

# UPSC CURRENT AFFAIRS NOTES 16-01-2024

## World Economic Forum (WEF)



The World Economic Forum (WEF) is holding its Annual Meeting from January 15 to 19 in Davos, Switzerland.

### World Economic Forum (WEF)

The World Economic Forum (WEF) is a Swiss-based international organization that plays a crucial role in shaping global, regional, and industry agendas. Here is an overview covering key aspects of the World Economic Forum:

#### Foundation and Establishment:

- Founded in 1971 by Professor Klaus Schwab.
- Originally named the European Management Forum, it adopted the name World Economic Forum in 1987.

#### Nature and Structure:

- Non-profit organization.
- Independent and impartial, facilitating public-private cooperation.
- Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

#### Annual Meeting in Davos:

- Most famous for its annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland.



- Attracts global leaders from various sectors, including politics, business, academia, and civil society.

### **Objectives:**

- Engages leaders to address and find solutions to global challenges.
- Provides a platform for dialogue and collaboration.
- Promotes public-private cooperation.

### **Stakeholder Capitalism:**

- Advocates for stakeholder capitalism, emphasizing the consideration of all stakeholders, not just shareholders.

### **Membership:**

- Membership includes leaders from governments, businesses, international organizations, academia, and civil society.

### **Global Agenda Councils (Discontinued):**

- Previously had Global Agenda Councils covering specific issues, but these were discontinued in 2016.

### **Sustainability and Climate Change:**

- Actively supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Emphasizes the importance of addressing climate change.

### **Young Global Leaders (YGLs) and Global Shapers:**

- Recognizes exceptional leaders under 40 as Young Global Leaders.
- Global Shapers are young leaders working on local community projects.

### **Criticism and Public Eye Award:**

- Faces criticism for perceived elitism and influence of global corporations.
- The Public Eye Award, organized by NGOs, criticizes companies associated with WEF.

### **Davos Declaration:**

- An official declaration emphasizing the commitment to stakeholder capitalism and environmental sustainability.



## Reports published by World Economic Forum

- The World Economic Forum (WEF) publishes several reports covering a range of global issues. Here are some of the notable reports published by the WEF:

### Global Competitiveness Report:

- Assesses the competitiveness of countries based on factors like infrastructure, innovation, and macroeconomic stability.

### Global Risks Report:

- Identifies and analyzes global risks, both in terms of likelihood and impact, covering economic, environmental, geopolitical, societal, and technological risks.

### Human Capital Report:

- Evaluates countries based on their ability to develop and deploy healthy, educated, and skilled workforces.

### Global Gender Gap Report:

- Assesses gender disparities in countries, covering areas such as economic participation, education, health, and political empowerment.

### Global Information Technology Report:

- Examines the global state of information and communication technologies, assessing the impact on economies and societies.

### Inclusive Development Index:

- Measures a country's economic performance in terms of its inclusive development, considering income distribution and living standards.

### Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report:

- Ranks countries based on their attractiveness for travel and tourism, considering factors like natural resources, infrastructure, and cultural resources.

### Energy Transition Index:

- Assesses countries' readiness for the energy transition, evaluating their commitment to reducing environmental impact and embracing sustainable energy sources.

### Global Enabling Trade Report:

- Evaluates the factors that facilitate or hinder the flow of goods across borders, including infrastructure, market access, and border administration.

### Global Information Technology Report:

- Provides insights into the adoption and impact of information and communication technologies globally.

### Future of Jobs Report:

- Analyzes the impact of technological advancements on the job market, assessing skills in demand and potential job displacement.

### Inclusive Growth and Development Report:

- Examines how countries are fostering economic growth that benefits a broad segment of their population.
- These reports contribute to shaping discussions on global economic, social, and environmental challenges, and they are valuable resources for policymakers, businesses, and researchers worldwide. It's important to stay updated on the latest reports, as they often provide insights into contemporary global issues.

## India Meteorological Department



India celebrating 150 years of India Meteorological Department

India is fortunate to have some of the oldest meteorological observatories of the world. The British East India Company established several such stations, for

example, those at Calcutta in 1785 and Madras (now Chennai) in 1796 for studying the weather and climate of India. The Asiatic Society of Bengal founded in 1784 at Calcutta, and in 1804 at Bombay (now Mumbai), promoted scientific studies in meteorology in India.

- Captain Harry Piddington at Calcutta published 40 papers during 1835-1855 in the Journal of the Asiatic Society dealing with tropical storms and coined the word "cyclone", meaning the coil of a snake.
- In 1842 he published his monumental work on the "Laws of the Storms". In the first half of the 19th century, several observatories began functioning in India under the provincial governments.
- A disastrous tropical cyclone struck Calcutta in 1864 and this was followed by failures of the monsoon rains in 1866 and 1871.
- In the year 1875, the Government of India established the India Meteorological Department, bringing all meteorological work in the country under a central authority. Mr. H. F. Blanford was appointed Meteorological Reporter to the Government of India.
- The first Director General of Observatories was Sir John Eliot who was appointed in May 1889 at Calcutta headquarters. The headquarters of IMD were later shifted to Shimla, then to Poona (now Pune) and finally to New Delhi.

