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Mains Manthan

- Dhankar's exit notified, but key questions remain (**Page No – 1**)
- Top court issues notice to States, Centre on powers of President & Governors (**Page No – 1**)
- US to pull out of UNESCO again, 2 years after rejoining (**Page No – 16**)

Prelims Saarthi

- MiG 27
- Manual Scavenging (Schemes)

Dhankhar's exit notified, but key questions remain

Why in News?

- Resignation of the Vice President of India

Syllabus

- GS Paper 2 – Indian Polity

Dhankhar's exit notified, but key questions remain

No official word on what prompted his resignation; sources link it to his acceptance of a notice from Opposition seeking removal of Justice Varma, which government intended to be bipartisan

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry on Tuesday issued the Gazette notification of Jagdeep Dhankhar's resignation as Vice-President, ostensibly on health grounds, less than 24 hours after he submitted it to President Droupadi Murmu, formally marking his abrupt exit from the post.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi acknowledged the resignation in a brief post on X, without any elaboration. "Shri Jagdeep Dhankharji has got many opportunities to serve our country in various capacities, including as the Vice President of India. Wishing him good health," he said.

Though there is no official word on what prompted



Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha Harivansh Narayan Singh calls on President Droupadi Murmu in New Delhi on Tuesday. PTI

ed the resignation, sources say it may have been linked to Mr. Dhankhar's decision to accept a notice submitted by 63 Opposition MPs in the Rajya Sabha seeking Justice Yashwant Varma's removal. Sources say the

Centre was taken by surprise as it had intended the motion for removal to be a bipartisan initiative originating in the Lok Sabha.

Sources said the matter led to a heated exchange of words between officials in

Numbers stacked in NDA's favour in election for V-P

NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party and its allies, with numbers in their favour in both the Houses, have at least 150 members more than the Opposition in the electoral college for the vice-presidential polls. The Opposition though has not taken a formal call, but is still likely to force a contest as it had done in the last two polls for the post. » **PAGE 13**

the Rajya Sabha Chairperson's office and government functionaries.

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EDITORIAL

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Key Takeaways from the Article

- **Election of Vice President:**

- ◆ The **Vice-President**, like the President, is elected not directly by the people but by the method of **indirect election**.
- ◆ He/she is elected by the members of an **electoral college** consisting of the members of both Houses of Parliament.
- ◆ Thus, this electoral college is different from the **electoral college** for the election of the President in the following two respects:
 - ◆ It consists of both elected and nominated members of the Parliament (in the case of president, only elected members).
 - ◆ It **does not include** the members of the state legislative assemblies (in the case of President, the elected members of the state legislative assemblies are included).
- ◆ Term of office - ?
- ◆ Resignation - ?
- ◆ Removal process - ?
- ◆ How many days notice - ?
- ◆ No ground has been mentioned in the Constitution for his/ her removal.

- **Vacancy in Office**

- ◆ On the expiry of his/her tenure of five years
- ◆ By his/her resignation
- ◆ On his/ her removal
- ◆ By his/ her death
- ◆ Otherwise, for example, when he/she becomes disqualified to hold office or when his/her election is declared void.
- ◆ When the **vacancy is going to be caused** by the expiration of the term of the sitting Vice President, an **election to fill the vacancy must be held before the expiration of the term**.
- ◆ If the office **falls vacant by resignation, removal, death** or otherwise, then election to fill the vacancy should be held as soon as possible after the occurrence of the vacancy.
- ◆ The newly elected Vice-President remains in office for a **full term of five years** from the date he/ she assumes charge of his/her office.

Prelims PYQs (2013)

Q. Consider the following statements: [2013]

1. The Chairman and the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha are not the members of that House.
2. While the nominated members of the two Houses of the Parliament have no voting right in the presidential election, they have the right to vote in the election of the Vice President.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2





Prelims PYQs (2004)

Q. The resolution for removing the Vice-President of India can be moved in the: [2004]

- (a) Lok Sabha alone
- (b) Either House of Parliament
- (c) Joint Sitting of Parliament
- (d) Rajya Sabha alone

Top court issues notice to States, Centre on powers of President, Governors

Why in News?

- Presidential Reference (Article 143)

Syllabus

- GS Paper 2 – Indian Polity

Top court issues notice to States, Centre on powers of President, Governors

Krishnadas Rajagopal

NEW DELHI

A Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai on Tuesday said the questions raised by President Droupadi Murmu in her Presidential Reference regarding the powers of the President and Governors in granting assent to State Bills concern the entire country.

The Chief Justice indicated that the matter may be listed for detailed hearing in mid-August, around Independence Day.

