

To receive Daily news juice pdf on your WhatsApp, send name and city through WhatsApp on 75979-00000.

1. Davos meeting 2024: 5 key takeaways

Why in news?

This year's edition of the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting was held from January 15 to January 19.

Every year, leaders from various fields, such as business, politics, economics, etc., gather in the Swiss town (Davos) to discuss challenges facing the world and explore the ways forward. The event has faced criticism for its elite and expensive nature, but the Davos summit still remains relevant, if only for the glimpse it offers of how the rich and powerful react to the most pressing issues.

This year, some key themes dominated proceedings at the meeting. Here are the five main takeaways (with a special mention of India).

Artificial Intelligence

The one issue that took centre stage at this year's WEF meet was Artificial Intelligence (AI). While its many transformational abilities for human welfare were discussed, so were the need for regulation, fear of job losses, the risks of impersonation and misinformation, and the inequalities it can potentially worsen.

War and uncertainty

Business leaders spoke of the risk posed by a fragile geopolitical situation, wars in the Middle East and Europe, the threats to global supply chains, and the uncertainty around food security. Yet, no plans or roadmaps for peace were offered about the Israel-Gaza violence.

Climate

The need for businesses to adapt to climate change and for countries to unite for action against it despite differences was another hot topic.

China's economy

Facing a slowing economy, China tried to attract more investment from the West, which has witnessed some cooling. At 5.2%, China's GDP growth in 2023 is still below pre-pandemic levels.

And finally, India

An assessment of Davos 2024 by consulting firm McKinsey and Company says, "India is transforming rapidly as one of the fastest growing large economies in the world. When it comes to technology, talent, healthcare, and other areas, its future in 2024—and beyond—is worth paying attention to."

India also made its presence felt in ways other than its economic potential. One of the ideas discussed at WEF this year was how investment in women's health could boost the global economy by \$1 trillion annually by 2040. According to the Press Information Bureau (PIB), "One of the key takeaways from the Forum meeting was the announcement of the launch of a Global Good Alliance for Gender Equity and Equality with the support and endorsement by WEF and Government of India. The idea of this alliance emerged from the G20 Leaders' Declaration and India's abiding commitment to the cause of women-led development as propounded by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi."

The objective of this Alliance is to bring together global best practices, knowledge sharing and investments in the identified areas of women's health, education, and enterprise.

Relevance: GS Prelims

Source: The Indian Express

2. What is the India-Myanmar border Free Movement Regime, which the Centre is planning to end?



Why in news?

Union Home Minister Amit Shah recently announced that the Centre has decided to fence the entire length of the India-Myanmar border to stop the free movement of people. The two countries share a largely unfenced 1,643 km border, which goes through the states of Manipur, Mizoram, Assam, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh. The government is reconsidering Free Movement Regime (FMR) agreement with Myanmar, and is going to end this ease of coming and going. The FMR agreement was implemented in 2018.

What is the Free Movement Regime on the India-Myanmar Border?

The FMR is a mutually agreed arrangement between the two countries that allows tribes living along the border on either side to travel up to 16 km inside the other country without a visa. It was implemented in 2018 as part of the Narendra Modi government's Act East policy, at a time when diplomatic relations between India and Myanmar were on the upswing.

But why was such a regime conceptualised?

The border between India and Myanmar was demarcated by the British in 1826, without seeking the opinion of the people living in the region. The border effectively divided people of the same ethnicity and culture into two nations without their consent. The current India-Myanmar Border reflects the line the British drew.

People in the region have strong ethnic and familial ties across the border. In Manipur's Moreh region, there are villages where some homes are in Myanmar. In Nagaland's Mon district, the border actually passes through the house of the chief of Longwa village, splitting his home into two.

Apart from facilitating people-to-people contact, the FMR was supposed to provide impetus to local trade and business. The region has a long history of trans-border commerce through customs and border haats. Given the low-income economy, such exchanges are vital for the sustenance of local livelihoods. For border people in Myanmar too, Indian towns are closer for business, education, and healthcare than those in their own country.

So why is the FMR being discussed critically?

The illegal migration of tribal Kuki-Chin peoples into India from Myanmar is one of the key issues in the ongoing Manipur conflict. While the Meiteis have accused these illegal migrants and the alleged "narco-terror network" along the India-Myanmar Border (IMB) of fomenting trouble in the state, the Kukis have blamed the Meiteis and Chief Minister N Biren Singh, a Meitei himself, of using this as a pretext for "ethnic cleansing".

