



April - 02

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **9th Ministerial Conference of Heart of Asia**

- ❖ Recently, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar reached Tajikistan's capital to attend the 9th Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process (HoA-IP) ministerial conference on Afghanistan.
- ❖ This conference is a part of the Istanbul Process.
- ❖ The conference was held in Dushanbe.

### **2020 Human Rights Report**

- ❖ It is released by the U.S. State Department.
- ❖ The report contains a country-wise discussion of the state of human rights.
- ❖ It is submitted each year to the U.S. Congress.

#### **Key findings**

- ❖ The harassment and detention of journalists critical of the Indian government in their reporting and on social media has continued although the government generally respected the freedom of expression.
- ❖ The Government's requests for user data from Internet companies had increased "dramatically."
- ❖ The government made 49,382 user data requests in 2019 from Facebook, a 32% increase from 2018.
- ❖ Over the same period, Google requests increased by 69%, while Twitter requests saw a 68% increase.

### **VAJRA PRAHAR 2021**

- ❖ Recently, Special Forces of India and the USA conducted the joint military exercise 'VAJRA PRAHAR 2021'.
- ❖ It took place in Himachal Pradesh.
- ❖ Aim of this exercise is to share the best practices and experiences in areas such as joint mission planning and operational tactics as also to improve interoperability between the Special Forces of both nations.
- ❖ The joint exercise by the Special Forces of both the countries is conducted alternatively between India and the United States.



- ❖ Special Forces are the units of a country's armed forces that undertake covert, counterterrorist, and other specialized operations.
- ❖ This is the 11th edition of the exercise conducted at Special Forces Training School located at Bakloh, Himachal Pradesh.
- ❖ The 10th edition of VAJRA PRAHAR was held in 2019 at Seattle, USA.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

### **Mahendragiri Biosphere Reserve**

- ❖ Odisha government has proposed a second biosphere reserve in the southern part of that state at Mahendragiri.
- ❖ Similipal Biosphere Reserve is Odisha's first such reserve.
- ❖ That was notified in 1996.
- ❖ The area of the proposed Mahendragiri Biosphere Reserve is spread over Gajapati and Ganjam districts in the Eastern Ghats.
- ❖ Mahendragiri hill ecosystem acts as a transitional zone between the flora and fauna of southern India and the Himalayas.
- ❖ Mahendragiri is inhabited by the Soura people, a particularly vulnerable tribal group as well as the Kandha tribe.
- ❖ According to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, Twenty-nine of the 41 species of threatened medicinal plants found in Odisha are found in the biosphere reserve area.

## **STATES**

### **Jail Radio project**

- ❖ "Tinka Tinka" foundation has launched 'Jail Radio' project in Haryana jails in collaboration with the State government.
- ❖ Jail Radio is an in-house production run by the inmates.
- ❖ The programmes are broadcast from a studio inside the premises and reach to the inmates through speakers in the barracks.
- ❖ The aim is to bring out the inmates' creativity, give them meaningful engagement.



### **Banana Festival in Kushinagar**

- ❖ The Uttar Pradesh government organised a 'Banana Festival' in Kushinagar.
- ❖ It has witnessed the participation of at least 35 farmers and entrepreneurs.
- ❖ The state government had in 2018 organised the One District One Product (ODOP) scheme to promote traditional enterprise.
- ❖ Products in the Kushinagar made from banana fibre were selected in the ODOP scheme.
- ❖ At least 4,000 farmers are linked to banana cultivation and after inclusion in the ODOP scheme.

### **Ashfaq Ulla khan zoo**

- ❖ Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated Shaheed Ashfaq Ulla Khan Zoological Park in Gorakhpur recently.
- ❖ This is the first zoo in Purvanchal and the third in that state.
- ❖ The zoo has been named after great freedom fighter Shaheed Ashfaq Ullah Khan.

### **Energy efficient towns**

- ❖ Bihar is set to become India's First State to have 2 Green Energy Efficient towns.
- ❖ The 2 towns are Rajgir & Bodh Gaya.
- ❖ They will start getting Solar Energy through the energy project from 2023.
- ❖ The green energy supply required for running the towns will be developed and supplied by the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI).



- ❖ To implement the project, the state government of Bihar will construct 500 MW solar energy plants at Lakhisarai & Bhagalpur.

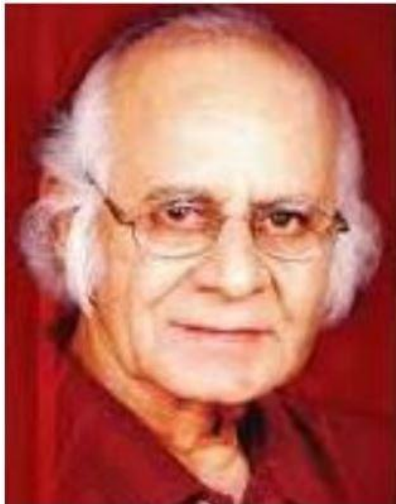
### SECI

- ❖ It is the only CPSU (Central Public Sector Undertaking) dedicated to the Solar Energy Sector.
- ❖ It comes under the administrative control of the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE).
- ❖ It was set up in 2011 to facilitate the implementation of the National Solar Mission.
- ❖ It is also known as Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission.

## **PERSONALITIES, AWARDS, AND EVENTS**

### **Saraswati Samman 2020**

- ❖ The Noted Marathi writer Dr Sharankumar Limbale will receive Saraswati Samman award 2020.
- ❖ This award is for his book Sanatan.
- ❖ The award carries fifteen lakh rupees, a citation and a plaque.
- ❖ Saraswati Samman is recognised as the most prestigious and highest literary award in the country.
- ❖ It was instituted by KK Birla Foundation in 1991.
- ❖ Dr Limbale's Sanatan has been published in 2018.
- ❖ Sanatan is an important social and historical document of the Dalit struggle.



सरस्वती नः सुभगामयस्कृत.

Saraswati samman

## IMPORTANT DAYS

### 100th year of gandhi's first visit to cuttack in odisha

- ❖ Odisha celebrated the 100th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's first ever visit to the state (March 23rd).
- ❖ On the occasion, Union Minister Sanjay Dhotre digitally released a commemorative postage stamp on '100 years of the first visit of Gandhiji to Odisha'.
- ❖ Mahatma Gandhi had stayed during his first visit to the state on 23rd March 1921.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### “Names of the Women” book

- ❖ A book titled “Names of the Women” was authored by Jeet Thayil.
- ❖ The book talks about the women whose roles were suppressed, reduced, or erased in the Gospels.
- ❖ Jeet Thayil is a renowned author, best known for his book ‘Narcopolis’.
- ❖ His Narcopolis book was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize 2012 and won the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature.
- ❖ His most recent book ‘Low’ was released in 2020.

