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INNER PARTY DEMOCRACY

In News

- The recent split of MPs from the AAP highlighted the urgent need to reinforce internal democracy within political parties.

Internal democracy within political parties

- It is also known as intra-party democracy, refers to the level and methods of including party members in decision making and deliberation within the party structure.

Importance of Internal Party Democracy

- **Foundation of Democracy:** Political parties are essential for representation in a democracy, and without democratic functioning within them, the overall democratic system loses its substance and effectiveness.
- **Transparent Candidate Selection:** Transparent and democratic processes ensure that candidates are chosen based on merit, public support, and performance instead of loyalty or favouritism.
- **Accountability:** Internal elections and consultations make leaders accountable to party members instead of only top leadership, thereby improving responsiveness and legitimacy.
- **Reducing dynastic politics:** Without internal democracy, power tends to concentrate in families or elites, restricting opportunities for grassroots leaders and undermining merit-based politics.
- **Preventing factionalism and instability:** Structured internal mechanisms for leadership change and conflict resolution help reduce party splits, defections, and internal instability.

Why Inner Democracy is Weak in Indian Parties

- **Centralized Leadership:** Parties often revolve around charismatic leaders or dynastic families, sidelining collective decision-making.
- **Opaque Candidate Selection:** Party tickets are often allocated based on loyalty, caste calculations, or financial influence instead of grassroots consultation.
- **Factionalism & Patronage:** Internal dissent is often suppressed, with factions managed through patronage instead of open democratic debate.
- **Weak Institutional Rules:** There is no strong legal framework requiring political parties to conduct internal elections or disclose their finances.

- **Financial Dependence:** Opaque funding practices reduce transparency and weaken accountability in political parties.
- **Electoral Incentives:** Parties often focus on electoral winnability rather than democratic processes, strengthening personality-driven politics.

Do you know?

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) derives its authority from Article 324 and has statutory powers under the Representation of People Act, 1950, including registering political parties under Section 29A.
- However, the Supreme Court in *Indian National Congress (I) vs Institute of Social Welfare* (2002) held that the ECI cannot deregister political parties for constitutional violations or breach of undertakings, limiting its regulatory power.
 - ♦ This creates a situation where the ECI can register parties but has little authority to act against their misconduct, effectively restricting its enforcement role.
- The anti-defection law in the Tenth Schedule restricts legislators from switching parties, though exceptions exist such as merger by two-thirds of legislators or condonation by the party in certain cases.
- In *Subhash Desai vs Principal Secretary, Governor of Maharashtra* (2023), the Supreme Court clarified that the "political party" (not the legislature party) is central for appointing the whip and leader of the legislative group.
 - ♦ Earlier rulings like *Rajendra Singh Rana vs Swami Prasad Maurya* (2007) stressed that legislative splits must reflect an actual split in the original political party to be valid, not just within the legislature group.

Suggestions

- **Party constitutions :** All registered political parties should have a public constitution outlining leadership selection, internal elections, disciplinary rules, and candidate selection processes.
- **Strengthen Election Commission :** The Election Commission of India can be empowered to ensure compliance with democratic norms and suspend or deregister parties that repeatedly violate them.

- ◆ There is a need to introduce a clear legal framework to regulate internal democratic processes within parties.
- **Financial Transparency:** Mandatory disclosure of donations and expenditures; strengthen oversight of electoral bonds.
- **Capacity Building:** Encourage training and leadership development within parties to broaden participation.
- **Grassroots Empowerment:** Institutionalize bottom-up decision-making through local party units.
- **Civic Pressure:** Media, civil society, and voters must demand accountability and reward parties practicing internal democracy.

Conclusion

- Inner-party democracy is essential for strengthening democracy itself. Without internal reforms, political parties risk centralisation, defections, and weak accountability.
- Strengthening it will make parties more representative and transparent, reinforcing constitutional morality and securing India's democratic future.

Source :IE

WEAKENING OF TRADE UNIONS IN INDIA

Context

- In the background of a number of protests for minimum wages; expansion of the social security ambit; and against the contractualisation of jobs, the **role of trade unions have come up for discussion.**

Trade Unions

- **Trade Unions are voluntary organizations** of Workers as well as Employers formed **to protect and promote the interest of their members.**
- They are the most suitable organizations for balancing and **improving the relations between the employer and the employees.**
- The workers come together **to maintain and improve their bargaining power on wages and working conditions.**
- **The first organized Trade Union in India** named as the **Madras Labour Union** was formed in the **year 1918.**

- **1926:** Enactment of Trade Unions Act 1926 (legal recognition).
- **Major Trade Union Organizations are:**
 - ◆ Indian National Trade Union Congress;
 - ◆ Mazdoor Sangh;
 - ◆ Centre of Indian Trade Unions;
 - ◆ Hind Mazdoor Sabha.

