

PRELIMS EDGE 202523-07-2025

## UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)

**Context:** The United States will once again exit UNESCO, the UN's cultural and education agency, as part of President Donald Trump's renewed push to withdraw from global institutions.



### About 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, France.
- Parent Organisation: United Nations Economic and Social Council.
- UNESCO has 194 member countries and 12 associate members.

### UNESCO focuses on five main areas:

1. Education
2. Natural sciences
3. Social and human sciences
4. Culture
5. 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.

**Key Reports Published by UNESCO**

- Global Education Monitoring Report
- The United Nations World Water Development Report
- World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development

Source : U.S. says it's leaving UN cultural agency UNESCO again, only two years after rejoining (The Hindu)

**SCHEMES IN NEWS****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.
- 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.

**TERMS IN NEWS****MiG-21 Jets**

- 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.
- 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.

### Etruscans



- The Etruscans were a Mediterranean civilization that flourished between the 8th and 3rd centuries BCE.
- The Etruscans, also known as the Tyrrhenians, inhabited the area that is now Italy.
- Their country was called Tuscia, or Etruria.
- Etruria was located in the central part of the Italian peninsula.
- They had a strong navy and dominated the seas on the western coast of Italy.

- The Etruscans possessed the biggest iron reserves in the whole of the western Mediterranean.
- Many features of Etruscan culture were adopted by the Romans, their successors to power in the peninsula.
- Etruscans were the first in the Mediterranean region to construct a city on the basis of a grid plan.
- In this plan, most of the streets were laid in a north-south direction with a few streets crossing them from the east-west direction.
- Romans later followed this plan while laying out military camps and new cities.

### Social Classes

- Scholars believe that there were three social classes in ancient Etruria.
- On the top was a powerful aristocratic, or noble class.
- Below them was a middle class that consisted of craftsmen, merchants, and sailors.
- Finally, there was a class of enslaved people.
- Unlike ancient Greece and Rome, women were considered equal in status to men.
- Etruscan women were often able to read and were educated.

### Religion

- Etruscans believed in a universe controlled by gods. For them, the gods existed in nature as well as in all objects made by humans.
- Etruscans thought that the gods revealed their presence through



natural phenomena such as lightning.

- Their mythology was different from the Greeks and Romans.
- However, the gods that they worshiped became similar to important Greek and Roman gods such as Zeus, Hermes, and Athena.

### Decline

- The decline of the Etruscan civilization began toward the end of the 6th century and the beginning of the 5th century BCE.
- In 509 BCE the Etruscan kings were forced out of Rome.
- Their naval superiority ended when the Greeks destroyed their fleet in 474 BCE.
- By the middle of the 3rd century BCE, Etruscans were taken over by the Romans.
- Latin, the language of the Romans, replaced Etruscan.
- By the 1st century BCE, the Etruscan people were completely absorbed by the Roman Empire, and Etruscan culture ceased to exist as a distinct civilization.

### 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

- 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)

### Stablecoins

- 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.

### About 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

**PRACTICE QUESTIONS**

Q1 : Consider the following statements regarding Cryptocurrencies

1. 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.
2. These currencies operate independently of a central bank.
3. The economic transactions underlying cryptocurrency are decentralized, distributed, and disbursed through block chain technology

How many of the above statements are correct?

- A. Only One
- B. Only Two
- C. All of the Above

D. None of the Above

Q2 : The term Etruscans is related to which of the following?

- A. Tribe of Africa
- B. Ancient Civilization
- C. Newly Discovered Species
- D. Glacial Landforms

Q3 : Which among the following cannot fly in supersonic speed?

- A. MiG 21
- B. Su-30 MKI
- C. F22 Raptors
- D. C-17 Globemaster

Q4 : Consider the following statements regarding Winter Fog Experiment conducted in India recently.

1. It is one of the world's few long-term open-field experiments focused solely on fog.
2. It was launched in the winter of 2015 at Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), New Delhi.

How many of the above statements are incorrect?

- A. Only Statement 1
- B. Only Statement 2
- C. Both the statements
- D. None of the Above

Q5 : Consider the following statements regarding UNESCO

1. It is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN).
2. Its main goal is to help build world peace and safety.

3. It does this by encouraging countries to work together in education, arts, sciences, and culture.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- A. Only One
- B. Only Two
- C. All of the Above
- D. None of the Above

**Answers**

- 1. C
- 2. B
- 3. D
- 4. D
- 5. C

