



**29-04-2024**

## National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

### Why in News?

- The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is preparing to defend the government's human rights processes at a meeting in Geneva this week, where a decision on whether India's human rights body will retain its "A status" is expected to be made.



## NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

### More About the News

- The NHRC's ratings were put on hold in 2023 over concerns on its composition procedure, the presence of police personnel in human rights investigations, and the lack of gender and minority representation, and the decision over whether the NHRC is given an A rating or a B rating would affect its ability to vote at the UN Human Rights Council and some UNGA bodies.
- The meeting of the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA) of the UN-recognised Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) worldwide will be held on May 1.
- According to a six-point submission by the SCA in March 2023, the NHRC has failed to

create conditions required to be "able to operate independent of government interference".

- Last week, the MEA had also reacted sharply to the U.S. State department's latest global report that spoke of "significant" human rights concerns in India, calling the report "biased" and reflecting a "poor understanding of India". "We attach no value to it and urge you to do the same.

### About NHRC

- The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is an independent statutory body established to protect and promote human rights in India.
- It is responsible for reviewing and addressing human rights violations and making recommendations for the protection and promotion of human rights.
- It is established in conformity with the Paris Principles (1991), adopted at the first international workshop on national institutions for the protection of human rights.
- The NHRC comprises of a Chairperson, five full-time Members, and seven deemed Members. The statute lays down qualifications for the appointment of the Chairperson and Members of the Commission.

## Forest Fires in Uttarakhand

### Why in the News?

- As per the latest FSI data, the prevailing fire in Nainital district has spread to neighbouring districts, including Almora, Tehri Garhwal, Bageshwar, Champawat and southern Pithoragarh, damaging over 30 acres of forests.



### More About the News

- According to the state forest department, fires that have been raging in the forests of Nainital and Pauri Garhwal in Uttarakhand were mostly man-made.
- Data from Uttarakhand Forest Department shows that at least 606 incidents of forest fires have been reported across the state since November last year, affecting 735.815 hectares of area.
- At least eight of these incidents were reported in the last 24 hours, affecting 11.75 hectares of land.
- The March-May period is highly prone to forest fires in India, as there is rich biomass availability following the winter season. In the absence of pre-monsoon showers, the dry forests cook up a perfect recipe for fires.
- As per the latest FSI data of Sunday, the prevailing fire in Nainital district has spread to neighbouring districts, including Almora, Tehri Garhwal, Bageshwar, Champawat and southern Pithoragarh, damaging over 30 acres of forests.
- In other parts of the country, the harsh summer has been making it conducive for forest fires. There is a marginal uptick in the fire incidents along forests of Koraput, Kandhamal, Sambalpur and Rourkela in Odisha, which has been reeling under severe heatwave since April 15.
- In March, several hectares of Nilagiri forests in Tamil Nadu went up in fire as the state experienced a spike in the maximum temperatures since February.
- With the India Meteorological Department forecast indicating no rainfall over the region anytime soon, daunting efforts remain to put out the forest flames.

### Critical Minerals Summit

#### Why in the News?

- The Ministry of Mines, in collaboration with the Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation (Shakti), Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), and Indian Institute of Sustainable Development (IISD), will hold "Critical Minerals Summit : Enhancing Beneficiation and Processing Capabilities" from April 29th to April 30th, 2024, at the India Habitat Centre in Lodhi Estate, New Delhi.

#### More About the News

- The Critical Minerals Summit is a pivotal event designed to foster collaboration, share knowledge and drive innovation in

the field of critical mineral beneficiation and processing.

- The summit is set against the backdrop of India's rapid economic growth and ambitious clean energy targets, which underscore the urgent need for securing a domestic supply of Critical Raw Materials (CRMs) essential for key technologies, including renewable energy systems and electric vehicles.



- The summit will bring together a diverse array of Indian and international stakeholders, including industry leaders, startups, government officials, scientists, academics, and policy experts.
- Participants will engage in active dialogue and interactive workshops focused on critical issues such as mineral auction progress, policy incentives for CRM ecosystem development, and the advancement of commercially viable and environmentally sustainable solutions.
- Key features of the summit include technical sessions on eight key minerals : Glaucosite (Potash), Lithium - Rare Earth Elements (Laterite), Chromium, Platinum Group, Graphite, Tungsten associated with Graphite, Rare Earths (RE), and Vanadium associated with Graphite.
- These sessions will provide valuable opportunities for business-to-business collaboration and knowledge sharing.
- The goal of the Critical Minerals Summit is to equip government and industry stakeholders with the knowledge,

connections, and tools necessary to accelerate the domestic production of CRMs, supporting India's economic growth and sustainability objectives.

### Indian Air Force ushers in Digital Transformation

#### Why in the News?

- Indian Air Force (IAF) embarked on a transformative digital journey recently by integrating with the DigiLocker platform, a flagship initiative under the Digital India programme.

#### More About the News

- In a ceremonial event held at Air Headquarters, Vayu Bhawan, the IAF and Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) signed the momentous Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to leverage DigiLocker's secure and accessible document repository services.
- This pioneering integration will revolutionize the way critical service documents of IAF personnel, both serving and retired, are issued, accessed, and verified digitally.



- By harnessing the power of cutting-edge technology, the IAF reaffirms its commitment to data security, operational efficiency, and seamless access to information.

#### Key Highlights of the MoU :

- Authorized IAF departments and divisions will now be able to seamlessly upload

digital records, certificates, and vital documents to the national DigiLocker repository, ensuring secure storage and easy accessibility.

- IAF officers will have direct access to their crucial documents, such as the Certificate of Service (COS) and Service Book Officers (SBO), through their personal DigiLocker wallets, enabling convenient retrieval and verification.
- The integration with DigiLocker will streamline various processes within the IAF, including the Agniveer Vayu recruitment, where candidate's academic document verification will be conducted digitally, enhancing transparency and credibility.
- The MoU was signed between Air vice Marshal Philip Thomas, ACAS (PO), Indian Air Force, and Shri Akash Tripathi, President

& CEO, NeGD, MeitY, marking a collaborative effort towards digital empowerment.



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