

BrainBuzz Academy

UPSC Current Affairs - 10-Dec-24

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Polity and Governance

Vice President of India/ex-officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha



Why in the news?

The uneasy relationship that Opposition parties share with Rajya Sabha Chairman and Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar is set to come to a head as the INDIA bloc parties have decided to submit a notice to move a no-confidence or impeachment resolution against him. The Opposition parties do not have the numbers in the House to ensure Dhankhar's impeachment as Vice-President but are contemplating the move "very soon" as a political signal.

Key Takeaways:

According to 67(b), "a Vice-President may be removed from his office by a resolution of the Council of States passed by the majority of all the then members of the Council and agreed to by the House of the People; but no resolution for the purpose of this clause shall be moved unless at least fourteen days' notice has been given of the intention to move the resolution."

No precedent:

While there is no precedence of a no-confidence or impeachment resolution being moved against the Rajya Sabha Chairman, the Opposition in 2020 submitted a no-confidence resolution against Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh. The move followed an uproar in the House over his decision to extend the Session beyond the scheduled 1 pm, overruling Opposition pleas to continue discussions on the contentious farm Bills the next day.

Article 90 of the Constitution deals with the "Vacation and resignation of, and removal from, the office of Deputy Chairman".

The precedents cited from the book by the Opposition included resolutions moved against the first Lok Sabha Speaker, G V Mavalankar, in 1951, Speaker Sardar Hukam Singh in 1966, and Speaker Balram Jakhar in 1987. The resolution against Mavalankar came up for discussion and was negated by the House. The other two resolutions were also discussed and negated by the House.

Vice President in India:

The Vice President of India is the second-highest constitutional office in the country after the President of India.

The Vice-President is accorded a rank next to the President in the official warrant of precedence. This office is modeled on the lines of the American Vice-President.

The Vice President's main role is to act as the President if the President cannot perform his or her duties, such as due to death, resignation, or impeachment.

The Vice President also serves as the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha (Council of States), the upper house of the Indian Parliament.

How is the Vice President of India elected?

The Vice-President, like the president, is elected not directly by the people but indirectly.

He 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 the President, only elected members).

It does not include the members of the state legislative assemblies (in the case of the President, the elected members of the state legislative assemblies are included).

Vice-President's election, like that of the President's election, is held in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote, and the voting is by secret ballot.

All doubts and disputes concerning the election of the Vice-President are inquired into and decided by the Supreme Court, whose decision is final.

Vice President of India Constitutional Provisions:

Article	Description
Article 63	There shall be a Vice President of India
Article 64	The Vice President shall be ex officio chairman of the council of States
Article 65	Vice President to act as President or to discharge his functions during casual vacancies in the office, or during the absence, of President
Article 66	Vice President shall be elected by the members of an electoral college consisting of the members of both Houses of Parliament in accordance with the system of proportional representation
Article 67	Vice President shall hold office for a term of five years
Article	

Article 68	Provisions related to the term and vacancy of the Vice President
Article 69	Oath to the office of President
Article 70	Discharge of Presidents functions in any contingencies
Article 71	Matters and disputes relating to, or connected with, the election of a President or Vice President

Qualifications:

To be eligible for election as Vice-President, a person should fulfill the following qualifications:

He should be a citizen of India.

He should have completed 35 years of age.

He should be qualified for election as a member of the Rajya Sabha.

He should not hold any office of profit under the Union government or any state government or any local authority, or any other public authority.

Conditions of Office:

The Constitution lays down the following two conditions of the Vice-President's office:

He should not be a member of either House of Parliament or a House of the state legislature. If any such person is elected Vice-President, he is deemed to have vacated his seat in that House on the date on which he enters upon his office as Vice-President.

He should not hold any other office of profit.

Term and Vacancy:

Term: The Vice-President holds office for a term of five years from the date on which he enters his office. However, he can resign from his office anytime by addressing the resignation letter to the President.

