

BrainBuzz Academy

UPSC Current Affairs - 29-Jan-25

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Polity and Governance

World Economic Forum (WEF)



Why in the News?

The World Economic Forum (WEF) is holding its Annual Meeting from January 20 to 24, 2025, in Davos, Switzerland.

About the World Economic Forum (WEF)

The World Economic Forum (WEF) was established in 1971 as a not-for-profit foundation by German engineer and economist Klaus Schwab. Initially called the European Management Forum, it was later rebranded as WEF in 1987. The forum introduced the concept of stakeholder capitalism, emphasizing that businesses should serve not just shareholders but also employees, customers, and communities. WEF engages global leaders, policymakers, and businesses through dialogue, debate, and action-oriented commitments, aiming to build resilient, inclusive, and sustainable economies.

Background and Evolution

In 1973, the collapse of the Bretton Woods system and the Arab-Israeli War expanded WEF's focus from management to global economic and social issues.

By 1975, WEF introduced a membership system for the top 1,000 companies worldwide.

In 1987, it was officially renamed the World Economic Forum, broadening its scope to include global policy discussions.

In 2015, WEF was formally recognized as an international organization.

Funding

WEF is primarily funded by its corporate partners, which are global enterprises with annual revenues exceeding \$5 billion.

Key Reports Published by WEF

Global Competitiveness Report

Global Gender Gap Report

Future of Jobs Report

Global Risks Report

Energy Transition Index

Global Travel and Tourism Report

Headquarters

📍📍 Cologny, Switzerland

Objectives of WEF

Improve the state of the world through public-private cooperation.

Address economic, social, and environmental challenges through collaboration.

2025 Theme

📍📍 "Collaboration for the Intelligent Age"

Functions of WEF

▢ Global Dialogues: Hosts the Davos Annual Meeting, where leaders discuss global challenges and solutions.

▢ Publications & Rankings: Regularly releases influential reports like the Global Competitiveness Report and Future of Jobs Report.

▢ Policy Advocacy: Drives initiatives on sustainability, inclusive development, and technological innovation.

▢ Diplomatic Initiatives: Facilitates key political dialogues, including the historic 1992 meeting between Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk.

Davos Meeting

📍📍 Participants: ~ 3,000 global leaders, including business executives, investors, policymakers, economists, journalists, and celebrities.

📍📍 Duration: Up to 5 days with 500+ sessions covering pressing global issues.

India's Participation and Stance at Davos

India plays an active role at WEF Davos, leveraging the platform to showcase its economic growth, investment opportunities, and global leadership in technology, sustainability, and innovation.

Key Aspects of India's Participation:

1 Showcasing Economic Growth 📍📍

India highlights its GDP growth, ease of doing business improvements, and "Make in India" & "Digital India" initiatives.

India ranks among the fastest-growing economies and uses WEF to attract FDI (Foreign Direct Investment).

2 Leadership in Climate Action & Sustainability 📍📍

India advocates for sustainable growth, focusing on renewable energy, the International Solar Alliance (ISA), and the Net Zero goal for 2070.

Indian policymakers emphasize green hydrogen, electric vehicles (EVs), and solar energy adoption.

3 Technology and Innovation 📍📍

India promotes its leadership in AI, fintech, digital payments (UPI), and semiconductor manufacturing.

Indian tech giants and startups use WEF to forge global partnerships.

4 Geopolitical and Trade Diplomacy 📍📍

India voices its stance on global trade, multilateral cooperation, and supply chain resilience.

Advocates for reforming global governance institutions like the UN, WTO, and IMF.

5 Social and Gender Inclusion

India highlights progress in gender equality, education, and social development.

Contributions to WEF's Global Gender Gap Report and discussions on financial inclusion & women entrepreneurship.

India's Representation at WEF 2025

Government Leaders: India is likely to be represented by ministers, policy advisors, and state leaders.

Business Delegates: CEOs of leading Indian firms (Reliance, Tata, Infosys, etc.) and startups.

Think Tanks & Experts: Indian economists and sustainability experts participate in panel discussions.

International Relations

Serbia PM Resigns Amid Anti-Corruption Protests



Why in the News?