Amid this charged and sensitive debate in the state, questions have been raised about the FMR.

Although beneficial to local people and helpful in improving Indo-Myanmar ties, it has been criticised in the past for unintentionally aiding illegal immigration, drug trafficking, and gun running.

The border runs through forested and undulating terrain, is almost entirely unfenced, and difficult to monitor. In Manipur, less than 6 km of the border is fenced.

Since the military coup in Myanmar on February 1, 2021, the ruling junta has launched a campaign of persecution against the Kuki-Chin peoples. This has pushed large numbers of Myanmar tribes across the country's western border into India, especially into Manipur and Mizoram, where they have sought shelter. Mizoram, where a large section of the population has close ethnic and cultural ties with people across the border, has set up camps for more than 40,000 refugees, despite protests from the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

What about migration from Myanmar to Manipur?

Manipur too has received a chunk of illegal migrants in the last few months. A committee set up by the state government to identify such migrants in 2023 put their number at 2,187. In September 2022, 5,500 illegal immigrants were caught in Moreh, and 4,300 were pushed back, sources said. Biometrics of these individuals have been recorded.

The Manipur government has alleged that village chiefs have been illegally settling migrants from Myanmar in new villages in the hills, leading to deforestation. An eviction drive against these new villages became the flashpoint between Kukis in the hills and the government last March, leading to violence in the state. The Kuki and Naga peoples live in the hills that surround the Imphal valley, whereas the valley itself is home to the majority Meiteis.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Bilateral Relations

Source: The Indian Express

3. Timeline leading to the consecration ceremony of Ram Mandir

1528: Demolition of temple for mosque

In a chapter etched in the annals of history, the year 1528 witnessed a significant transformation in Ayodhya, where a temple made way for the construction of a mosque, as recounted in the most popular version documented in government gazettes. According to historical records, Mughal ruler Babur's general Mir Baq was instrumental in the establishment of a mosque at the site believed to be the birthplace of Lord Rama in Ayodhya's Ramkot, following the demolition of the existing temple. The historical narratives suggest that the location, identified as the capital of Lord Rama's father Dashrath in the epic Ramayana, witnessed a profound transformation during this period.

1853: Beginning of dispute and the first petitions

The echoes of religious unrest over the Babri Masjid site in Ayodhya resonated for the first time in 1853. In response to escalating tensions, the British administration took action six years later, installing a partitioning fence at the site. The move delineated two distinct sections, granting Muslims permission to pray within the mosque, while designating the outer court for Hindu use.

Later in January 1885, the first plea in the land dispute case was filed by Mahant Raghbir Das in the Faizabad district court seeking to construct a canopy on the Ramchabutra, a raised platform located outside the mosque. However, the plea was met with denial, underscoring the simmering tensions and legal disputes surrounding the contested site.

1949: Pivotal moments in the temple's movement

The year 1949 stands out as a crucial juncture in the trajectory of the Ram Temple movement, witnessing a transformative event that would reverberate through the years. In a move that would set the stage for legal and communal tensions, members of the fringe Hindu outfit Akhil Hindu Ramayana Mahashabha placed an idol of Lord Ram inside the Babri Masjid.

Subsequently, both Hindu and Muslim groups filed petitions, adding complexity to the situation. Gopal Singh Visharad, seeking permission to worship the deity, filed a petition before the Faizabad court. In contrast, Hashim Ansari, a resident of Ayodhya, approached the court

advocating for the removal of the idols and the preservation of the site as a masjid. In response to the mounting tensions, the government intervened by locking the premises, though permitting daily puja by the priests.

1980s: Ram Mandir construction campaign takes centre stage

A crucial chapter in the saga of the temple unfolded in the 1980s with the launch of a campaign aimed at reclaiming and constructing a temple at the birthplace of Lord Ram. Spearheading this mission was a dedicated committee led by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad Party (VHP).

In 1986, the Ayodhya court, responding to a plea by Hari Shankar Dubey, issued a historic order to open the gates of mosque for Hindus. The district judge in Ayodhya played a crucial role in implementing the court's directive, paving the way for Hindus to worship at the site. However, this decision stirred unrest, leading to the formation of the 'Babri Mosque Action Committee' by the Muslim community in protest.

