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1. UN-linked body defers accreditation of NHRC-India for second year in a row

Why in News?

In a setback for India's human rights record, the Geneva-based, United Nations-linked Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) deferred the accreditation of the National Human Rights Commission-India (NHRC) for the second year in a row.

UN-linked body defers NHRC-India accreditation for second year in a row

The decision could now affect India's ability to vote at the Human Rights Council and some UNGA bodies

The decision, which can affect India's ability to vote at the Human Rights Council and some UN General Assembly bodies, was taken on May 1, during the meeting of the Subcommittee on Accreditation (SCA), which included representatives from New Zealand, South Africa, Honduras, and Greece.

Reasons for deferral

While the committee's latest report is still awaited, its previous report had cited a number of reasons for recommending the deferral, including the lack of transparency in appointing members to the NHRC, the appointment of police officers to oversee human rights investigations, and the lack of gender and minority representation on the member panel.

The deferral is likely to be reviewed later this year, during meetings in September, or again in May next year.

The NHRC's "A-status" has only been deferred once before, in 2016, but it was restored in 2017. This is the first time India's status has been suspended for two years in a row.

About NHRC

The NHRC was set up under the Protection of Human Rights Act, passed by Parliament in 1993. It has been accredited as an 'A' Status NHRI since the beginning of the accreditation process for NHRIs in 1999, which it retained in 2006, 2011 and in 2017 also after the deferment.

The 'A' status was deferred this time after civil society organisations and human rights activists wrote to the global body, expressing concerns about India's record.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Organisations

Source: The Hindu

2. GPT-4o, OpenAI's newest AI model that makes ChatGPT smarter and free for all

Why in News?

OpenAI introduced its latest large language model (LLM) called GPT-4o, billing it as their fastest and most powerful AI model so far. The company claims that the new model will make ChatGPT smarter and easier to use.

Until now, OpenAI's most advanced LLM was the GPT-4, which was only available to paid users. However, the GPT-4o will be freely available. LLMs are the backbone of AI chatbots. Large amounts of data are fed into these models to make them capable of learning things themselves.



What is GPT-4o?

GPT-4o ("o" stands for "Omni" here) is being seen as a revolutionary AI model, which has been developed to enhance human-computer interactions. It lets users input any combination of text, audio, and image and receive responses in the same formats. This makes GPT-4o a multimodal AI model – a significant

leap from previous models.

How is GPT-4o better?

1. Unlike its predecessors that required multiple models to handle different tasks, GPT-4o uses a single model trained end-to-end across various modalities – text, vision, and audio.

Essentially, this means the GPT-4o comes with an integration that allows it to process and understand inputs more holistically. For example, GPT-4o can understand tone, background noises, and emotional context in audio inputs at once. These abilities were a big challenge for earlier models.

2. When it comes to features and abilities, GPT-4o excels in areas like speed and efficiency as it responds to queries as fast as a human does in conversation, in around 232 to 320 milliseconds. This is a big leap over previous models, which came with response times of up to several seconds.

3. It comes with multilingual support, and shows significant improvements in handling non-English text, making it more accessible to a global audience.

4. The GPT-4o also features enhanced audio and vision understanding. During the demo session at the live event, ChatGPT solved a linear equation in real-time when the user was writing it on paper. It could gauge the emotions of the speaker on camera and identify objects.

What are GPT-4o's limitations?

Although it is claimed to be the most advanced model, GPT-4o is not without limitations. On its official blog, OpenAI said that GPT-4o is still in the early stages of exploring the potential

of unified multimodal interaction, meaning certain features like audio outputs are initially accessible in a limited form only, with preset voices.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Science & Technology

Source: Indian Express

3. Why some Indians are turning to LMIA work permits to emigrate to Canada

Introduction

The Canadian government imposed an intake cap on international student permit applications in January. It will be enforced for two years amid high levels of immigration that have reportedly put a strain on local resources. For 2024, the cap is expected to result in approximately 3,60,000 approved study permits, a decrease of 35 per cent from 2023.

Following the imposition of intake caps on international student admissions to Canada this year, many Indians hoping to emigrate have been turning to alternative routes. For many, the Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) permit has emerged as a preferred option.



What is LMIA?

The LMIA programme allows Canadian employers to hire foreign workers if recruitment efforts for hiring local employees fail. Employers need to post their job requirements on the official Canadian portal, and eligible foreign workers can apply through it.

According to the Canadian government's website, "A positive LMIA will show that there is a need for a foreign worker to fill the job. It will also show that no Canadian worker or permanent resident is available to do the job. A positive LMIA is sometimes called a confirmation letter."

Once an employer gets the positive LMIA, workers can apply for the job. If they get selected, they will then need Canadian work permits. To apply for a work permit, a worker needs a job offer letter, a contract, a copy of the LMIA, and the LMIA number.

Why is LMIA becoming popular among Indians, and who is applying under it?

Several factors are responsible. First, there is the increasingly competitive nature of the international student visa process, due to caps on international admissions.

Second, given labour shortages, roles such as farm/dairy workers, cooks, welders, plumbers, carpenters, and caregivers are being recruited for. Sectors such as healthcare and technology also have vacancies.

Why is LMIA being preferred over the student visa route?

The rising costs associated with student visas, including living expenses and tuition fees, are also deterring some people from seeking that route since their main goal for immigrating may be to work in Canada.

While study permits often require higher language proficiency scores, many jobs under LMIA accept lower scores in English proficiency tests like the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Scores between the 4.5 and 5.5 bands each in the four modules of speaking, reading, writing, listening are acceptable for some jobs.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Bilateral Relations

Source: Indian Express

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