Serbia's Prime Minister Milos Vucevic resigned on Tuesday in an effort to ease political tensions following weeks of anti-corruption protests. The protests were sparked by the deadly collapse of a concrete canopy in Novi Sad, which claimed 15 lives. The resignation is seen as a move to address public outrage and restore political stability.

Key Takeaways

Prime Minister's Resignation: Milos Vucevic stepped down amid growing protests against corruption and governance issues in Serbia.

Novi Sad Incident: The protests were triggered by a fatal canopy collapse in November, which became a symbol of wider dissatisfaction with the government.

Political Impact: The resignation may pave the way for an early parliamentary election, as Serbia's Parliament has 30 days to either confirm a new government or call a snap election.

Opposition's Demand: Opposition parties are advocating for a transitional government to ensure free and fair elections.

Do You Know?

President Aleksandar Vucic has been accused of curbing democratic freedoms despite Serbia's aspirations to join the European Union.

The ruling party has faced allegations of election irregularities in previous polls.

Novi Sad, where the tragic incident occurred, is the second-largest city in Serbia and a key cultural and economic hub.

Static Points about Serbia

Geography: Serbia is a landlocked country in the Balkans, bordered by Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro.

Capital: Belgrade, one of the oldest cities in Europe.

Government: Serbia is a parliamentary republic, with a President as the head of state and a Prime Minister as the head of government.

Minister as the head of government.

EU Aspirations: Serbia has been a candidate for European Union membership since 2012, but concerns over democratic governance have hindered progress.

Economy: Serbia's economy is diverse, with strong agriculture, manufacturing, and technology sectors.

Conclusion

The resignation of Prime Minister Milos Vucevic marks a significant moment in Serbian politics, as it reflects public dissatisfaction and the demand for governance reforms. The upcoming political developments, including a possible snap election, will determine Serbia's path towards stability and democratic progress.

UAE Declares 2025 the 'Year of Community'



In a move to strengthen social cohesion and celebrate diversity, UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan has declared 2025 as the "Year of Community." Under the slogan "Hand in Hand," this national initiative aims to foster unity, inclusion, and collective responsibility among all citizens and residents of the UAE.

Why in the News?

The UAE's declaration of 2025 as the "Year of Community" highlights the nation's commitment to building a cohesive and empowered society. This initiative comes as part of the UAE leadership's ongoing efforts to promote social harmony, cultural diversity, and community engagement. With a diverse population that includes over 4 million Indians, the UAE seeks to strengthen its social fabric and set an example of unity in diversity.

Key Takeaways

Slogan: The campaign, "Hand in Hand," symbolizes collective efforts towards building a united society.

Focus Areas:

Unity and Inclusion: Bringing together all citizens and residents to contribute to community development.

Volunteering: Encouraging community service and cultural engagement through various programs.

Cultural Diversity: Celebrating the UAE's multicultural population as a cornerstone of its identity.

Leadership Support:

Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed: Called on residents to take shared responsibility for sustainable growth.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid: Emphasized the role of strong communities and families in shaping the future.

Do You Know?

The UAE is home to one of the most diverse populations in the world, with over 200 nationalities living and working together.

The “Year of Community” initiative builds on the UAE’s legacy of promoting tolerance and inclusivity, as seen in initiatives like the Ministry of Tolerance and the Year of Tolerance (2019).

The campaign will feature a series of events and programs throughout 2025, aimed at strengthening social bonds and fostering a sense of belonging.

Static Points about the Year of Community

Objective: To promote unity, inclusion, and collective responsibility.

Slogan: “Hand in Hand.”

Key Focus Areas:

Strengthening social bonds.

Encouraging volunteering and community service.

Celebrating cultural diversity.

Leadership Vision:

Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed: Emphasized the importance of shared responsibility.

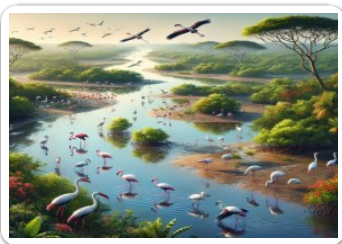
Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid: Highlighted the role of strong communities in shaping the future.