The Vice-President can hold office beyond his term of five years until his successor assumes charge.

He is also eligible for reelection to that office. He may be elected for any number of terms.

Vacancy: A vacancy in the Vice-President's office can occur in any of the following ways:

On the expiry of his tenure of five years

By his resignation

On his removal

By his death

Otherwise, for example, when he becomes disqualified to hold office or when his election is declared void.

If the office falls vacant by resignation, removal, death, or otherwise, then an election to fill the vacancy should be held as soon as possible (within six months for President) after the occurrence of the vacancy.

What is the procedure for the removal of the Vice President of India?

The Vice President can also be removed from office before the completion of his term. A formal impeachment is not required for his removal.

He can be removed by a resolution passed by a majority of all the then members of the Rajya Sabha (Effective Majority) and agreed to by the Lok Sabha (Simple Majority). This means that this resolution

should be passed in the Rajya Sabha by an effective majority and in the Lok Sabha by a simple majority.

It must be noted here that the effective majority in India is only a type of special majority and not a separate one. Further, this resolution can be introduced only in the Rajya Sabha and not in the Lok Sabha.

But, no such resolution can be moved unless at least 14 days advance notice has been given.

How can the office of the Vice President of India be compared to that of the Vice President of the USA?

India	USA
He serves as the second-in-command to the President and acts as the President in case of his death, resignation, or incapacity. He serves as the ex-officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha in India. The Vice-President of India does not automatically take over the presidency when it becomes vacant, instead, the office will remain unfilled for the unexpired term. The Indian Vice-President acts as the President temporarily until a new President is elected and takes office.	The Vice President of the United States is the second-highest officer in the executive branch of the federal government after the President of the United States. The Vice President is elected alongside the President and serves as the President's deputy and the President of the Senate . In the United States, if the presidency becomes vacant, the vice-president will assume the role and serve the remainder of the previous president's term .

Vice President of India Powers and Functions:

The powers and functions of the Vice-President include

He is the ex-officio Chairman of Rajya Sabha. In this capacity, his powers and functions are similar to those of the Speaker of Lok Sabha. In this respect, he resembles the American vice president, who also acts as the Chairman of the Senate—the Upper House of the American legislature.

He acts as President when a vacancy occurs in the office of the President due to his resignation, impeachment, death, or otherwise.

He can act as President only for a maximum period of six months, within which a new President has to be elected.

Further, when the sitting President cannot discharge his functions due to absence, illness, or any other cause, the Vice-President discharges his functions until the President resumes his office.

While acting as President or discharging the functions of the President, the Vice-President does not perform the duties of the office of the chairman of Rajya Sabha. During this period, those duties are performed by the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.

Vice President of India Significance:

The Vice President of India serves as the ex-officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian Parliament.

As Chairman, the Vice President presides over the sessions of the Rajya Sabha, maintains order and decorum in the chamber, and ensures that the rules and procedures of the house are followed.

Though he is not a member of the house, the Vice President can vote in the Rajya Sabha in the case of a tie.

The Vice President also appoints the Chairman and members of the Rajya Sabha's various committees.

Consideration of motion of removing supreme court or high court judge depends upon the chairman

of Rajya Sabha.

Previous Year Questions (PYQs):

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

Ans: b

Vice President of India Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

Q1. Which Vice Presidents later became President in India?

Ans: Dr S Radhakrishnan, Dr Zakir Hussain, V V Giri, R Venkataraman, Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma, K R Narayanan are the persons who were first elected as Vice-President and later became the country's President. Dr S Radhakrishnan, Dr Zakir Hussain, V V Giri, R Venkataraman, Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma, K R Narayanan.

Q2. Who presides over the sessions of Rajya Sabha in the absence of the Vice President?

Ans: The Deputy Chairman, who is elected from amongst the house's members, takes care of the day-to-day matters of the house in the absence of the Chairman. Chairman nominates the panel of chairpersons who preside in the absence of Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha.

