

09– 10 – 2022

News: UN Council rejects debate on Xinjiang

- The UN Human Rights Council recently voted against holding a debate on alleged abuses in China's Xinjiang region after intense lobbying by Beijing, in a major setback for Western nations. India and 10 other nations abstained.

UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

- United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is a United Nations body whose mission is to **promote and protect human rights around the world.**
- UNHRC has **47 members elected for a swaggered 3 year term** on a regional group basis.
- HQ of UNHRC is in **Geneva, Switzerland.**
- The UNHRC **investigates allegations of breaches of human rights in United Nations member states, and addresses important thematic human rights issues** such as freedom of association and assembly, freedom of expression, freedom of belief and religion, women's rights, LGBT rights, and the rights of racial and ethnic minorities.
- The UNHRC was established by the **UN General Assembly on 15 March 2006 to replace the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR, herein CHR)** that

had been strongly criticised for allowing countries with poor human rights records to be members.

Special Rapporteurs (SRs)

- Special Rapporteurs ("SRs") are **independent experts appointed by the U.N. Human Rights Council** (formerly the U.N. Commission on Human Rights) with the mandate **to monitor, advise and publicly report on human rights situations in specific countries** (country mandates) and **on human rights violations worldwide** (thematic mandates).
- The thematic mandates cover a wide range of issues relating to **civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights, including the human rights of migrants, violence against women, the rights of internally displaced persons, freedom of religion and arbitrary detention, among many others.**
- The functions of Special Rapporteurs include **responding to individual complaints, conducting studies, providing advice on technical cooperation and undertaking country visits to assess specific human rights situations.**
- Most Special Rapporteurs also receive information on specific allegations of human rights violations and send urgent appeals or letters of allegation to governments asking for clarification and concrete measures to end rights violations.

- While the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights at the United Nations provides the Special Rapporteurs with the personnel and logistical assistance necessary for them to carry out their mandates, Special Rapporteurs nonetheless serve in their personal capacity, and **do not receive salaries or any other financial retribution for their work.**

News: The Indian made LCH 'Prachand' and its significance

Light Combat Helicopter Prachand

- Recently, the **Indian Air Force formally inducted the indigenously developed multi-role Light Combat Helicopter (LCH), Prachanda** which is suitable for **operating in high-altitude battlefields.**
- The LCH is the only attack helicopter in the world which can **land and take off at an altitude of 5,000 meters with a considerable load of weapons and fuel.**
- The helicopter uses **radar-absorbing material to lower radar signature** and has a **significantly crash-proof structure and landing gear.**
- A pressurised cabin offers **protection from Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) contingencies.**
- The helicopter is equipped with a countermeasure dispensing system that protects it from enemy radars or infrared seekers of enemy missiles.

- LCH is powered by two French-origin Shakti engines manufactured by the HAL.
- The LCH has the capabilities of combat roles such as destruction of enemy air defence, counter insurgency warfare, combat search and rescue, anti-tank, and counter surface force operations.

Genesis

- It was during the 1999 Kargil war that the need was first felt for a homegrown lightweight assault helicopter that could hold precision strikes in all Indian battlefield scenarios.
- This meant a craft that could operate in very hot deserts and also in very cold high altitudes, in counter-insurgency scenarios to full-scale battle conditions.
- India has been operating sub 3 ton category French-origin legacy helicopters, Chetak and Cheetah, made in India by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).
- These single engine machines were, primarily, utility helicopters. Indian forces also operate the Lancer, an armed version of Cheetah.
- In addition, the Indian Air Force currently operates the Russian origin Mi-17 and its variants Mi-17 IV and Mi-17 V5, with maximum take-off weight of 13 tonnes, which are to be phased out starting 2028.

- The government sanctioned the LCH project in October 2006 and HAL was tasked to develop it.

News: Vyom mitra

Vyom Mitra

- Vyom Mitra is a **half-humanoid and her body stops at the torso and has no legs.**
- She is capable of **switching panel operations, performing Environment Control and Life Support Systems (ECLSS) functions, conversations with the astronauts, recognizing them and solving their queries.**
- She will simulate the human functions required for space before real astronauts take off in August 2022.
- The humanoid has been developed in **ISRO Inertial Systems Unit, Thiruvananthapuram.**
- Over the past few months, the **IISU has successfully integrated it with a computer “brain”, which enables it to “read” control panels aboard the unmanned test flights and communicate with the ISRO ground stations.**
- The AI enabled robot **is designed to fly aboard a rocket, withstanding vibrations and shock during the flight.**

- Meanwhile, Vyommitra is set to get a digital twin. The “twin” will undergo computer simulations where the control systems are tested for microgravity conditions.
- The twin will be developed in collaboration with academic institutions such as the IITs.