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The Hindu Analysis

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PRELIMS + MAINS + INTERVIEW READY

IN TODAY'S EDITION

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| ★ | Practice Zone — 2 Mains + 10 Prelims MCQs + Revision | DRILL |

Why in News: Indian Army's military dogs — including the indigenous **Rampur Hound** — are demonstrating specialised operational skills alongside U.S. Army personnel during the ongoing India–U.S. bilateral exercise **Yudh Abhyas 2026**.

Key Highlights

- ◆ Four Army canines are taking part: Rampur Hounds **Victor** and **Rowdy**, Belgian Malinois **Zac**, and Labrador Retriever **Rice**.
- ◆ They are performing **room-intervention** and **rappelling** drills as part of professional exchanges with the U.S. Army.
- ◆ The move highlights the Army's push to induct **indigenous canine breeds** for specialised military roles — a "self-reliance" thrust extended to the Army's K9 units.

About the Rampur Hound

- ◆ Also called the **Rampur Greyhound**; a sleek, athletic **sighthound** bred around 300 years ago in the **Rampur region of Uttar Pradesh** by the Nawab of Rampur.
- ◆ Developed by crossing the **Afghan Hound (Tazi)** with the **English Greyhound** to enhance speed and strength.
- ◆ Among the **fastest dogs** — can exceed **40 mph**; tall, long-legged, deep-chested frame built for speed and endurance.
- ◆ Aloof with strangers but deeply loyal and obedient, often bonding with one primary person.
- ◆ Historically used by royalty for hunting large game; **declined after Independence** as princely states lost power. Purebreds are now rare.



The Rampur Hound — an indigenous Indian sighthound.

VALUE ADDITION — FOR PRELIMS & MAINS

- **Yudh Abhyas:** annual bilateral **India–U.S. Army** exercise, held alternately in the two countries; focuses on interoperability & counter-terror drills.
- **Military-dog roles:** explosive detection, patrol & apprehension, search & rescue, tracking — selected for intelligence, trainability, agility, endurance & scenting ability.
- The U.S. military primarily breeds and trains the **Belgian Malinois**.
- Other recognised Indian breeds gaining military/security use: **Mudhol Hound** (Karnataka), **Chippiparai**, **Combai**.

Why in News: Tamil Nadu has announced a **multi-pronged campaign to reduce salt intake**, aiming to cut hypertension and cardiovascular disease across the State.

Why Salt Matters

- ◆ Salt is an essential electrolyte — in the right proportion it aids **hydration, nerve signalling, muscle function and digestion**.
- ◆ In excess (especially via **ultra-processed foods**) it raises the risk of **stroke, heart disease and kidney strain**. Excess salt makes the body retain water, raising blood volume and pressure on artery walls → **hypertension**.

The Numbers

- ◆ **ICMR surveys:** Indian men consume ~**8.9 g/day**, women ~**7.1 g/day** of salt.
- ◆ **WHO recommendation:** keep intake **under 5 g/day** ($\approx$ 2 g sodium); Jan 2025 WHO guidelines recommend **lower-sodium (potassium-enriched) salt substitutes**.
- ◆ Hypertension prevalence in Tamil Nadu $\approx$ **33.9%** (2024 study) — well above the national average of **28.5%**.

Tamil Nadu's Action Plan

- ◆ First-ever **statewide survey using urine samples** to scientifically measure salt consumption.
- ◆ Salt to be **gradually reduced** in government-run kitchens — Nutritious Meal Programme, ICDS centres, government hospitals and hostels.
- ◆ Feasibility of a **low-sodium salt substitute** to be examined; awareness drive on **reading food labels** and tasting before adding salt.
- ◆ Hypertension control stepped up through the community outreach programme **Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam**; those diagnosed to get counselling & anti-hypertension drugs.

VALUE ADDITION

- WHO's **"SHAKE"** technical package guides population salt-reduction (Surveillance, Harness industry, Adopt labelling, Knowledge, Environment).
- India's target under the **National NCD action plan**: 30% relative reduction in mean population salt intake.
- A 2021 randomised trial (*American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*) found **reduced-sodium, potassium-enriched salt substitutes** effective in lowering systolic BP in rural India.