International Relations

Merriam-Webster declares word of the year: 'Polarization'



Polarization means?

"Polarization means division, but it's a very specific kind of division," said Peter Sokolowski, Merriam-Webster's editor at large, in an exclusive interview with The Associated Press. "Polarization means that we are tending toward the extremes rather than toward the center."

Key Takeaways:

The Merriam-Webster entry for "polarization" reflects scientific and metaphorical definitions. It's most commonly used to mean **"causing strong disagreement between opposing factions or groupings."** Merriam-Webster, which logs 100 million pageviews a month on its site, chooses its word of the year based on data, tracking a rise in search and usage.

Last year's pick was "authentic." This year's comes as large swaths of the U.S. struggle to reach consensus on what is real.

Democracy In 2003, Merriam-Webster decided to make "democracy" its first word of the year.

History of polarization:

It's notable that "polarization" originated in the early 1800s - and not during the Renaissance, as did most words with Latin roots about science, Sokolowski said. He called it a "pretty young word," in the scheme of the English language. "Polarized is a term that brings intensity to another word," he continued, most frequently used in the U.S. to describe race relations, politics and ideology.

IN SHORT:

Merriam-Webster declares word of the year: 'Polarization'

It's most commonly used to mean **"causing strong disagreement between opposing factions or groupings."**

Environment

India's latest tiger reserves



Why in news?

On December 2, India got its 57th tiger reserve in the Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary of Madhya Pradesh, following in-principle approval from the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change.

Key Takeaways :

1. Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary of Madhya Pradesh has a core area of 763.8 sq km, buffer area of 507.6 sq km and total area of 1271.4 sq km. Now, there are Eight tiger reserves in Madhya Pradesh.
2. A tiger reserve in India is a designated area established under the Project Tiger initiative to ensure the conservation of tigers and their habitats. These reserves are part of the government's efforts to protect the tiger population, maintain biodiversity, and restore ecological balance.
3. Tiger reserves consist of extensive areas of land that include both a core zone and a buffer zone. The core area is designated as a national park or sanctuary, providing strict protections for wildlife. In contrast, the buffer zone is a mix of forested and non-forested land that serves various uses. These buffer zones act as transitional areas that support wildlife movement and habitat.
4. Presently, there are 57 tiger reserves in India, spread across around 82,000 sq kilometres and accounting for over 2.3 per cent of India's geographical area, as per the National Tiger Conservation Authority.

National Tiger Conservation Authority:

The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) is a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change constituted under enabling provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, for strengthening tiger conservation, as per powers and functions assigned to it under the said Act. The NTCA conducts the All India Tiger Estimation to track the big cat numbers,

usually in cycles of four years. As per the 5th cycle summary report of 2022, India has a minimum of 3,167 tigers and is home to more than 70% of the world's wild tiger population.

Process of Creating a Tiger Reserve:

1. The state government identifies a suitable area for a tiger reserve based on the presence of a viable tiger population and appropriate habitat. Ecological assessments are conducted, which include studies on the prey base, vegetation, and the area's potential to support tigers.
2. The state prepares a detailed proposal that includes maps, ecological studies, and management plans. This proposal is submitted to the NTCA, which reviews and approves it before forwarding it to the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change for further consideration.
3. Once this process is complete, the state government issues a preliminary notification under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, declaring the identified area as a tiger reserve.
4. After addressing any objections or proposed modifications, the state issues a final notification under Section 38V of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, formalizing the establishment of the reserve. Notably, As per section 38W of the Act, once the notification comes “no State Government shall de-notify a tiger reserve, except in public interest with the approval of the Tiger Conservation Authority and the National Board for Wild Life”.