Conclusion

The “Year of Community” initiative reflects the UAE’s dedication to fostering a society where everyone feels valued and empowered. By promoting unity, inclusion, and cultural diversity, the UAE continues to set an inspiring example of progress and harmony. As 2025 approaches, the nation looks forward to a year of collective efforts and shared achievements, truly embodying the spirit of “Hand in Hand.”

National

Coringa and Adjoining Wetlands: A Prime Feeding Ground for Migratory Birds



Why in the News?

The Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS) and its adjoining wetlands in the Godavari estuary have emerged as a vital feeding habitat for 106 bird species, including nearly 70 migratory species. The findings were revealed during the Asian Waterbird Census-2025, conducted by the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and the Wildlife Institute of India (WII). The survey recorded a remarkable count of 39,725 birds, underscoring the ecological significance of this region in Andhra Pradesh.

Key Takeaways

Diverse Avian Population: The census identified 106 species of birds, including 56 species of waders, in the Coringa and adjoining wetlands.

Threatened Species: Among the recorded species, three are classified as Endangered—Black-bellied tern (*Sterna acuticauda*), Great knot (*Calidris tenuirostris*), and Indian skimmer (*Rynchops albicollis*). The Common pochard (*Aythya ferina*) was identified as the only Vulnerable species, while 11 species fell under the Near Threatened category.

Migratory Patterns: Most migratory species, such as the Great knot, travel from Siberia, Russia, China, and Mongolia to spend the winter in the Godavari estuary, which lies in the Asian Flyway Zone.

Prime Habitats: Bhairavapalem and Etimoga are two key winter destinations where large congregations of migratory birds have been observed. Notably, a Great knot tagged in Russia was sighted at Bhairavapalem after traveling approximately 7,500 km.

International Collaboration: The census data is being shared with global organizations studying migratory bird patterns to aid conservation efforts and track endangered species' movements.

Do You Know?

The Godavari estuary supports the feeding of nearly 90,000 birds annually, making it an ecologically significant region for avian biodiversity.

The Indian skimmer, one of the endangered species found in this area, is known for its unique feeding behavior, where it skims the water surface with its elongated lower beak.

The presence of a high diversity of migratory birds is a critical criterion for recognizing a wetland as a Ramsar Site of international importance.

Static Points about Wetlands of India

Ramsar Sites in India: As of 2025, India has 80 designated Ramsar Sites, wetlands of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.

Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary: Located in Andhra Pradesh, this sanctuary is the second-largest stretch of mangrove forests in India and serves as a crucial breeding and feeding ground for numerous species.

Importance of Wetlands: Wetlands serve as biodiversity hotspots, support migratory bird populations, regulate climate, and act as natural buffers against coastal erosion and extreme weather events.

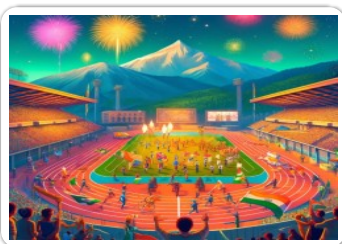
Conservation Initiatives: Several Indian wetlands, including Chilika Lake, Keoladeo National Park, and Sundarbans, are protected under the Ramsar Convention to maintain ecological balance and sustain wildlife.

Conclusion

The findings of the Asian Waterbird Census-2025 highlight the critical role of Coringa and its adjoining wetlands in supporting avian diversity. With significant populations of migratory and endangered birds relying on these habitats for survival, conservation efforts must be strengthened. Experts advocate for recognizing Coringa as a Ramsar Site, a move that would enhance global conservation initiatives and ensure the long-term protection of this vital ecosystem.

Sports

38th National Games: A Grand Sporting Extravaganza in Uttarakhand



Why in the News?

Uttarakhand is set to host the 38th National Games, commencing on January 28, 2025. This will be the largest sporting event in the state's history, with athletes from across India competing in 35

the largest sporting event in the state's history, with athletes from across India competing in 30 disciplines. The event not only highlights the state's sporting enthusiasm but also provides a platform to showcase its cultural and natural heritage.