The Bench – including Justices Surya Kant, Vikram Nath, P.S. Narasimha, and A.S. Chandurkar – issued formal notices to all States and the Union government, seeking their responses to the Presidential Reference. The notices are returnable within a



The issue affects all the States. The Supreme Court is concerned with the entire country. The court will answer the questions raised by the President.

B.R. GAVAI
Chief Justice of India

week. The Bench is scheduled to reconvene on July 29.

Tamil Nadu, represented by senior advocate P. Wilson, said the issues raised had already been addressed in the Supreme Court's April 8 judgment in the case concerning the delay by the Tamil Nadu Governor in assenting to the Bills. Senior advocate K.K. Venugopal, appearing for Kerala, questioned the maintainability of the reference issued on May 13.

Chief Justice Gavai responded that the questions raised in the reference were not confined to Tamil Nadu or Kerala. "The issue affects all the States. The Supreme Court is concerned with the entire country. The court will answer the questions raised by the President," he said.

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Key Takeaways from the Article

- **Article 143 (Advisory jurisdiction)** empowers the **President of India** to seek the **SC's advisory opinion** on any **question of law or fact** that is of **public importance** and is likely to arise or has already arisen.
- This provision establishes the **SC's advisory jurisdiction**, which is **exclusive to the President**.
- Article 200 of the Indian Constitution **outlines the process for a Bill passed by the Legislative Assembly of a State** to be presented to the Governor for assent, who may either assent, withhold assent or reserve the Bill for consideration by the President.
 - ♦ The Governor **may also return the Bill** with a message requesting reconsideration by the House or Houses.

Court's prescription

SC observed that Governor is "playing with fire" by holding back crucial Bills

- Governor cannot sit on Bills claiming the House passed them in an invalid session convened after adjourning sine die without prorogation
- Speaker is within jurisdiction in adjourning the House sine die
- Any attempt to cast doubt on the session of the Legislature is fraught with grave perils to democracy

The Governor, as an appointee of the President, is a titular head of the State
SUPREME COURT BENCH



Unravelling the order: What the SC said on...

TOP COURT'S AUTHORITY

Apex court established its authority to review constitutional functions, defending its prescription of timelines. It said that such a measure balances the need for expedient decision-making with the right of states in a federal system to fulfil their mandate to voters.

"It is clear as a noon day, that no exercise of power under the Constitution is beyond the pale of judicial review."



GOING FORWARD...

- President can obtain SC's advisory opinion on a bill received from gov, which appears to be "patently unconstitutional".
- States should consider entering into pre-legislation consultation with Centre before introducing bills that might require Presidential assent.
- Governors should respect the will of the people expressed through the legislature.

TIMELINE FOR PRESIDENT

It extended the timeline discipline to the central government and held that the President must decide within three months of receiving a bill from a governor. If there is any delay beyond this period, the President's office will be required to convey reasons to the state concerned.

"[We] prescribe that the President is required to take a decision on the bills reserved for his consideration by the Governor within a period of three months."



GOVERNOR'S POWERS

Verdict clarified the constitutional role of governors, stressing that they must act on the advice of the council of ministers as they do not have discretionary powers under Article 200.



"Governor cannot be vested with such a power...which would enable him to collude with the Union cabinet and ensure the death of any and all legislation initiated by the state."



- **Article 201:** It states that “when a Bill is reserved by a Governor for the consideration of the President, the President shall either assent to the Bill or withhold assent therefrom.”
- ♦ The SC noted that **Article 201 provides no specific timeline for Presidential assent**, and such delays can **stall legislative processes**, leaving state Bills in “indefinite and uncertain abeyance.”
- ♦ It emphasized that inaction violates the **constitutional principle of nonarbitrariness in the exercise of power**.

On the clock

SC sets time frame for Governors, saying the phrase 'as soon as possible' permeates Article 200 with a sense of expediency

- A Governor has a maximum of **one month** to withhold assent on the aid and advice of the State Cabinet
- A maximum of **three months** is given to return the Bill with a message specifying reasons if the Governor withholds assent contrary to the Cabinet's advice
- The Governor has **three months** to reserve a Bill for the President's consideration against the advice of the Cabinet
- The Governor 'must' grant assent to a Bill re-passed by the State Legislature under Article 200 within a **maximum of one month**



Q. Which of the following are the discretionary powers given to the Governor of a State? (2014)

1. Sending a report to the President of India for imposing the President's rule
2. Appointing the Ministers
3. Reserving certain bills passed by the State Legislature for consideration of the President of India
4. Making the rules to conduct the business of the State Government

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

US to pull out of UNESCO again, 2 years after rejoining

Why in News?