Conservation of Tiger (Panthera Tigris):

1. The IUCN status of the tiger is endangered, and it is protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
2. India has been actively collaborating with neighbouring countries to enhance transboundary conservation efforts like India-Bangladesh to promote tiger conservation across the Sundarbans landscape.
3. International Big Cats Alliance (IBCA) was launched by the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, in 2023 to promote the protection of seven big cats: the tiger, leopard, snow leopard, lion, cheetah, puma and jaguar during a program honouring 50 years of Project Tiger. The alliance seeks to establish contact with a spectrum of countries that surround these large cats' native habitats. The IBCA aims to increase international collaboration and conservation efforts for these untamed inhabitants.

Project Tiger:

1. The 'Project Tiger' is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) launched by the Central government on April 1, 1973, in a bid to promote conservation of the tiger. The programme came at a time when India's tiger population was rapidly dwindling. According to reports, while there were 40,000 tigers in the country at the time of the Independence, they were soon reduced to below 2,000 by 1970 due to their widespread hunting and poaching.
2. To tackle the problem of hunting and poaching of not just tigers but also other animals and birds, then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi promulgated the Wildlife Protection Act in 1972. A year later, after a task force urged the government to create a chain of reserves dedicated to tiger preservation, government unveiled Project Tiger.
3. Launched at the Jim Corbett National Park, the programme was initially started in nine tiger reserves of different States such as Assam, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, covering over 14,000 sq km.
4. Notably, Project Tiger didn't just focus on the conservation of the big cats. It also ensured the preservation of their natural habitat as tigers are at the top of the food chain.

List of Tiger Reserves in India (As of December 2024)			
State	Tiger Reserve	Area (sq km)	Year of Establishment

Sl No	Tiger Reserve (TR)	State	TR Notification Year
1	Bandipur	Karnataka	2007
2	Corbett	Uttarakhand	2010
	Amanagarh buffer	Uttar Pradesh	2012
3	Kanha	Madhya Pradesh	2007
4	Manas	Assam	2008
5	Melghat	Maharashtra	2007
6	Palamau	Jharkhand	2012
7	Ranthambore	Rajasthan	2007
8	Simlipal	Orissa	2007
9	Sunderban	West Bengal	2007
10	Periyar	Kerala	2007
11	Sariska	Rajasthan	2007
12	Buxa	West Bengal	2009
13	Indravati	Chattisgarh	2009
14	Namdapha	Arunachal Pradesh	1987
15	Nagarjunsagar Sagar	Andhra Pradesh	2007
16	Dudhwa	Uttar Pradesh	2010
17	Kalakad Mundanthurai	Tamil Nadu	2007
18	Valmiki	Bihar	2012
19	Pench	Madhy Pradesh	2007
20	Tadobha Andhari	Maharashtra	2007
21	Bandhavgarh	Madhy Pradesh	2007
22	Panna	Madhy Pradesh	2007
23	Dampa	Mizoram	2007
24	Bhadra	Karnataka	2007
25	Pench – MH	Maharashtra	2007
26	Pakke	Arunachal Pradesh	2012
27	Nameri	Assam	2000
28	Satpura	Madhya Pradesh	2007
29	Anamalai	Tamil Nadu	2007
30	Udanti Sitanadi	Chattisgarh	2009
31	Satkoshia	Odisha	2007
32	Kaziranga	Assam	2007
33	Achanakmar	Chattisgarh	2009
34	Kali	Karnataka	2007
35	Sanjay Dhubri	Madhya Pradesh	2011

