

ELECTION OF VICE PRESIDENT OF INDIA

- The Vice-President is elected by an **electoral college** consisting of **members of both Houses of Parliament**, in accordance with the **system of proportional representation** by means of the **single transferable vote**, and the voting in such election is by **secret ballot**.
- The **Electoral College** to elect a person to the office of the Vice-President consists of **all members of both Houses of Parliament**.
 - The **electoral college** for electing the **President of India** comprises **only the elected members of Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies**.
- The Vice-President is **not a member of either House of Parliament or of a House of a Legislature** of any state.
- **If a member of either House of Parliament or of a House of a Legislature** of any state is elected as **Vice-President**, he is deemed to have vacated his seat in that House on the date he/she enters his office as Vice-President.
- A person **cannot be elected as Vice-President unless he**
 - is a **citizen** of India;
 - has completed the **age of 35 years**, and
 - is **qualified for election as a member of the Council of States (Rajya Sabha)**.
- A person is **not also eligible if he holds any office of profit under the Government of India or a State Government or any subordinate local authority**.
- An **election** to fill a vacancy caused by the **expiry of the term** of office of Vice-President is **completed before the expiry of the term**.
- In case a **vacancy arises by reasons of death, resignation or removal or otherwise**, the election to fill that vacancy is held as soon as possible after the occurrence.
- The **person so elected** is entitled to **hold office for a full term of 5 years** from the date he enters office.

- Under Article 324 of the Constitution of India, the **authority to conduct elections** to the Office of Vice-President is vested in the **Election Commission of India**.
- **Other Provisions:**
 - The **Returning Officer** usually appointed to conduct the Vice-Presidential elections is the **Secretary-General of either House of the Parliament, by rotation**.
 - **Any person qualified** to be elected and intending to stand for election as Vice-President is **required to be nominated by at least 20 MPs as proposers and at least 20 MPs as seconders**.
 - A candidate seeking election as Vice-President is required to make a **security deposit of Rs.15,000/-**.
- **Disputes regarding Election of the Vice-President:**
 - All doubts and disputes arising in connection with the election of the Vice-President are enquired into and **decided by the Supreme Court of India, whose decision is final**.
 - A petition challenging the election of the Vice-President is **heard by a five-judge bench of the Supreme Court of India**.

WHAT ARE STABLE COINS?



- Stablecoins are a **type of cryptocurrency** whose value is **pegged to another asset, such as a fiat currency or gold, to maintain a stable price**.
- They strive to provide an **alternative to the high volatility of popular cryptocurrencies**, making them potentially more **suitable for common transactions**.
- Stablecoins can be **utilized in various blockchain-based financial services** and can even be **used to pay for goods and services**.

- Although the term “stablecoin” is commonly used, there is **no guarantee that the asset will maintain a stable value** in relation to the value of the reference asset when traded on secondary markets or that the reserve of assets, if there is one, will be adequate to satisfy all redemptions.
- Types of Stablecoins: There are primarily three types of stablecoins: fiat-collateralized, crypto-collateralized, and non-collateralized (algorithmic).
 - Fiat-collateralized stablecoins are pegged to a specific asset, such as a fiat currency. The entity behind the stablecoin maintains a reserve of the asset or assets backing the stablecoin, supporting the value of the digital currency.
 - On the other hand, non-collateralized (algorithmic) stablecoins use software algorithms to automatically adjust the supply of the stablecoin based on demand, aiming to maintain a stable price.

What is Cryptocurrency?

- Cryptocurrencies are **digital or virtual currencies** in which **encryption techniques are used to regulate the generation of their units and verify the transfer of funds.**
- These currencies **operate independently of a central bank.**
- The economic **transactions** underlying cryptocurrency **are decentralized, distributed, and disbursed.**
- The **first and most famous** cryptocurrency, **Bitcoin** was introduced in 2009.
- **Technology:**
 - Most cryptocurrencies are built on **blockchain technology.**
 - Blockchain is a **decentralized and distributed database on a peer-to-peer network** which works on the basis of a **consensus mechanism involving every node (computer) on the network.**
 - Blockchain is a peer-to-peer distributed network that **records a public history of transactions without actually recording identities of the parties or the transaction details.**



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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)



- It is a **specialized agency of the United Nations (UN)**.
- UNESCO was started in 1945 after World War II. It took over from an older group called the **International Committee on Intellectual Cooperation**.
- Its main **goal** is to help **build world peace and safety**.
- It does this by encouraging countries to work together in **education, arts, sciences, and culture**.
- **Headquarters: Paris,**
- **Parent Organisation: United Nations Economic and Social Council.**
- UNESCO has **194 member countries** and 12 associate members.

