
  - Precision agriculture
  - Biofertilizers, Biopesticides
  - Higher productivity with lower environmental footprint

NITI Aayog suggests  
₹50,000-crore fund  
for biotech growth

### Use in Economy Answers

- Bioeconomy can become a new pillar of economic growth, alongside IT and digital services.
- High-value biotechnology sectors generate:
  - Skilled employment
  - High exports
  - IP creation
  - Import substitution
- NITI Aayog projects India's bioeconomy could reach **\$691 billion by 2035** and create over 30 million high-value jobs (**\$137 billion in 2022**)



**Syllabus: PRELIMS:** Health  
**Newspaper:** The Hindu, **Page No.** 15

## What is Diabetes?

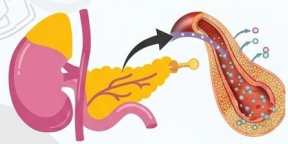
- It is a **chronic disease** that occurs when the **pancreas can no longer make insulin**, or the body cannot make good use of the insulin it produces.
- Insulin** - hormone that **regulates blood glucose**.
- Not being able to produce or use insulin effectively **leads to raised glucose levels** in the blood, known as **hyperglycaemia**.
- Over the long-term high glucose levels are associated with **failure of various organs** and tissues.
- Diabetes is a major cause of:
  - Blindness, kidney failure, heart attacks, stroke, and lower limb amputation.

## DIABETES

Diabetes is a chronic disease with **high blood sugar** due to low or **ineffective insulin**.

**Hyperglycemia**, or **high blood glucose**, is a common result of uncontrolled diabetes and can damage nerves and blood vessels.

### Occurs when



The pancreas **insufficiently produces insulin**, which regulates blood sugar.



**Cellular Insulin Resistance**  
The body **cannot effectively use the insulin** it produces.

## Type 1 Diabetes

Your body is no longer able to produce insulin

### Why

Usually develops during childhood, but can develop at any age

### Age

Family history



### Risk Factor

- Bedwetting
- Blurry vision
- Frequent urination
- Increased appetite and thirst
- Mood changes and irritability
- Tiredness and weakness
- Unexplained weight loss



### Symptoms

No known prevention methods



### Prevention

Insulin injections



### Treatment

## Type 2 Diabetes

Your body still produces insulin, but it doesn't make enough of it or it doesn't use it efficiently

Can develop at any age but is most common in adults over 45

- Overweight and/or inactive
- Family history
- High blood pressure

- Increased appetite and thirst
- Dark patches on armpits/neck
- Frequent urination
- Blurry vision
- Tiredness and weakness
- Unexplained weight loss

Healthy lifestyle

Healthy living, possible insulin support

## Gestational Diabetes

- Hyperglycaemia with blood glucose values **above normal but below those diagnostic of diabetes**.
- Develops during **pregnancy**.



## Exam Traps

- Type 1 diabetes is mainly caused by obesity → **WRONG**
- Type 2 diabetes is an autoimmune disease → **WRONG**
- Gestational diabetes occurs only after childbirth → **WRONG**
- Insulin is produced by the liver → **WRONG**
- Type 1 diabetes can usually be managed without insulin → **WRONG**



# Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act



**Syllabus: PRELIMS:** Governance  
**Newspaper:** The Hindu, **Page No.** 1

## Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA)

- **FCRA, 2010** is an internal security legislation designed to **regulate** the acceptance and utilization of **foreign donations** by individuals, associations, or companies in India.
- Administered By:
  - **Ministry of Home Affairs**
- **Objective:**
  - Ensure that foreign funds do not adversely affect India's sovereignty, security, public interest or democratic institutions.
- **Who Needs Registration?**
  - NGOs, associations and trusts receiving foreign contributions.
- **Validity of Registration:**
  - 5 years, renewable.