36	Mudumalai	Tamil Nadu	2007
37	Nagarhole	Karnataka	2007
38	Parambikulam	Kerala	2009
39	Sahyadri	Maharashtra	2012
40	Biligiri Ranganatha Temple	Karnataka	2007
41	Kawal	Telangana	2012
42	Sathyamangalam	Tamil Nadu	2013
43	Mukundara	Rajasthan	2013
44	Nawegaon Nagzira	Maharashtra	2013
45	Amrabad	Telangana	2015
46	Pilibhit	Uttar Pradesh	2014
47	Bor	Maharashtra	2012
48	Rajaji	Uttarakhand	2015
49	Orang	Assam	2016
50	Kamlang	Arunachal Pradesh	2017
51	Srivilliputhur Megamalai	Tamil Nadu	2021
52	Ramgarh Vishdhari Tiger Reserve	Rajasthan	2022
53	Ranipur Tiger Reserve	Uttar Pradesh	2022
54	Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve	Madhya Pradesh	2023
55	Dholpur – Karauli Tiger Reserve	Rajasthan	2023
56	Guru Ghasidas – Tamor Pingla Tiger Reserve	Chhattisgarh	2024
57	Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary	Madhya Pradesh	2024

Sports

9-year-old Aarit Kapil becomes youngest Indian to beat a chess Grandmaster



Why in the news?

Nine-year-old **Delhi boy Aarit Kapil** has become the youngest Indian to beat a chess **Grandmaster** as he emerged victorious against **Raset Ziatdinov of United States** in the ninth and penultimate round of the **KIIT International open tournament** here.

Key Takeaways:

❖❖ At 9 years, 2 months and 18 days, Aarit is the youngest Indian and third in the world to beat a GM under the classical time control.

❖❖ The youngest player in the world to beat a GM is Indian-origin Singapore boy Ashwath Kaushik who won against Jacek Stupa of Poland when he was just 8 years and six months old earlier this year.

❖❖ In a thrilling encounter during the ninth round of the KIIT International Open Tournament, Aarit emerged victorious against Raset Ziatdinov, a 66-year-old Grandmaster from the United States.

The top three youngest players to beat a Grandmaster:

1. Ashwath Kaushik (Singapore) – 8 years 2 months
2. Leonid Ivanovic (Serbia) – 8 years 11 months
3. Aarit Kapil – 9 years 2 months.

Appointments and Resigns

Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra next RBI Governor



Why in the news?

Sanjay Malhotra, a 1990-batch Indian Administrative Service officer, currently Revenue Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, has been appointed as the next Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Succeeding Shaktikanta Das.

Key Takeaways:

❖❖ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet on Monday gave its nod for the selection of the 56-year-old Malhotra as the 26th RBI Governor with effect from December 11 for a period of three years.

❖❖ The six-year term of current RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das is slated to end on December 10.

❖❖ Malhotra faces challenges like balancing inflation control with economic growth and managing the rupee's depreciation amid global dollar strength.

❖❖ His tenure starts on December 11, 2024, for three years. A former Secretary in the Department of Financial Services, Malhotra is credited for steering LIC's record ₹21,000 crore IPO and advancing public sector banking reforms.

❖❖ Known as a "pro-reformist," he combines technical expertise from IIT Kanpur and Princeton University with a deep understanding of fiscal and monetary policies.

About Sanjay Malhotra:

Malhotra, a 1990-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of Rajasthan cadre, is an IIT Kanpur alumnus. Prior to assuming the charge of revenue secretary, he was the financial services secretary in the department of financial services (DFS). The government on October 19, 2022 appointed him as the officer on special duty (OSD) in the revenue department to take over the position from incumbent Tarun Bajaj who was scheduled to retire on November 30.

Malhotra took over as revenue secretary on December 1, 2022, with a long tenure in hand (up to February 29, 2028).

Prior to joining DFS – an arm of the Union finance ministry – on February 8, 2022, Malhotra was chairman and managing director of REC Ltd. He is an engineering graduate in computer science from IIT, Kanpur and has a master's degree in public policy from Princeton University, according to the Reserve Bank of India's website. Malhotra was one of the directors in RBI's Central Board as DFS secretary.

How is the RBI Governor appointed?

The governor is appointed as the the RBI Act, 1934. The law states that the chief is appointed by the Central government.

The Financial Sector Regulatory Appointment Search Committee, consisting Cabinet Secretary, current RBI Governor, Financial Services Secretary and two independent members, prepares a list of people eligible to hold the post.

