Prelim Bits 07-10-2023 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Freedom on the Net Report 2023

According to the report titled, Freedom on the Net 2023: The Repressive Power of Artificial Intelligence, global Internet freedom has declined for the 13th consecutive year.

- **Report** - Freedom on the Net Report, 2023, is an *annual survey and analysis of internet freedom* around the world.
- **Released by** - Freedom House (Non-Profit Organisation)
- **Current study period** - 2022 to 2023
- **Coverage** – It evaluates Internet freedom in 70 countries, accounting for 88% of the world's Internet users.

Evaluation methods used	Ranking Scale (0 – 100)
• Internet connectivity restrictions • Blocks on social media platforms • Blocks on websites • Blocks on VPNs • Forced removal of content	• "0" represents the worst digital repression • "100" represents the highest digital freedom • Iceland scored 94 and tops the list

Digital repression includes shut down Internet service, blocked WhatsApp and Instagram, and increased surveillance in a bid to quell anti-government protests.

Digital repression in India

- India scored 50 on the ranking scale.
- India engaged in 4 censorship methods except VPN blocking.

Key findings of the report

- The online human rights have deteriorated in 29 countries, with only 20 countries registering net gains.
- ***China is the world's worst*** for 9 straight years followed by Myanmar.
- Iran witnesses the sharpest rise in digital repression.

References

1. The Hindu| Declining Global Internet Freedom
2. Freedom House| Freedom on the Net 2023

Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD)

India has been elected recently as the President of AIBD General Conference (GC) for the 3rd successive term.

- **AIBD** - It is a regional inter-governmental organisation in the field of *electronic media development*.
- **Established** – In 1977 under the auspices of UNESCO.
- **Objectives**
  - To act as window for regional policy makers to access worldwide information.
  - To establish inter-regional links and cooperation.
  - To act as agent of change in developing regional IT environment.
- **Founder organizations** - The International Telecommunication Union, UN Development Programme, and UNESCO.
- **Voting** - These founding organizations are non-voting members of the General Conference.
- **Region** - It services countries of UN-ESCAP (UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific).
- **Members** - 26 full members represented by 43 member organisations and 50 affiliate members.
- **Secretariat** - It is hosted by the Government of Malaysia and the secretariat is located in Kuala Lumpur.

India & AIBD

- India is one of the founding members of the AIBD.
- Prasar Bharati, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting is the representative body of India at AIBD.

Prasar Bharati is India's state-owned Public service broadcaster, headquartered in New Delhi which comprises the Doordarshan Television and Akashvani.

GC 2023

- The 21st General Conference & Associated Meetings 2023 (GC 2023) of AIBD was held in 2023 at Port Louis, Mauritius.
- The conference is mandated to achieve a vibrant and cohesive electronic media environment in the Asia-Pacific region through policy and resource development.

References

1. The Hindu| India elected to AIBD
2. AIBD| Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development

Nobel Prize for Peace, 2023

The 2023 Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to Iranian activist Narges Mohammadi "for her fight against the oppression of women in Iran and her fight to promote human rights and freedom for all".

- **Narges Mohammadi** – An engineer-turned-activist and a human right advocate.
- She became the 2nd Iranian women after Shirin Ebadi in 2003 and 19th women to receive peace prize.

Nobel Peace Prize for 2022 was jointly awarded to Belarusian human rights advocate Ales Bialiatski, the Russian human rights organisation Memorial, and the Ukrainian human rights organisation Centre for Civil Liberties.

- **Contribution** – Mohammadi has long campaigned for women's rights and for the abolition of the death penalty.
- She *opposed the use of torture and sexualized violence* against women political prisoners in Iran.
- She is currently in a detention facility under the charges of spreading anti-state propaganda and defamation and was sentenced to a total of 31 years in prison.
- **Honours/Awards** – She was featured in the *BBC's list of 100* inspiring and influential women from around the world.
- Inspired from her work, "*Women Life Freedom*" was adopted as motto by the demonstrators for their struggle.
- Awards received by her include
    - 2023 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize
    - 2023 PEN/Barbey Freedom to Write Award

Some of the previous Nobel Peace laureates include Mother Teresa, Kailash Satyarthi, Malala Yousafzai, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Barack Obama, and the European Union.

References

1. The Hindu| Nobel Peace Prize for 2023
2. IE| Narges Mohammadi

Caravan Park in Kerala

First Public Sector Caravan Park in Kerala to come up at Bekal in Kasaragod.

- **Caravan Park** – It is a place where people with *recreational vehicles can stay overnight, or longer*, in allotted spaces known as "*sites*" *or* "*campsites*".
- It will be developed under *cinema tourism project* that seeks to showcase prime

locations to attract tourists.

- **Location** – In natural settings, offering stress-free environment.
- **Top priority** – Safety, security and hygienic features.
- **Ownership** – Private Sector, Public Sector or by the Joint Sector.
- **Tourist Facilitation centre (TFC)** - The TFC shall be constructed providing appropriate facilities and infrastructure for the tourists /campers.
- Responsible Tourism-friendly policy shall be adopted for sustainable growth which also benefits the local community and does not adversely affect the local environment.

At present, there is only 1 Caravan Park in Kerala, run by a private player at Wagamon.

Types of Caravan Parks	Facilities
State-of-the-art-park	• Overnight and extended stay • Full-fledged facilities
Day Parks	• One Day tours • Minimal facilities
Hybrid Caravan Park	• A part of a resort • Accommodation facilities

Bekal Fort

- It is 17th century fort built by *Shivappa Nayaka of the Keladi dynasty* in Kasaragod, Kerala.
- It later came under the control of the Kingdom of Mysore.
- It is the largest fort in Kerala.
- The fort's prime features are the grand laterite walls, observation towers, bastions, and a well-preserved moat.

References

1. The Hindu| Caravan Park in Kerala
2. Kerala Tourism| Kerala's Caravan Policy

India's 1st Solar City

Sanchi, the historic home of the Stupa, has become India's first 'solar city'.

- **Features** - The 5,572 solar panels spread over an area of 4.98 hectares ensure supply from 9 am to 4 pm.
- The entire solar project in Sanchi will reduce 14,324 tonnes CO2 less per year.
- It currently includes a 3 MW solar plant that caters to the city's energy needs.
- A 5 MW plant for agricultural requirements is also under construction.
- Another similar facility in Gulgaon village, which will house a 5 MW solar facility equipped with 11,722 solar panels is about to come up.

- Madhya Pradesh has also initiated the construction of a 600 MW electricity-producing solar plant on the dam water in Omkareshwar.
- Once completed, Sanchi will become *energy surplus*.

Madhya Pradesh has increased its renewable energy capacity by 11 times, to about 24% of its installed capacity. In the last decade, solar energy capacity has increased by 52 %.

Solar City Programme

- A total of 24 states and union territories have identified cities to be developed as solar cities.
- It comes under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).
- Each State /Union Territory shall *select at-least one city* under this.
- There is *no separate fund allocation* as funds available under the different existing schemes can be utilized for development of solar cities.

References

1. Economic Times| India's Solar City
2. IE| Solar power in Sanchi
3. Livemint | Solar City

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