Why in News: The government has proposed a more stringent **FCRA (Amendment) Bill, 2026**, reviving old anxieties about foreign funding of non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Background

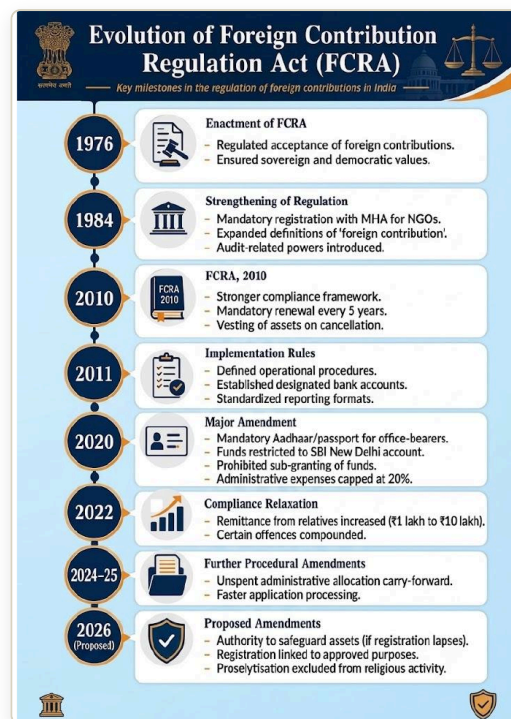
- ◆ The **Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act** was first passed in **1976** to regulate the acceptance and use of foreign contributions and to protect sovereign, democratic functioning.
- ◆ Government's claim: foreign funds flow into the NGO sector as a "vast, intricate and opaque web," with unmonitored capital used for politically charged campaigns and proselytisation.
- ◆ An **unstated fear**: religious conversions by minority-run organisations.

What the 2026 Bill Proposes

- ◆ If an FCRA certificate is **cancelled, surrendered or lapses**, foreign contributions and all assets created from them **vest in a government-appointed "designated authority."**
- ◆ Assets are **recoverable** if registration is restored within the prescribed period; otherwise **permanent vesting** follows.
- ◆ Un-restored assets may be **sold/transferred** to a government department, with proceeds going to the **Consolidated Fund of India**.
- ◆ Provides for **revision and appeal to the District Judge**.

Concerns Raised

- ◆ Chilling effect on **civil society space** and independent advocacy; a vibrant civil society is essential to a healthy democracy.
- ◆ Christian and minority organisations — which run **schools, hospitals, old-age homes**, often the sole service providers in the **North-East and tribal areas** — fear the real sufferers will be beneficiaries.
- ◆ **22,496** NGO FCRA registrations cancelled since 2015; only **14,466** active associations remain eligible to receive foreign contributions (MHA, Sept 2026).



Evolution of the FCRA, 1976 → 2026.

VALUE ADDITION

- FCRA is administered by the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**.
- **2020 amendment** highlights: mandatory FCRA account at **SBI, New Delhi Main Branch**; **sub-granting prohibited**; administrative expenses capped at 20%; Aadhaar for office-bearers.
- Under the **Companies Act, 2013**, CSR spending is compulsory for qualifying firms — a growing domestic funding channel (₹22,563 crore by listed firms in FY25).

Why in News: With the RBI holding the repo rate at **5.25%** while inflation rises, India's **real policy rate** is steadily losing its cushion — reviving a debate on the timing of monetary action.

The Inflation Picture

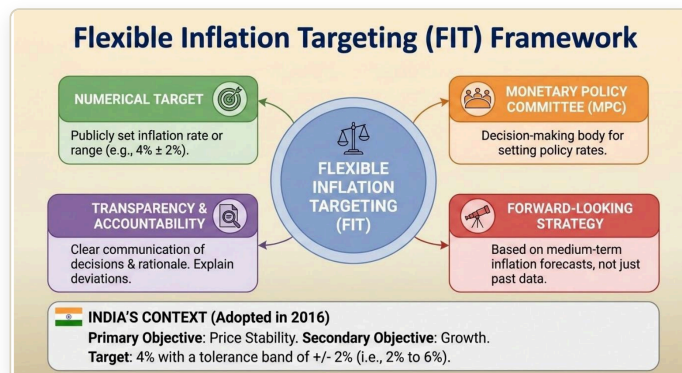
- ◆ **CPI inflation:** rose to **4.82% in August** (from 4.45% in July) — the third consecutive month above the RBI's **4% target**.
- ◆ **Food inflation** at 5.95%; **core inflation** up to ~4.2%, showing price pressures are broadening beyond food.
- ◆ **Real policy rate** = repo rate – expected inflation. As inflation expectations approach ~5.25%, the real rate nears **zero** — a far less restrictive stance.