- US to pull out of UNESCO

Syllabus

- **GS Paper 2 – International Relations**

U.S. to pull out of UNESCO again, 2 years after rejoining

Associated Press
WASHINGTON

The United States announced on Tuesday it will again pull out of the UN's educational, scientific and cultural agency because it believes that its involvement is not in the country's national interest, and that the agency promotes anti-Israel speech. This decision comes only two years after the United States rejoined UNESCO after leaving in 2018, during U.S. President Donald Trump's first administration.

State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce said the withdrawal was linked to UNESCO's perceived agenda to “advance divisive social and cultural causes”.

She added in a state-



Tammy Bruce

ment that UNESCO's decision “to admit the ‘State of Palestine’ as a Member State is highly problematic, contrary to U.S. policy, and contributed to the proliferation of anti-Israel rhetoric within the organisation”.

The decision, first reported by the *New York Post*, will take effect at the end of December 2026.

This will be the third time that the United States has left UNESCO, which is

based in Paris, and the second time during a Trump administration. It last rejoined the agency in 2023, under the Biden administration.

UNESCO's Director General Audrey Azoulay said she “deeply” regrets the U.S. decision but insisted that it was expected, and that the agency “has prepared for it”. She also denied accusations of anti-Israel bias.

“These claims ... contradict the reality of UNESCO's efforts, particularly in the field of Holocaust education and the fight against anti-Semitism,” she said.

The U.S. withdrawal is likely to affect UNESCO because the U.S. provides a notable share of the agency's budget. But the organization should be able to cope.





Key Takeaways from the Article

- The **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)** is a specialised UN agency committed to fostering global peace through **education, science, culture, and information exchange**.
- **Founded on** - November 16, 1945 (Constitution came into force in 1946)
- **Headquarters** - Paris, France
- **Key Functions:**
 - ♦ **Promote education access and literacy** across member states.
 - ♦ Safeguard world heritage - both cultural and natural - through its World Heritage Sites.
 - ♦ **Foster scientific cooperation** (e.g., tsunami warning systems, biosphere reserves).
 - ♦ **Protect intangible heritage** and traditional knowledge (e.g., Nubian Monuments rescue).
 - ♦ **Set ethical standards** on digital governance, AI, and genetic research.
 - ♦ **Advocate for freedom of expression**, copyright protection, and global knowledge equity.
- **UNESCO Initiatives:**
 - ♦ Man and Biosphere Programme (1971)
 - ♦ World Heritage Convention (1972)
 - ♦ Convention for Safeguarding Intangible Heritage (2003)
 - ♦ Global Education Coalition (2020) during COVID19
 - ♦ Ethics of AI Recommendations (2021)

UPSC Prelims Facts - UNESCO



Name: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
Year of formation: 1945
HQ: Paris, France
Sector: Education, Science, Culture, Peace, etc.
Is India a member?
Yes



United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
193 member states and 11 associate members
HQ: Paris, France
Founded in 1945
It aimed at promoting world peace and security through international cooperation in education, the sciences, and culture.

Mains PYQs (2019)

Q. 'Too little cash, too much politics, leaves UNESCO fighting for life.' Discuss the statement in the light of US' withdrawal and its accusation of the cultural body as being 'anti-Israel bias'. (10m 150 words)

MiG-21 fighter jets to retire in September

- The **Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG 21** is a **supersonic jet fighter and interceptor aircraft**, designed by the **Mikoyan-Gurevich Design Bureau in the Soviet Union**.
- MiG is a product of the **Soviet Union** which entered into service in **1959**.

After glorious career, MiG-21 fighter jets to retire in September

The Air Force will hold a ceremonial send-off at the Chandigarh airbase; there are plans to replace them with indigenously developed Tejas Mk1A

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

After protecting the skies for more than six decades, the MiG-21 Bison fighter jets of the Indian Air Force are set to retire in September.

Confirming the development, a senior defence official said the Air Force will hold a ceremonial send-off at the Chandigarh airbase in September.

The ceremony will be attended by veteran pilots who have flown the Russian-origin jets.

According to sources, there are plans to replace the MiG-21 jets with the indigenously developed Tejas Mk1A fighter aircraft.

First purchased in 1963, the MiG-21 is a single-engine supersonic jet fighter and interceptor aircraft.

They formed the backbone of the Air Force till the mid-2000s, when the Su-30MKIs were inducted. They have played key roles in the 1965 and 1971 wars with Pakistan, the Kargil War in 1999, the Balakot air



Off the skies: First procured in 1963, the MiG-21 is a single-engine supersonic jet fighter and interceptor aircraft.

strikes in 2019, and the most recent Operation Sindoor. During the Balakot air strikes, then Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthanan had used his MiG-21 aircraft to shoot down a Pakistani F-16 fighter. The MiG was subsequently shot down too.

