



Lackadaisical Approach: Uttarakhand Forest Fires | Uttarakhand | 16 May 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the **Supreme Court** sought an explanation from the Uttarakhand government on why **central funds** were not utilized for dousing fires.

Key Points

- The SC summoned the **Uttarakhand chief secretary** to appear before it on 17th May over the '**lackadaisical**' approach shown by the Uttarakhand government in tackling fires.
- The top court directed that no state shall deploy forest officials or forest department vehicles for poll duty.
- The chief secretary has also been asked to explain large vacancies in the forest department, lack of fire fighting equipment, and deployment of forest officials despite specific exemption granted by the [Election Commission](#).
- The bench headed by **Justice BR Gavai** and also comprising **Justices SVN Bhatti** and **Sandeep Mehta**, observed that though multiple action plans are prepared, no steps are taken for their implementation.
 - **1,300 hectares of land** were affected due to the forest fires.
- Uttarakhand chief minister **Pushkar Singh Dhimi** had launched the [Pirul Lao-Paise Pao Mission](#).
 - Under this campaign, to prevent forest fires, the **Pirul** (leaves from the Pine Tree) lying in the forest will be collected by the local villagers and youth, weighed, and then stored at the designated **Pirul Collection Centre**.

Char Dham Yatra | Uttarakhand | 16 May 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the alarming scenes of a massive turnout at **Yamunotri** and long traffic blockades on the **Kedarnath** and **Badrinath** routes have forced the government to prioritize short-term and long-term solutions for the Char Dham yatra.

Key Points

- The [Char-Dham yatra](#) in Uttarakhand consists of visiting four temples, **Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, and Yamunotri**.
- It holds profound spiritual significance in Hinduism. This journey typically occurs from **April/May to October/November**.
- The state is planning to create a "**Dharmik Yatra Authority**" that would regulate not only **Char**

Dham yatra but also other pilgrimages like the **Kanwar yatra**.

- The authority will take a call on all issues, like deciding the number of **daily pilgrims, routes, health, and security deployments**, and all other arrangements.
- Uttarakhand is considering adopting the regulatory body for religious events similar to the one in Uttar Pradesh and will study its model before implementation.

Char Dham Yatra

▪ Yamunotri Dham:

- **Location:** Uttarkashi district.
- **Dedicated to:** Goddess Yamuna.
- River Yamuna is the second-most sacred river in India after River Ganga.

▪ Gangotri Dham:

- **Location:** Uttarkashi district.
- **Dedicated to:** Goddess Ganga.
- Considered the most sacred of all Indian rivers.

▪ Kedarnath Dham:

- **Location:** Rudraprayag district.
- **Dedicated to:** Lord Shiva.
- Situated on the bank of the Mandakini River.
- One of the 12 Jyotirlingas (divine representations of Lord Shiva) in India.

▪ Badrinath Dham:

- **Location:** Chamoli district.
- Home to the sacred Badrinarayan Temple.
- **Dedicated to:** Lord Vishnu.
- One of the holy shrines for Vaishnavites.

Haryana's New Excise Policy | Haryana | 16 May 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the **Haryana Cabinet** gave its nod to a **new excise policy** for the year **2024-25** after receiving approval from the [Election Commission](#).

Key Points

- There will be a slight increase in the **excise duty** on **IMFL (Indian Made Foreign Liquor)** and **country liquor** in the new policy starting from 12th June.
- The cabinet met here under the **chairmanship of Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini**.
- The maximum basic quota of **IMFL** will be **700 lakh proof liters** (Measurement Unit) and **1,200 lakh proof liters** for the country liquor for the year **2024-25**.
- The **QR code-based track and trace system** that was introduced in 2023-24 for IMFL and country liquor will be extended to **imported foreign liquor** as well.
- The maximum number of retail vends will remain the same in the new policy. Any person desirous of participating in the **e-auction** will be required to furnish an [Aadhar Card](#) or **Parivar Pehchan Patra**, [Income Tax Returns](#) for the last three assessment years and must have a minimum net worth of **Rs 60 lakh**.
- As the [Model Code of Conduct](#) is in force in view of the ongoing **Lok Sabha election**, the approval of the EC was taken before the decision was taken on the policy.