Banking & External Backdrop

- ◆ **Bank credit** grew 19.1% YoY (end-August); **deposits** rose 17.8%, partly on the RBI's special **FCNR(B)** mobilisation. Credit-deposit ratio ≈ 80.3%.
- ◆ External shock: renewed **West Asia conflict** disrupted shipping through the **Strait of Hormuz**, pushing **Brent crude above \$100** (near \$110) alongside a weaker rupee.
- ◆ **The timing argument:** a timely 25-bps adjustment may ultimately cost less than a delayed 50-bps correction — with GDP growth ~7.8% and credit strong, demand is hardly weak.

Monetary Policy Committee	
MPC was constituted in 2016 as a statutory body under the RBI Act to formulate monetary policy in India (on recommendation of Urjit Patel committee)	
- Composition (Chairperson + 5 Members): Quorum: 4 members. - RBI Governor - ex-officio chairperson - RBI Deputy Governor + 1 more member from RBI to be nominated by the Central Board of Directors. 3 other members are appointed by the Central Government.	
Members of MPC hold office for a period of 4 years and are not eligible for re-appointment.	
MPC is required to meet at least four times in a year.	
MPC takes decisions based on majority vote (by those who are present and voting. In case of a tie, the RBI governor will have the second or casting vote).	
The decision of the committee is binding on the RBI.	

Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).



Flexible Inflation Targeting framework.

VALUE ADDITION — MPC & FIT

- **MPC:** constituted in **2016** as a statutory body under the RBI Act (on the **Urjit Patel Committee** recommendation); 6 members (Governor + Dy Governor + 1 RBI nominee + 3 Central Govt); **4-year** term, no re-appointment; meets ≥ 4 times a year; decisions by **majority vote** with Governor's **casting vote**; binding on the RBI.
- **FIT (2016):** primary objective **price stability**, secondary **growth**; target **4% ± 2%** (i.e., 2–6%).

Why in News: A **counterfeit medicine racket** busted in Bengaluru has exposed serious gaps in India's drug quality-control and monitoring systems.

What Happened

- ◆ Relabelled or fake drugs — including **cancer drugs and ICU injections** — were supplied to **90+ hospitals and clinics** across Karnataka.
- ◆ Raids near **Bidadi** (Aug 18) at an unlicensed farmhouse found fake and expired drugs with a label value of **₹5 crore**; the unit repacked expired drugs as fresh consignments with altered expiry dates.
- ◆ The State formed a **Special Investigation Team (SIT)**; possible inter-State links and complicity within the private-hospital supply chain are under scrutiny.

The Larger Issue

- ◆ Fake/spurious drugs can cause immediate **adverse reactions, severe disability and death** — the gravest concern being patient safety for time-sensitive, life-saving medicines.
- ◆ Recent **contaminated cough-syrup deaths** (in India and abroad) have dented the credibility of the "Make in India" campaign.
- ◆ For a nation aspiring to be the "**pharmacy of the world**," ambition must be matched with adequate, stringent monitoring and quality control.

VALUE ADDITION — REGULATORY ARCHITECTURE

- Governed by the **Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940** & Rules, 1945.
- **CDSCO** (Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation) under the **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare**, headed by the **DCGI**, handles approvals & imports; **State Drug Controllers** license manufacture & sale.
- India supplies ~20% of the world's generic medicines by volume — hence "pharmacy of the world."
- Cough-syrup deaths were linked to contamination with **diethylene glycol / ethylene glycol (DEG/EG)**.

Why in News: The **U.S. Russia Sanctions Act**, now signed into law by President Trump, and its impending tariffs mark a new, more serious escalation of U.S.-India tensions.

What the Law Does

- ◆ Empowers the U.S. President to levy tariffs of **up to 100%** on countries — such as India — that import large quantities of **Russian oil and gas**.
- ◆ More serious than the earlier **50% penal tariffs**, which rested on an Executive Order. Being **Congress-passed**, the Act carries greater legal permanence; any waiver needs written justification to Congress.
- ◆ These 100% tariffs would be **over and above** the 10% "forced-labour" tariffs and the 50% **Section 232** tariffs on steel and aluminium.

Impact & India's Options

- ◆ The 50% tariffs already hit exports hard; cost-sharing with U.S. buyers proved unsustainable. A **100% tariff would be impossible for India's MSME exporters**.
- ◆ The U.S. is India's **largest export destination** (~20% of total goods exports).
- ◆ Three options: (i) **cut Russian oil imports**; (ii) **retain imports and bear the tariffs**; (iii) **convince the U.S.** to use the "up to 100%" phrasing to set a low rate.
- ◆ Russia accounted for **>51%** of India's oil imports (July 2026); with the Strait of Hormuz constrained and oil above \$100/bbl, finding alternatives (e.g., chivvying Oman) is difficult.