UNESCO focuses on five main areas:

- **Education**
- **Natural sciences**
- **Social and human sciences**
- **Culture**
- **Communication and information**
- It supports member states' efforts to **eliminate illiteracy**, encouraging the extension of **free education**, and acts as a clearinghouse for the exchange of ideas and knowledge.
- It also **works with** many other groups, including **non-governmental organizations and private companies**.
- UNESCO designates and **maintains a list of World Heritage Sites**, which are places of outstanding universal value that deserve protection for future generations.
- UNESCO is **part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group**.

WINTER FOG EXPERIMENT



- It was **launched in the winter of 2015** at Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), New Delhi.
- It was led by the **Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM)** under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), with support from the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** and the **National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF)**.
- WiFEX is one of the world's few **long-term open-field experiments** focused solely on fog — an elusive winter hazard that regularly disrupts air, rail, and road transport **across the Indo-Gangetic Plain**.
- **Objectives of Winter Fog Experiment**
 - The objectives of the Winter Fog Experiment (WiFEX) are to **develop better now-casting** (next 6 hours) and **forecasting of winter fog** on various time and spatial scales.
 - To help **reducing fog's adverse impact** on aviation, transportation and economy, and loss of human life due to accidents
- **How was it conducted?**
 - WiFEX scientists have deployed **advanced instruments, micrometeorology towers, ceilometers, and high-frequency sensors** to collect detailed data on temperature layers, humidity, wind, turbulence, soil heat, and aerosols — building an unmatched dataset that reveals how dense fog forms and disperses.
 - These insights have **powered the development of a high-resolution** (3 km) probabilistic fog prediction model, which now stands among the region's most advanced tools for operational forecasting.
- **Benefits:** This model can **reliably predict when fog will begin, how dense it will be, how long it will last, and when it will clear** — achieving more than 85% accuracy for very dense fog (visibility below 200 meters).



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IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS



- It is the largest gathering of **nature conservation experts**, leaders and decision-makers in the world.
- It will help shape global priorities for nature conservation and climate change for the coming decade and beyond.
- It is **held once-every-four-years**.
- **It has three components**
 - **Forum:** It is the largest knowledge marketplace for conservation and sustainable development science, practice and innovation.
 - **Exhibition:** In the Exhibition, IUCN Members and Commissions, businesses, partners, and academia host pavilions, booths and events.
 - **Member's Assembly:** It is IUCN's highest decision-making body. During the Assembly, IUCN's Member organisations vote on pressing conservation and sustainable development issues.
- **Theme of IUCN Congress 2025:** Under the theme “**Powering transformative conservation**”, the IUCN Congress 2025 will tackle five critical themes, each driving the bold, transformative change needed to secure a sustainable future for both nature and humanity.

What is IUCN?

- **IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature)** is a membership Union of government and civil society organisations.
- It was **created in 1948**, IUCN is now the world's largest and most diverse environmental network, harnessing the knowledge, resources.
- **Governance of IUCN**
 - **President and Council:** The council is IUCN's **principal governing body** in between sessions of the World Conservation Congress. The IUCN President presides over the IUCN Council.



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- **IUCN World Conservation Congress:** The Members' Assembly of the IUCN World Conservation Congress is IUCN's highest governing body. IUCN Members discuss strategic topics, adopt motions defining IUCN's general policy, approve the IUCN programme, **amend IUCN's statutes and elect the IUCN Council.**
- **IUCN Statutes:** It lays out the governance of IUCN.