## Mandates

- To take meteorological observations and to provide current and forecast meteorological information for optimum operation of weather-sensitive activities like agriculture, irrigation, shipping, aviation, offshore oil explorations, etc.
- To warn against severe weather phenomena like tropical cyclones, norwesters, duststorms, heavy rains and snow, cold and heat waves, etc., which cause destruction of life and property.
- To provide meteorological statistics required for agriculture, water resource management, industries, oil exploration and other nation-building activities.
- To conduct and promote research in meteorology and allied disciplines.
- IMD became the first organisation in India to have a message switching computer for supporting its global data exchange. One of the first few





electronic computers introduced in the country was provided to IMD for scientific applications in meteorology.

- India was the first developing country in the world to have its own geostationary satellite, INSAT, for continuous weather monitoring of this part of the globe and particularly for cyclone warning.

### Organisational structure

- At present IMD is under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).
- The Director General of Meteorology is the Head of the India Meteorological Department, with headquarters at New Delhi.
- There are 4 Additional Directors General at New Delhi and 1 at Pune. There are 20 Deputy Directors General of whom 10 are at New Delhi.
- For the convenience of administrative and technical control, there are 6 Regional Meteorological Centres, each under a Deputy Director General with headquarters at Mumbai, Chennai, New Delhi, Calcutta, Nagpur and Guwahati.
- Under the administrative control of Deputy Director General, there are different types of operational units such as Meteorological Centres at state capitals, Forecasting Offices, Agrometeorological Advisory Service Centres, Flood Meteorological Offices, Area Cyclone Warning Centres and Cyclone Warning Centres.

In addition, there are separate Divisions to deal with specialised subjects. They are: -

- Agricultural Meteorology
- Civil Aviation
- Climatology
- Hydrometeorology
- Instrumentation
- Meteorological Telecommunication
- Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre
- Positional Astronomy
- Satellite Meteorology
- Seismology



- Training

### **New projects/Schemes/Programmes approved/ initiated**

- Integration of Landslide Susceptibility Module into Flash Flood Guidance System for better predictability of landslide associated flash floods in the vulnerable hilly regions of Indian Subcontinent.
- Integration of Urban Flood Module into Flash Flood Guidance System for real time flood monitoring of urban cities. In this context, Delhi has been selected for the pilot study on Urban Flood Modeling.
- “Drone based calibration activities of X Band Radar” installed at NIOT Chennai campus, Pallikaranai on 6th January, 2022
- Two Design storm studies for (i) Yammeng Hydro Project, Arunachal Pradesh and (ii) Katapati Barrage, Maharashtra got completed and the values sent to the concerned project authority
- National Monsoon Mission (NMM): Government of India launched NMM in 2012 with a vision to develop a state-of-the-art dynamical prediction system for monsoon rainfall on different time scales.
- Mausam App: Tool for dissemination of weather information and warnings in an attractive and user friendly manner.
- Doppler Weather Radars: Based on Doppler principle, the radar is designed to improve precision in long-range weather forecasting and surveillance using a **Interim Budget and Vote-On-Account?**

#### Overview:

- The Finance Minister is all set to present her sixth Budget in a row and since it is a general elections year, the government will be allowed only to present an Interim Budget or Vote-on-account instead of a regular full Budget.
- **About Interim Budget vs Vote-On-Account**
- An interim budget serves as a framework for managing provisional expenditures over a short duration, usually spanning a few months, until a new government takes office at the central level.
- An interim budget generally includes the current state of the economy, plan and non-plan expenditures and receipts, changes in tax rates, revised estimates of the current financial year, and estimates for the coming financial year.



- Despite being presented for the entire year, similar to a regular budget, the interim budget is subject to constraints imposed by the Election Commission.
- These constraints aim to prevent the government from implementing policies that could unduly influence the general public before the commencement of voting.
- The Parliament passes a Vote-on-account to meet essential expenditures such as salaries of central government staff, funding of ongoing projects, and other government expenditures.
- In other words, it accounts for only expenditures to be borne by the outgoing government for a period of two months, which may be extended to four months on special circumstances.
- The interim budget serves as a financial plan during a transitional period, typically when there are only a few months left in the current government's tenure. The vote-on-account can be approved within the framework of the interim budget.
- Like a full budget, an interim budget will be discussed and passed in the Lok Sabha, and in the case of a vote-on-account, it will be passed without any formal discussion as such.
- An interim budget can propose changes in the tax regime, whereas a vote-on-account cannot change the tax regime under any circumstances.
- Vote-On-Account is a parliamentary approval for withdrawing money from the Consolidated Fund of India from April to June/July or until the new Government presents its full-fledged budget.
- It can be termed an advance grant, interim arrangement, and authorisation for the outgoing government to draw the money from the above-said fund and meet short-term expenditures.
- As far as validity is concerned, the interim budget is valid throughout the year whereas the vote-on-account is valid only for a period of two to four months.
- parabolic dish antenna and a foam sandwich spherical radome.