VALUE ADDITION

- **Section 232** (U.S. Trade Expansion Act, 1962): allows tariffs on **national-security** grounds — used for steel & aluminium.
- Union Commerce Minister **Piyush Goyal**'s planned **G-20 Trade Ministerial** visit to the U.S. is significant; ~30 days remain before tariffs can be levied.
- Tension between India's stated "**strategic autonomy**" and historical compliance with U.S. pressure on oil sourcing.

Practice Zone

Mains answer-writing · Prelims MCQs · Quick revision · Trap-setters · Places & Persons in news

Mains — Answer Writing

GS 2 & GS 3 · 15 marks each · 250 words

Q1 · GS 2 · GOVERNANCE

The FCRA (Amendment) Bill, 2026 seeks to tighten state control over the foreign funding of NGOs. Critically examine the concerns it raises for civil-society space while balancing the state's regulatory objectives.

प्र.1: FCRA (संशोधन) विधेयक, 2026 एनजीओ की विदेशी फंडिंग पर राज्य का नियंत्रण कड़ा करने का प्रयास करता है। राज्य के नियामकीय उद्देश्यों को संतुलित करते हुए, नागरिक-समाज के दायरे के लिए इससे उत्पन्न चिंताओं का आलोचनात्मक परीक्षण कीजिए।

APPROACH

Intro: Note FCRA's 1976 origin & purpose (regulating foreign contributions to protect sovereignty). **Body:** (a) Outline the 2026 Bill — vesting of assets in a "designated authority," permanent vesting, transfer to Consolidated Fund, appeal to District Judge; (b) State's rationale — opacity of funds, sovereignty, misuse; (c) Concerns — chilling effect on advocacy, hit to minority-run schools/hospitals in NE & tribal belts, due-process worries, 22,496 cancellations since 2015; (d) Balance via transparency, proportionality, domestic philanthropy & CSR. **Conclusion:** Regulation should target genuine misuse without shrinking legitimate civil-society space.

Q2 · GS 3 · ECONOMY

With inflation persistently above target and the real policy rate shrinking, examine the dilemma before the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee. What role does the *timing* of monetary action play?

प्र.2: लगातार लक्ष्य से ऊपर मुद्रास्फीति और घटती वास्तविक नीतिगत दर के बीच, भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक की मौद्रिक नीति समिति (MPC) के समक्ष उत्पन्न दुविधा की जाँच कीजिए। मौद्रिक कार्रवाई के "समय" (timing) की इसमें क्या भूमिका है?

APPROACH

Intro: Define real rate (nominal – expected inflation) & the FIT mandate ($4\% \pm 2\%$). **Body:** (a) Current data — CPI 4.82%, food 5.95%, core 4.2%, repo held at 5.25% → real rate near zero; (b) External shock — West Asia/Hormuz, Brent >\$100, weaker rupee; (c) Growth-inflation trade-off — GDP ~7.8%, credit 19.1%, demand not weak; (d) Timing — risk of inflation getting embedded in expectations; a small early move vs a larger delayed correction. **Conclusion:** Direction is clear; timeliness minimises long-run cost.

1. With reference to the Rampur Hound, consider the following statements:

1. It is a sighthound developed by crossing the Afghan Hound with the English Greyhound.
2. It was originally bred by the Nawab of Rampur in present-day Uttar Pradesh.
3. It is the primary breed used by the U.S. military.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| (a) Only one | (b) Only two |
| (c) All three | (d) None |

2. The bilateral military exercise Yudh Abhyas is conducted between India and:

- | | |
|------------|-------------------|
| (a) Russia | (b) United States |
| (c) France | (d) Japan |

3. As per WHO, the recommended daily intake of salt for an adult should be kept under:

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| (a) 2 grams | (b) 5 grams |
| (c) 8 grams | (d) 10 grams |

4. Consider the following statements about the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC):

1. It was constituted as a statutory body under the RBI Act.
2. It consists of six members, three of whom are nominated by the Central Government.
3. In the event of a tie, the RBI Governor has a casting vote.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

5. Under India's Flexible Inflation Targeting framework, the inflation target (with tolerance band) is:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| (a) $2\% \pm 2\%$ | (b) $4\% \pm 2\%$ |
| (c) $5\% \pm 2\%$ | (d) $6\% \pm 1\%$ |

6. The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) is administered by which of the following?

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (a) Ministry of Finance | (b) Ministry of External Affairs |
| (c) Ministry of Home Affairs | (d) NITI Aayog |