Role of Trade Unions

- **Collective Bargaining:** Negotiate wages, bonuses, and service conditions with employers.
- **Protection of Workers' Rights:** Safeguard against unfair dismissal, exploitation, and wage cuts.
- **Dispute Resolution:** Act as mediator between workers and management to prevent strikes/lockouts.
- **Welfare Activities:** Provide support in health, education, housing, and social security.
- **Awareness & Education:** Educate workers about rights, laws, and responsibilities.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Influence labour laws and government policies.
- **Mobilization:** Organize protests, strikes, and movements when needed.
- **Facilitating Communication:** Bridge gap between management and labour.

Recent Concerns

- **Declining Bargaining Power: Before 1991,** unions had relatively better bargaining power, mainly in the public sector.
 - ◆ **Post-liberalisation,** mainstream trade unions gradually suffered from declining bargaining power as the labour market became predominantly informal.
- **Fragmentation & Multiplicity:** Existence of multiple unions within the same industry or enterprise leads to inter-union rivalry and weak bargaining power.
- **Political Interference:** Many unions are affiliated with political parties which at times diverts focus from worker welfare to political agendas.
- **Limited Reach in New Economy:** Poor representation of gig workers, platform workers, and freelancers leads to difficulty in organizing workers in dispersed and digital workplaces.

- **Low Awareness Among Workers:** Workers, especially migrants and informal labourers are often unaware of rights which limit union membership and participation.

Constitutional Safeguards related to Trade Unions

- **Fundamental Right: Article 19(1)(c)** guarantees the right to form associations or unions. However, this right is not absolute, Article 19(4) allows reasonable restrictions in the interest of: Public order, Morality, Sovereignty and integrity of India.
 - ♦ The Constitution does not guarantee the right to strike, The Supreme Court has clarified that the right to form unions is not the right to strike.
- **Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSPs) guide the State in labour welfare:**
 - ♦ **Article 38:** Promote social order based on justice.
 - ♦ **Article 39:** Ensure adequate livelihood and prevent exploitation.
 - ♦ **Article 41:** Right to work, education, and public assistance.
 - ♦ **Article 42:** Just and humane working conditions, maternity relief.
 - ♦ **Article 43:** Living wage and decent standard of life.
 - ♦ **Article 43A:** Participation of workers in management of industries.

Way Forward

- The government should prioritise expanding unionization in informal and gig sectors.
- Strengthen legal framework for worker protection.
- Encourage social dialogue between government, employers, and workers.

Source: TH

ANTI-DEFECTION LAW

Context

- More than two-thirds of the MPs of the Aam Aadmi Party in the Rajya Sabha have decided to merge with the Bharatiya Janata Party, raising questions around the application of the anti-defection law.

What is the Anti-defection law?

- **Aaya Ram Gaya Ram** was a phrase that became popular in Indian politics after a Haryana MLA Gaya Lal changed his party thrice within the same day in 1967.

- The anti-defection law (Tenth Schedule of the Constitution) was inserted by the 52nd Amendment in 1985 to prevent political defections.

- **Constitutional Disqualifications** [Articles 102(1) & 191(1)]: A person shall be disqualified if he/she:
 - ♦ Holds an office of profit under the Central or State Government;
 - ♦ Is of unsound mind, as declared by a competent court;
 - ♦ Is an undischarged insolvent;
 - ♦ Is not a citizen of India, or has acquired citizenship of a foreign State, or shows allegiance to a foreign State;
 - ♦ Is disqualified under any law made by Parliament.

Features of the Anti-Defection Law

- **Disqualification on ground of defection:** A legislator belonging to a political party will be disqualified if he: (i) voluntarily gives up his party membership, or (ii) votes/abstains to vote in the House contrary to the direction issued by his political party.
 - ♦ A member is not disqualified if he has taken prior permission of his party, or if the voting or abstention is condoned by the party within 15 days.
 - ♦ Independent members will be disqualified if they join a political party after getting elected to the House. Nominated members will be disqualified if they join any political party six months after getting nominated.
- The decision to disqualify a member from the House **rests with the Chairman/Speaker of the House.**

Exceptions

- The Tenth Schedule originally provided for **two exceptions** that would not render the members liable for disqualification.
 - ♦ **One-third members** of the 'legislature party' split to form a separate group.
 - ♦ Merger of their 'political party' with another party that is approved by two-third members of its 'legislature party'.
 - However, the **first exception (one-third split) was removed in 2003 to strengthen the law.**

Objectives of Anti-Defection Law



Political Stability

Prevents government collapses due to party shifts



Electoral Mandate

Upholds voter choices by discouraging party-switching



Discipline

Ensures adherence to party positions on critical votes



Corruption

Deters defections motivated by personal gain

Supreme Court Judgments

- **Kihoto Hollohan v. Zachillhu (1992):** The decisions of the Speaker regarding disqualification under the Tenth Schedule (Anti-defection Law) are subject to judicial review by the High Courts and the Supreme Court.
- **Keisham Meghachandra Singh v. Speaker, Manipur (2020):** The Supreme Court set a clear outer limit of three months for the Speaker to decide on a disqualification petition.