Next, the shortlisted candidates are interviewed and sent to the Cabinet Committee on Appointments, which is headed by the Prime Minister. The committee selects the governor through confirmation of the appointment. The

The governor holds office for periods not exceeding five years. The term of the governor may be fixed by the government at the time of his appointment. The central bank chief is is eligible for reappointment or extension.

RBI Governor qualifications:

The RBI Act, 1934 does not mention any specific qualification for the governor. People with different educational backgrounds were selected to head the institution.

However, the governor traditionally is either a civil services personnel or an economists.

IN SHORT:

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet on Monday gave its nod for the selection of the 56-year-old Sanjay Malhotra as the 26th RBI Governor with effect from December 11 for a period of three years.

The six-year term of current RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das is slated to end on December 10.

Useful information for all competitive exams:

Reserve Bank of India:

Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra

Established: 1 April 1935

Inaugural holder: Sir Osborne Smith

Governor (26th): Sanjay Malhotra

Deputy Governors: M. Rajeshwar Rao, Swaminathan J, T. Rabi Sankar, Dr. M.D. Patra

Sir C. D. Deshmukh(3rd): He was the first Indian to serve as the governor.

List of Governors:

1. Sir Osborne Smith
2. Sir James Taylor
3. Sir C D Deshmukh
4. Sir Benegal Rama Rau
5. K G Ambegaonkar
6. H V R Iengar
7. P C Bhattacharya
8. I. K. Jha

8. L R Shid

9. B N Adarkar

10. S Jagannathan

11. N C Sen Gupta

12. K R Puri

13. M Narasimham

14. Dr. I G Patel

15. Dr. Manmohan Singh

16. A Ghosh

17. R N Malhotra

18. S Venkitaramanan

19. Dr. C Rangarajan

20. Dr. Bimal Jalan

21. Dr. Y V Reddy

22. D. Subbarao

23. Raghuram Rajan

24. Urjit Patel

25. Shaktikanta Das

26. Sanjay Malhotra

Important Days

World Human Rights Day



Why in the news?

World Human Rights Day is observed every year on December 10.

Why we observe World Human Rights Day?

It is a testament to the universal commitment to equality, freedom, and human dignity. Human rights play a vital role as a preventative, protective and transformative force for good. This day also empowers people and communities across the world to build a better future.

World Human Rights Day 2024: History

World Human Rights Day was established in 1948 when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). It is the first global enunciation of human rights.

This landmark document outlined the fundamental rights that every individual is entitled to, regardless of race, religion, gender, or nationality.

Human Rights Day was formally adopted at the 317th Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on 4 December 1950, when the General Assembly declared resolution 423 (V). It invited all the member states and any other interested organisations to celebrate the day as they saw fit. The Human Rights Day is celebrated to honour this monumental achievement and to remind the world of its collective

responsibility to uphold these principles.

World Human Rights Day 2024: Significance

World Human Rights Day emphasises the importance of protecting and promoting human rights across the world. It serves as a reminder of the ongoing fight against discrimination, oppression, and inequality. The day also acknowledges the contributions of activists, organizations, and governments working tirelessly to safeguard these rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights sets out a broad range of fundamental rights and freedoms to which all people are entitled. World Human Rights Day guarantees the rights of every individual everywhere, without distinction based on nationality, place of residence, gender, national or ethnic origin, religion, language, or any other status.

In 2024, with the rise of conflicts, social inequalities, and environmental crises across the world, the need to reaffirm the universality of human rights has become very critical. This day encourages individuals and nations alike to advocate for a world where justice and equality prevail.

World Human Rights Day 2024: Theme

The theme for World Human Rights Day 2024 is “Our rights, our future, right now.”

IN SHORT:

World Human Rights Day is observed every year on December 10.

The theme for World Human Rights Day 2024 is “Our rights, our future, right now.”