## Exercise Ayutthaya

Recently, the maiden Bilateral Maritime Exercise -Ayutthaya' between the Indian Navy (IN) and Royal Thai Navy (RTN) was conducted.



### About Exercise Ayutthaya

- The India-Thailand Bilateral Exercise is being named as 'Ex-Ayutthaya', which literally translates to 'The Invincible One' or 'Undefeatable'.
- It symbolises the significance of two of the oldest cities Ayodhya in India and Ayutthaya in Thailand, the historic legacies, rich cultural ties and shared historical narratives dating back to several centuries.
- Indigenously built Indian Naval ships Kulish and IN LCU 56 participated in the inaugural edition of the exercise.
- With the institution of a Bilateral Exercise, both navies have taken a step towards strengthening operational synergy and progressively increasing the exercise complexity.
- During the maiden edition of the exercise, participating units from both navies conducted surface and anti-air exercises including weapon firing, seamanship evolutions and tactical manoeuvres.
- The 36th edition of India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT) was also conducted along with the maiden bilateral exercise.



- Maritime Patrol Aircraft from both navies participated in the Sea Phase of the exercise.
- As part of Government of India's vision of SAGAR (Security And Growth for All in the Region), the Indian Navy has been proactively engaging with countries in the Indian Ocean Region towards enhancing regional maritime security.
- The Indian Navy and Royal Thai Navy have maintained a close and friendly relationship which has strengthened over the years.

## Windfall Tax

India cut its windfall tax on petroleum crude to 1,700 rupees (\$20.53) a tonne from 2,300 rupees a tonne, according to a recent government notification.

### About Windfall Tax

What is it? It is a tax levied by governments against certain industries when economic conditions allow those industries to experience significantly above-average profits.

The term “windfall” refers to an unexpected rise in profits, and the tax on windfall gains is known as the windfall tax.

### When is it imposed?

When the government notices a sudden increase in an industry's revenue, they impose this tax.

However, these revenues cannot be linked to anything the company actively pursues, such as its business strategy or expansion.

Rather, it is related to a one-off external event for which the business is not responsible.

Consequently, a Windfall Tax is imposed on an industry's profits when it experiences a sharp increase in revenue due to unrelated external events.

A recent example is the sudden rise in the profits of the oil and gas industries due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

The unexpected windfalls are taxed by the government over and above the normal tax rates.

The most common industries that fall target to windfall gains tax include oil, gas, and mining.



### **Purpose:**

Redistribution of unexpected gains when high prices benefit producers at the expense of consumers;

To fund social welfare schemes;

As a supplementary revenue stream for the government;

As a way for the Government to narrow the country's widening trade deficit.

## **Instrument Landing System**

Thick mist which hampers flight operations, necessitating the reliance on instruments like the "Instrument Landing System" (ILS) to navigate through the obscured surroundings.

### **About Instrument Landing System**

- It is a ground-based radio navigation system that provides pilots with accurate information about their aircraft's position and alignment with the runway.
- It comprises two main components, the localiser, and the glide slope,
  - The localizer ensures lateral alignment, guiding the aircraft along the correct azimuth toward the runway centerline.
  - Simultaneously, the glide slope provides vertical guidance, aiding pilots in maintaining the proper descent angle for a safe landing.
- It guides pilots along both horizontal and vertical axes, aiding them in maintaining the correct approach path during low-visibility conditions.
- With the help of ILS systems, pilots are able to understand how their aircraft is positioned with respect to an airport runway without needing to physically see it.
- This system warns pilots in case their jets are not flying to meet the runway's centreline.
- It will also warn pilots in case their jets are too low or too high and thus, at the risk of undershooting or overshooting the runway.
- Both of these tasks performed by the Instrument Landing System are crucial in ensuring landing in cases where the pilots aren't able to see the runway clearly.



- In addition to ILS, modern aircraft are equipped with advanced avionics and autopilot systems that enhance precision during foggy landings.
- These systems, often coupled with radar altimeters, help maintain a stable descent and ensure the aircraft follows the designated glide path with minimal reliance on external visibility.
- It is a standard International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) precision landing aid that is used to provide accurate azimuth (angular measurement in a spherical coordinate system) and descent guidance signals for guidance to flight for landing on the runway under adverse weather conditions.