Model Code of Conduct

- The MCC is a **consensus document**. The political parties have themselves agreed to keep their conduct during elections in check and to work within the Code.
- It helps the EC in keeping with the mandate it has been **given under Article 324** of the Constitution, which gives it the power to supervise and conduct **free and fair elections** to the Parliament and State Legislatures.
- The MCC is **operational from the date on which the election schedule is announced until the date of the result announcement**.
- The government **cannot announce any** financial grants, promise construction of roads or other facilities, and make any ad hoc appointments in government or public undertaking during the time the Code is in force.

Income Tax Return

- **Income Tax:** It is a tax charged on the annual income of an individual or business earned in a financial year.
 - The Income Tax system in India is governed by **The Income Tax Act, 1961** and it is a direct tax.
- **Income Tax Return:** It is a designated document used to convey details about an individual's earnings in a financial year and the taxes paid on that income to the Income-tax Department.
 - This form also facilitates the carrying forward of losses and enables individuals to claim refunds from the income tax department.

Heatwave in Haryana | Haryana | 16 May 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** has issued a "yellow" and "orange" alert, signaling the likelihood of heatwave conditions in Haryana.

Key Points

- Heatwaves are **prolonged periods of excessively hot weather** that can cause adverse impacts on human health, the environment, and the economy.
 - India, being a tropical country, is particularly vulnerable to heatwaves, which have become more frequent and intense in recent years.
- **Criteria for Declaring Heat Wave in India:**
 - **Plains and Hilly Regions:**
 - Heat wave is considered if the maximum temperature of a station reaches at least **40°C or more for Plains** and at least **30°C or more for Hilly regions**.
 - **Based on Departure from Normal Heat Wave:** Departure from normal is **4.50°C to 6.40°C**.
 - **Severe Heat Wave:** Departure from normal is **>6.40°C**.
 - Based on Actual Maximum Temperature Heat Wave: When actual maximum temperature **≥45°C**.
 - **Severe Heat Wave:** When actual maximum temperature **≥47°C**.
 - If the above criteria are met in **at least 2 stations** in a Meteorological subdivision for at least two consecutive days, it is declared so on the second day.
 - **Coastal Areas:**

- When the maximum temperature departure is **4.50°C or more from normal**, a heat wave may be described provided the **actual maximum temperature is 37°C or more**.

Rajasthan Mine Collapse | Rajasthan | 16 May 2024

Why in News?

Recently, all 15 officials from [Hindustan Copper Limited](#) who were trapped in a mine in Rajasthan were rescued on 15 th May, 2024.

Key Points

- The incident happened at the **Kolihan mine** when a cage carrying the officials down the mine shaft collapsed after a rope snapped.
- Rescue efforts continued through the night, and all **14 survivors** were transported to a hospital in Jaipur for treatment.
- The **Kolihan Mine** are mechanised underground **copper mines** in Rajasthan owned by **Hindustan Copper Limited**.
- The mined ore is treated in the **Khetri Copper Complex's concentrator plant**.
- The **Kolihan mine** is located in the **Neem Ka Thana district** and is part of the **Khetri Copper Belt's northern tip**, covering 162.23 hectares.

Khetri Copper Complex

- Khetri is situated at the **foothills of the Aravalli Range**, which hosts **copper mineralisation**, giving rise to a 80 km long metallogenetic province from Singhana in the north to Raghunathgarh in the south, popularly known as **Khetri Copper Belt**.
- The belt comprises of tightly folded **Proterozoic metasediments** that rest over basement gneisses and is a part of the North Delhi fold belt.
- Prominent deposits of the belt are: **Khetri, Kolihan, Banwas, Chandmari, Dhani Basri, Baniwali Ki Dhani** (Neem Ka Thana, Rajasthan).
 - Other deposits are: **Dholamala, Akwali, Muradpura - Pacheri (Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan), and Devtalai (Bhilwara, Rajasthan)**.