SASCI SCHEME



- **Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment Development of Iconic Tourist Centres to Global Scale'**(SASCI) has the objective to comprehensively **develop iconic tourist centres** in the country, branding and marketing them at global scale.
- **Salient features of SASCI Scheme:** It has an endeavor of **developing end to end tourist experience**, funding support to the shortlisted proposals, strengthening all points of the tourist value chain, harnessing quality expertise for design and development, sustainable operations and maintenance etc.
- Under this scheme projects have been identified based on the **project proposals submitted by the concerned State Governments.**
- **Parameters:** Examination on the prescribed parameters such as **connectivity to the site**, tourism eco-system, **carrying capacity**, **sustainability measures**, sustainable operation and management, project impact and value created, tourism marketing plans etc.
- **Time Period:** The projects are implemented and managed by the concerned State Government and projects are to be developed and **completed within maximum 2 year's period**
- **Funding: Government of India** will release funds under this scheme **up to 31st March, 2026.**

CHINA, INDIA, AND THE CONFLICT OVER BUDDHISM

Buddhism as a Tool of Statecraft

- **China's Use of Buddhism**
 - **China has been particularly aggressive** in using Buddhism as a tool of statecraft.
 - Since the 1950s, **Beijing has systematically sought to dominate Tibetan religious life by marginalising independent lamas**, controlling religious institutions, and asserting its authority over the process of reincarnation.
 - **In 2007, China officially declared that all Living Buddhas must receive state approval**, effectively placing spiritual legitimacy under political control.
 - **Today, Beijing maintains a database of approved lamas, closely monitors monastic activities**, and invests heavily in Buddhist infrastructure as part of its broader soft power strategy.
- **India's Buddhist Diplomacy**
 - **India, by contrast, has been slower to respond.**
 - **Hosting the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government-in-exile since 1959 gave New Delhi a moral advantage** but little strategic leverage.
 - **Only in the past decade has India begun to actively promote its Buddhist heritage**, positioning itself as the birthplace of the Buddha and investing in pilgrimage circuits to attract regional influence.
 - However, **these initiatives remain fragmented compared to China's well-coordinated efforts**. As one scholar aptly notes, while India practices Buddhist diplomacy, China pursues Buddhist statecraft.

The Dalai Lama Succession Crisis

- **The Dalai Lama, who turned 90 in July, has expressed his intention to reincarnate outside Chinese, controlled territory, most likely in India.**

- **Beijing, however, plans to select its own Dalai Lama** using the historical Golden Urn method.
- This will almost certainly result in two competing Dalai Lamas: one recognised by the Tibetan exile community and much of the Buddhist diaspora, and another installed under Chinese control in Lhasa.
- **Such a schism would not only divide Tibetan Buddhism** but also force Himalayan Buddhist communities, in Ladakh, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Nepal, and Bhutan, to choose sides.
- **Spiritual allegiance, in this case, could translate directly into geopolitical loyalty.**
- **If the Dalai Lama's successor is recognised in India,** it would strengthen New Delhi's influence. If China's candidate gains traction, it could tilt loyalties toward Beijing.

China's Expanding Cultural Influence

- **China is already using cultural and religious narratives** to assert territorial claims.
- In Arunachal Pradesh, particularly Tawang, birthplace of the sixth Dalai Lama, **China combines military posturing with claims of historical and spiritual legitimacy,** arguing that the region is inherently Tibetan and therefore Chinese.
- In Nepal, **Beijing has heavily invested in Buddhist infrastructure, notably around Lumbini, the birthplace of the Buddha.**
- In Bhutan, **China subtly engages with monastic communities,** testing the kingdom's careful balance between tradition and foreign influence.

Conclusion

- **The unfolding struggle over Himalayan Buddhism highlights a deeper truth:** geopolitics is not confined to territory, trade, or military might.
- **India and China continue their contest for regional dominance;** the future of Asia may be shaped as much by spiritual succession as by strategic deterrence.
- **The Himalayas, far from being a remote periphery,** have emerged as the stage where religion and realpolitik converge, where the next great Asian rivalry will be waged not only on land or sea but in the realm of the sacred.