700 aircraft

Over the years, India procured more than 700 MiG-21 aircraft of different variants. Many were domestically built by Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. The Air Force currently has two

MiG squadrons, or 36 aircraft, that are operated by the 23 Squadron, known as the Panthers, and the No. 3 Squadron, known as the Cobras. The squadrons are stationed at the Nal airbase in Rajasthan.

The MiG-21 aircraft have also been involved in several accidents, leading to the deaths of 170 pilots and 40 civilians. They were once termed "Flying Coffin".

After the current squadrons of MiG-21 are phased out, the combat strength of the Air Force will drop to 29 squadrons.





- Approximately 60 countries on **four continents** have flown the **MiG-21**, and it still serves many nations six decades after its maiden flight.
- India inducted the **MiG-21** in **1963** and got full technology transfer and rights to license-build the aircraft in the country.
- **Russia stopped** producing the aircraft in 1985, while India continued operating the upgraded variants.



Sewer deaths in India (no safety gear)

- **Government Schemes for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers**
 - ♦ Self-Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS)
 - ♦ Swachh Bharat Mission
 - ♦ NAMASTE Scheme (2022)

'In over 90% of sewer deaths, workers had no safety gear'

In an audit of 54 sewer deaths in 2022 and 2023, no equipment was given in 47 cases; only five of the deceased workers had gloves, one had gumboots; workers' consent was not taken in 27 cases

Abhinav Lakshman
NEW DELHI

Over 90% of workers who died while cleaning sewers did not have any safety gear or personalised protective equipment (PPE) kits, according to a recent social audit commissioned by the Union government to look into hazardous sewer and septic tank cleaning across the country. Even in the cases where they had some safety gear, it was limited to a pair of gloves and gumboots.

In September 2023, the Social Justice Ministry commissioned a study into hazardous cleaning deaths, which analysed the circumstances surrounding 54 such deaths in 17 districts across eight States and Union Territories that occurred in 2022 and 2023.

Government data show 150 people across the country died due to hazardous cleaning in 2022 and 2023.

The social audit, whose findings were made public in Parliament on Tuesday, investigated hiring mechanisms, the use of safety equipment, institutional set-ups, availability of PPE kits, rapid response readiness and equipment, and



A sanitation worker cleaning a drain, during the cleanliness drive in New Delhi on Friday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHKAR

awareness of the law banning manual scavenging.

No safety equipment

In 49 out of the 54 deaths examined, the workers were not wearing any safety equipment. In five cases, they were wearing just gloves, and in one case, gloves and gumboots.

In 47 instances, "no mechanized equipment and safety gears for cleaning of sewers and septic tanks were made available to the workers", the audit report said. In fact, it was able to identify just two instances where this equipment was made available and only one where the requisite training was provided. The audit noted that in 45 of these deaths, "it was found

that there is still no equipment readiness on the part of the concerned Agency carrying out such work".

Awareness drives were conducted – only "partially" – in the wake of just seven of the deaths, in Chennai and Kancheepuram districts in Tamil Nadu, and in Satara district in Maharashtra.

No informed consent

No consent was taken from workers in 27 cases, according to the social audit, which further noted that even in the 18 cases where written consent was taken from the workers, "they were not counselled on the risks involved in the work".

The study found that in 38 cases, the workers were

"contracted personally/individually". In five cases, the workers were employed by a government agency, and in three cases, they were employed by the public sector but were hired by private employers for the particular work they were doing when they died.

These findings became public when the Social Justice Ministry was replying to a question in the Lok Sabha by Congress MP Praniti Sushilkumar Shinde. In its response, the Ministry added that it has already launched the NAMASTE scheme for addressing the problem of hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tank workers and waste-pickers in July 2023.

This is in line with the government's declaration that manual scavenging has ended in the country, and that it is the problem of hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks that now needs attention.

So far, the NAMASTE scheme has identified 84,902 sewer and septic tank workers in 36 States and UTs across the country, of which a little over half have been provided with PPE kits and safety gear.





Prelims PYQs (2016)

Q. Rashtriya Garima Abhiyaan' is a national campaign to [2016]

- (a) rehabilitate the homeless and destitute persons and provide them with suitable sources of livelihood
- (b) release the sex workers from their practice and provide them with alternative sources of livelihood
- (c) eradicate the practice of manual scavenging and rehabilitate the manual scavengers
- (d) release the bonded labourers from their bondage and rehabilitate them

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