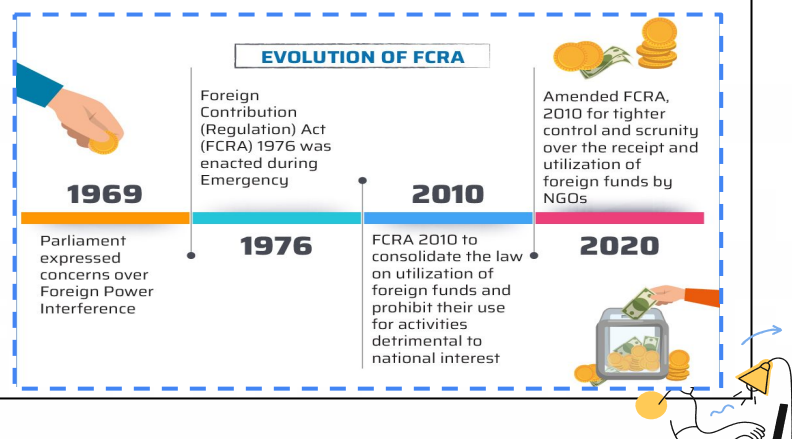
### KEY CHANGES: FCRA Amendment Bill, 2026

- **Registration Ends Automatically**  
If renewal not applied, denied, or expired
- **Designated Authority Control**  
Takes over foreign funds & assets after cancellation/surrender
- **Temporary vs Permanent Vesting**
  - Returned if registration restored
  - Permanently used for public purposes if not
- **Expanded Ban on Foreign Funds**  
Applies to any person in politics, judiciary, media
- **Reduced Penalties**  
Jail term cut from 5 years to 1 year
- **Govt Approval for Investigation**  
Mandatory before initiating any probe

- **FCRA (Amendment) Act, 2020 – Key Changes:**
  - Prohibited transfer of foreign contributions to another FCRA-registered organization.
  - Reduced administrative expenses limit from 50% to 20%.
  - Mandatory Aadhaar identification for office bearers.
  - Made opening an SBI New Delhi Main Branch account mandatory.
- **Who Cannot Receive Foreign Contribution?**
  - Election candidates
  - Members of Parliament/State Legislatures
  - Political parties and office bearers
  - Judges, Government servants
  - Journalists working with specified media organizations

### Exam Traps

- FCRA is administered by the Ministry of Finance → **WRONG**
- FCRA registration is valid for 10 years → **WRONG**
- Administrative expenses can be up to 50% under the current law → **WRONG**
- Foreign contribution can be received in any commercial PSU bank account → **WRONG**
- Political parties can receive foreign contributions under FCRA → **WRONG**



**Syllabus: PRELIMS:** Art & Culture  
**Newspaper:** Indian Express, **Page No.** 14

## Jagannath Rath Yatra

- It is an ancient Hindu festival that commemorates the annual journey of **Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, and Goddess Subhadra** from the Jagannath Temple to the Gundicha Temple in Puri, Odisha.
- The present Jagannath Temple was built in the **12th century CE** by **King Anantavarman Chodaganga Deva**.
- Popularly known as the **Festival of Chariots** because the deities travel in three grand wooden chariots.
- Celebrated In:
  - Ashadha month** (June–July) on the Dwitiya (2nd day) of Shukla Paksha.
- Route:
  - From Jagannath Temple to Gundicha Temple (~3 km).

### THE THREE RATHS

|                    | NANDIGHOSA     | DARPADALAN       | TALADHWAJA      |
|--------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Presiding Deity    | Lord Jagannath | Goddess Subhadra | Lord Balabhadra |
| Wheels             | 16             | 12               | 14              |
| Wooden pieces used | 832            | 593              | 763             |
| Height             | 44.2 feet      | 42.3 feet        | 43.3 feet       |
| Colour of cloth    | Red & yellow   | Red & black      | Red & green     |



## Jagannath Rath Yatra

- Duration:**
  - 9 days, followed by the Bahuda Yatra (return journey).
- Unique Feature:**
  - The deities are brought outside the temple, allowing everyone, irrespective of caste or religion, to have darshan.
- One of the **Char Dham pilgrimage** sites
  - Along with Badrinath, Dwarka, and Rameswaram.
- Popularly known as the **"White Pagoda."**
  - Designed in the Kalinga style of architecture

## Exam Traps

- Rath Yatra is celebrated in Chaitra month → **WRONG**
- The procession starts from Gundicha Temple → **WRONG**
- Jagannath Temple is located in Bhubaneswar → **WRONG**
- Rath Yatra is a UNESCO World Heritage Site → **WRONG**