7. In monetary economics, the real interest rate is best understood as:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (a) Repo rate + reverse repo rate | (b) Nominal rate – expected inflation |
| (c) Nominal rate + inflation | (d) Bank rate – CRR |

8. Section 232 tariffs, referred to in the context of U.S. trade actions, are imposed on the ground of:

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| (a) Currency manipulation | (b) National security |
| (c) Anti-dumping | (d) Labour standards |

9. The apex body responsible for approval of new drugs and regulation of drug imports in India is:

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| (a) ICMR | (b) NPPA |
| (c) CDSCO | (d) FSSAI |

10. Under the proposed FCRA Amendment Bill, 2026, proceeds from the sale of assets of an NGO whose registration is not restored would be credited to the:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| (a) National Foundation for NGOs | (b) Consolidated Fund of India |
| (c) Contingency Fund of India | (d) Prime Minister's Relief Fund |

Q	Ans	Rationale
1	(b)	Statements 1 & 2 are correct — the Rampur Hound is an Afghan Hound × English Greyhound sighthound bred in Rampur (UP). Statement 3 is wrong: the U.S. military primarily uses the Belgian Malinois .
2	(b)	Yudh Abhyas is the annual India- United States Army-to-Army exercise.
3	(b)	WHO recommends salt intake under 5 g/day ($\approx$ 2 g sodium).
4	(d)	All correct — MPC is statutory under the RBI Act; six members with three Central-Government nominees; the Governor holds a casting vote in a tie.
5	(b)	India's FIT target is 4% with a $\pm$2% band (2-6%), adopted in 2016.
6	(c)	FCRA is administered by the Ministry of Home Affairs .
7	(b)	Real rate = nominal (policy) rate – expected inflation ; it measures the true restrictiveness of policy.
8	(b)	Section 232 of the U.S. Trade Expansion Act, 1962 permits tariffs on national-security grounds (e.g., steel & aluminium).
9	(c)	CDSCO (under MoH&FW, headed by the DCGI) approves new drugs & regulates imports; state controllers license manufacture/sale.
10	(b)	Un-restored assets may be sold and the proceeds credited to the Consolidated Fund of India .

Score 8+ / 10 → excellent · 5–7 → revise value-addition boxes · <5 → re-read today's topic pages.

One-Line Recap

- **Rampur Hound:** indigenous UP sighthound (Afghan Hound × Greyhound) in **Yudh Abhyas 2026** (India-US Army).
- **Salt campaign (TN):** urine-sample survey, cuts in govt kitchens, low-sodium substitute; WHO <5 g/day; TN hypertension ~33.9%.
- **FCRA Bill 2026:** asset-vesting in "designated authority," transfer to Consolidated Fund, appeal to District Judge; 22,496 cancellations since 2015.
- **Monetary policy:** repo held at 5.25%, CPI 4.82% → real rate near zero; MPC (2016, RBI Act), FIT 4% ± 2%.
- **Counterfeit drugs:** Bengaluru/Bidadi racket, 90+ hospitals; Drugs & Cosmetics Act 1940, CDSCO/DCGI.
- **U.S. Russia Sanctions Act:** up-to-100% tariffs on Russian-oil buyers; Section 232; Russia >51% of India's oil imports.

⚠ Trap-Setters — Don't Get Fooled

- Rampur Hound is from **Uttar Pradesh** — **not** Tamil Nadu. The **Mudhol Hound** is from Karnataka.
- The repo rate is being **held at 5.25%**, not cut — the concern is a shrinking **real** rate, not a rate hike already done.
- MPC has **6 members** (not 7); term is **4 years, no re-appointment**.
- FCRA was first enacted in **1976** (the "FCRA, 2010" is a later re-enactment, not the origin).
- WHO's **<5 g salt ≈ <2 g sodium** — the two figures refer to salt vs sodium, don't mix them.
- Yudh Abhyas is an **Army** exercise (India-US) — not naval; don't confuse with **Malabar** (naval).

Places in News

- ▶ **Rampur** (Uttar Pradesh) — home of the Rampur Hound.
- ▶ **Bidadi** (Karnataka) — site of the counterfeit-drug raid.
- ▶ **Strait of Hormuz** — chokepoint disrupting oil shipping.
- ▶ **Tamil Nadu** — statewide salt-reduction campaign.

Persons & Terms in News

- ▶ **K.G. Arunraj** — TN Health Minister (salt campaign).
- ▶ **Piyush Goyal** — Union Commerce Minister (G-20 trip).
- ▶ **Urjit Patel Committee** — recommended the MPC/FIT.
- ▶ **Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam** — TN doorstep health scheme.