In response to the court's ruling, the Rajiv Gandhi-led government took action and ordered the unlocking of the gates of Babri Masjid. The unfolding events during this period marked a significant turning point in the ongoing debate over the disputed site, setting the stage for further legal and communal developments in the years to come.

1989: Foundation of Ram Temple by VHP

The foundation for the construction of the Ram Temple was ceremoniously laid by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad on the adjacent land to the Babri Masjid. Former VHP Vice President Justice Deoki Nandan Agarwal filed a case, urging the relocation of the mosque. The Faizabad court subsequently transferred the four pending suits to a special bench of the High Court.

1990: Lal Krishna Advani's Rath Yatra

A pivotal moment in the Ram Mandir movement unfolded in 1990 with the launch of the Rath Yatra led by Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP's) then-president Lal Krishna Advani. This mass mobilisation, appreciated by the public at the time, saw Advani leading the Rath Yatra from Somnath in Gujarat to Ayodhya, expressing support for the Ram Temple agitation. Commencing on September 25, 1990, in Somnath, the Yatra included thousands of kar sevaks, or volunteers, affiliated with the Sangh Parivar.

1992: Babri Masjid demolition

The year 1992 marked a seismic event in the Ram Mandir movement with the demolition of Babri Masjid by kar sevaks, triggering political tensions and communal riots across the country, resulting in the loss of at least 2,000 lives. The demolition unfolded in the presence of leaders from the Shiv Sena, VHP, and BJP, leaving an indelible mark on the socio-political landscape of India.

2003: ASI conducts survey of the disputed site

In 2003, a three-judge bench of the Allahabad High Court issued an order directing the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to excavate the disputed site and ascertain whether it had served as a temple in the past. The ASI conducted a thorough survey, revealing compelling evidence of a substantial Hindu complex beneath the mosque. However, these findings faced

opposition from Muslim organizations, leading to prolonged disagreements over the historical interpretation of the site.

2010: Disputed site divided into three parts

The culmination of legal proceedings occurred in 2010 when the Allahabad High Court delivered a landmark judgment. The court ruled that the contested land should be divided into three parts: one-third was allocated to Ram Lalla, represented by the Hindu Mahasabha; another third went to the Islamic Waqf Board; and the remaining portion was granted to the Nirmohi Akhara.

2011: Legal battle reaches Supreme Court

The protracted legal saga surrounding the disputed Ayodhya site continued in 2011 as all three parties -- Nirmohi Akhara, Ram Lalla Virajman, and the Sunni Waqf Board -- approached the Supreme Court, challenging the Allahabad High Court verdict. The apex court promptly intervened, issuing a stay on the High Court order, which had divided the contested site into three parts.

2019: Supreme Court renders historic verdict

A momentous chapter in the Ayodhya dispute unfolded in 2019 when the Supreme Court, led by then Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, delivered a landmark judgment. The five-judge bench ruled in favour of Ram Lalla and decreed that the entire disputed land would be handed over to a trust established by the government. According to the judgment, this trust would assume the responsibility of overseeing the construction of the Ram Temple at the site, bringing a long-awaited resolution to the complex and contentious issue that had gripped the nation for decades.

2020: PM Modi lays foundation stone of temple

In a significant moment for the nation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the construction of the Ram Temple on August 5, 2020. During the ceremony, he not only laid the foundation stone but also unveiled a commemorative plaque and released a special postal stamp, marking the commencement of the much-anticipated construction project.

2024: Consecration Ceremony marks a sacred occasion

A sacred event is scheduled to unfold in Ayodhya on January 22, 2024. This momentous occasion will witness the consecration ceremony (Pran Pratishtha) of Ram Lalla, further cementing the spiritual and cultural significance of the Ram Temple. The ceremony is poised to bring together dignitaries, devotees, and participants from various walks of life, creating a chapter of reverence and celebration in the rich tapestry of Ayodhya's history. Ayodhya, the birthplace of Lord Rama, holds great spiritual, historical and cultural significance for the people of India. A Vedic priest from Varanasi, Dr Lakshmi Kant Dixit will perform the main rituals of the consecration ceremony of Ram Lalla on January 22.

Relevance: GS Prelims

Source: Times of India