**Syllabus: PRELIMS:** Places In News  
**Newspaper:** Indian Express, **Page No.** 15

## Falkland Islands

- Also known as the **Malvinas Islands**
  - It is an internally **self-governing overseas territory of the United Kingdom** in the South Atlantic Ocean.
  - The islands are self-governing, although **foreign affairs and defence** matters are handled by the British government.
- Geography:
  - Two main islands, East Falkland and West Falkland (separated by the **Falkland strait**), together with 776 smaller islands.
  - The capital and major town is **Stanley**.
- Economy:
  - Fisheries (especially squid)
  - Sheep farming (wool)
  - Tourism
  - Offshore oil and gas exploration



## Exam Traps

- Falkland Islands lie in the South Pacific Ocean → **WRONG**
- They are an independent sovereign country → **WRONG**
- The capital is Buenos Aires → **WRONG**
- The islands are administered by Argentina → **WRONG**
- The Falklands War took place in 1971 → **WRONG**

## Falkland Islands

- Strategic Importance:**
  - Rich fishing grounds
  - Potential offshore hydrocarbon reserves
  - Important location in the South Atlantic
- History:**
- At various times, the islands have had French, British, Spanish, and Argentine settlements.
- Britain reasserted its rule in 1833.**
- Falklands War (1982):** Argentine forces temporarily occupied the islands.
- British administration was restored two months later at the end of the Falklands War.
- Most Falklanders favour the archipelago remaining a UK overseas territory.**



**Q1. With reference to the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), consider the following statements:**

1. It was established through the Bangkok Declaration in 1997.
2. It connects countries from both South Asia and Southeast Asia.
3. Bangladesh hosts the permanent Secretariat of BIMSTEC.
4. All BIMSTEC member countries have a coastline along the Bay of Bengal.

**Which of the statements given above are correct?**

- a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- b) 1 and 4 only
- c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

**Answer: a**

**Q2. With reference to Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus, consider the following statements:**

1. Type 1 diabetes is primarily caused by autoimmune destruction of insulin-producing beta cells in the pancreas.
2. Type 2 diabetes is characterised by insulin resistance and may eventually involve reduced insulin secretion.
3. Type 1 diabetes is more commonly associated with obesity and a sedentary lifestyle than Type 2 diabetes.
4. People with Type 2 diabetes may require insulin therapy in advanced stages of the disease.

**Which of the statements given above are correct?**

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1, 2 and 4 only
- c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

**Answer: b**

**Q3. Regarding the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2010, consider the following statements:**

1. The Act is primarily intended to regulate foreign direct investment (FDI) into companies operating in India.
2. The Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal authority for administering the Act.
3. Registration under the Act, once granted, remains valid permanently unless specifically cancelled by the government.
4. One of the objectives of the Act is to ensure that foreign contributions do not adversely affect India's sovereignty and democratic institutions.

**How many of the above statements is/are correct?**

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) Only Three
- d) All Four

**Answer: b**

**Q4. With reference to the Jagannath Rath Yatra, consider the following statements:**

1. It commemorates the annual journey of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, and Goddess Subhadra from the Jagannath Temple to the Gundicha Temple.
2. The present Jagannath Temple at Puri was built in the 12th century CE by King Anantavarman Chodaganga Deva.
3. The festival is celebrated on the Dwitiya (second day) of the Krishna Paksha in the month of Ashadha.
4. It is popularly known as the Festival of Chariots because the deities are taken in three grand wooden chariots.

**Which of the statements given above are correct?**

- a) 1, 2 and 4 only
- b) 1 and 3 only
- c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

**Answer: a**

**Q5. With reference to the Falkland Islands (Malvinas Islands), consider the following statements:**

1. The Falkland Islands are an internally self-governing overseas territory of the United Kingdom.
2. The British government is responsible for the islands' foreign affairs and defence.
3. The Falkland Strait separates East Falkland and West Falkland.
4. Fisheries, particularly squid fishing, constitute an important component of the islands' economy.

**How many of the above statements is/are correct?**

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) Only Three
- d) All Four

**Answer: d**





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