Key Takeaways

Major Sporting Event: The National Games will witness around 10,000 athletes competing in various sports disciplines, with events spread across seven cities in Uttarakhand, including Dehradun as the main venue.

Grand Opening Ceremony: The opening ceremony was held at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium, attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, and other dignitaries.

Medal Tally at Stake: Approximately 450 gold, silver, and bronze medals will be awarded during the event.

Symbolic Representations:

The Logo: A visual tribute to Uttarakhand's natural beauty and cultural heritage, featuring the Himalayan Peaks, the Himalayan Monal (state bird), and the sacred Ganga River.

Mascot 'Mauli': Inspired by the Himalayan Monal, symbolizing Uttarakhand's pristine environment, resilience, and sportsmanship.

Torch 'Tejaswini': Representing strength, inspiration, and the spirit of unity, this torch will travel across the state, igniting passion for sports.

Do You Know?

Prime Minister's Commitment: PM Modi reiterated his ambition to bring the 2036 Olympics to India during his address at the opening ceremony.

Star Absentees: Some of India's top athletes, including Neeraj Chopra, P.V. Sindhu, and Manu Bhaker, are skipping the event, offering emerging athletes an opportunity to shine.

Previous National Games: The 2022 edition was hosted by Gujarat, while Goa organized the 2023 edition.

Static Points about National Games

Inception: The first National Games in India were held in 1924.

Organizing Body: The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) oversees the event.

Rotational Hosting: The games are hosted by different states to promote sports infrastructure development across the country.

Significance: These games act as a stepping stone for athletes aspiring to represent India in international competitions such as the Asian Games and the Olympics.

Conclusion

The 38th National Games not only celebrate sportsmanship but also offer Uttarakhand an opportunity to showcase its rich heritage and natural splendor. As athletes compete for glory, the event fosters national unity, competitive spirit, and a commitment to sports excellence.

Important Days

Data Privacy Day 2025





Each year, on January 28, the world observes Data Privacy Day. The day highlights the significance of privacy and data protection. It all started in Europe, where it was observed earlier as Data Protection Day. In 2008, it was extended to the US and Canada, where it began to be observed as Data Privacy Day. On this day in 1981, the Convention 108, the first legally binding international treaty dealing with privacy and data protection, was signed. Today, Data Privacy Day is observed globally each year.

What is data?

In relation to data privacy, the term 'data' refers to personal or sensitive information about individuals that needs to be protected to maintain confidentiality, integrity, and security. This can include any data that identifies the person. The data can include personally identifiable information, such as name, contact details, email ID, date of birth or Aadhar details, PAN card number, passport details, etc. This can also include sensitive personal data such as health records, financial information, and biometric data. Data can also refer to behavioral data, such as online activities, geolocation data, or the device that the user is using, and can include the communication data, such as emails, messages, and call logs.

Why is data privacy important?

Cybersecurity expert and co-founder of The Organisation For Enlightening and Education (TOFEE), Tushar Sharma, said, "When personal data—like your name, address, online activities, or financial details—gets into the wrong hands, it can lead to identity theft, financial fraud, and even stalking or harassment."

Identity Protection: Personal data, if exposed, can be used to impersonate anyone, leading to unauthorized access to the date of birth, KYC documents, bank details, or even to the victim's social media profiles.

Financial Safety: Personal financial data, such as credit card details, online purchase history, and banking information, can be misused by cybercriminals/fraudsters to make fraudulent transactions.

Avoiding Discrimination: Data privacy ensures that sensitive information like your health status, race, or political beliefs isn't exploited or used against you, whether by employers, insurance companies, or even advertisers.

Personal Autonomy: It's about your right to control who has access to your information. If you don't have control over your data, companies, governments, or other entities can make decisions about you without your consent.

Cybersecurity: Protecting data privacy is also essential for preventing larger-scale cyberattacks. If individual data is compromised, it can lead to larger breaches affecting millions of people, compromising personal security on a wider scale.

Freedom from Surveillance: Data privacy also relates to personal freedom. If too much personal information is exposed, it could lead to a world where people feel constantly surveilled or manipulated by companies or governments.