Key Issues and Challenges

- **Delay in decision-making:** In several cases (e.g., Karnataka, Manipur), decisions were delayed for **months or even years**, affecting government stability.
- **Allegations of bias:** The Presiding Officer (Speaker/Chairman) is often from the ruling party, raising concerns of partisan decisions.
- **Limited judicial intervention:** Although judicial review is allowed (*Kihoto Hollohan v. Zachillhu*), courts generally intervene **only after the Speaker's decision**, not during the process.
- **Restriction on legislators' freedom:** The law discourages MPs/MLAs from voting independently, limiting **freedom of speech and conscience** in legislatures.
- **Rigid whip system:** Party whips are issued even on non-critical issues, reducing scope for **intra-party debate and dissent**.
- **Mass defections still possible:** The **two-thirds exception** allows large-scale defections under the guise of "merger," weakening the law's intent. Bodies like the **Law Commission (170th Report)** and various scholars have argued that the law has **failed to fully curb political defections** and needs reform.

Conclusion and Way Forward

- The Anti-Defection Law has helped reduce political instability but suffers from implementation flaws and overreach, weakening its democratic purpose.

- Reforms are needed to balance party discipline with accountability, ensure unbiased adjudication, and promote internal party democracy to strengthen India's parliamentary system.

Source: TH

MYTHOS CHALLENGE: AI, CYBERSECURITY, AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Context

- The emergence of highly advanced models such as **Anthropic's Mythos**, which has the ability to autonomously discover and exploit vulnerabilities in critical infrastructure, has made governance an urgent global priority.

AI and the Changing Nature of Cybersecurity

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming the cybersecurity landscape, creating both unprecedented opportunities and systemic risks.
- It has significantly enhanced cybersecurity capabilities by enabling **real-time threat detection, predictive analytics for cyber risks, and automation of defence mechanisms**.
- However, the same capabilities can be weaponised. Advanced AI systems can identify **zero-day vulnerabilities**, execute **multi-stage cyberattacks autonomously**, and target **critical infrastructure** such as banking, energy, and telecom.
- AI-driven systems can automate vulnerability discovery, while the rise of **agentic AI**, which operates with minimal human intervention, makes traditional security frameworks inadequate.

Case of Anthropic's Mythos

- The Mythos model exemplifies the **dual-use dilemma of AI**. It can strengthen cyber defences, however, its ability to exploit system weaknesses poses serious threats:
 - ◆ Potential misuse by **non-state actors**
 - ◆ Risk of **unauthorised access**
 - ◆ Capability to outmatch human cybersecurity experts
- Such developments have made **AI governance an immediate necessity**.

Governance Challenges in the AI Era

- **Regulatory Gaps:** Existing cybersecurity laws are not designed for **self-learning AI systems**.

- ♦ India's cyber laws struggle to accommodate AI-driven threats, necessitating updated frameworks.
- **Lack of Global Consensus:** AI risks transcend national boundaries. There is a need for **cyber diplomacy** and **international cooperation**, as cyber threats to critical infrastructure have global spillovers.
- **Accountability and Transparency (Opacity Problem):** AI systems often function as 'black boxes', making it difficult to assign responsibility.
- **Private Sector Dominance:** The development and deployment of powerful AI models are largely controlled by private corporations, raising concerns about **accessibility, safety, and accountability in case of misuse**.
- **Security-Centric Approach (USA):** It focuses on **national security and innovation balance**:
 - ♦ Executive Orders on **AI safety and cybersecurity**
 - ♦ Collaboration between **AI firms and government agencies**
 - ♦ Controlled access to powerful models
- **AI Safety and Frontier Models (UK):** The UK has established institutions such as the **AI Safety Institute**:
 - ♦ Focus on **frontier AI risks**, including autonomous cyberattacks
 - ♦ Promotes **international cooperation on AI safety standards**
- **State-Controlled AI Governance (China):** China follows a **centralised regulatory model**:
 - ♦ Strict controls on AI deployment and data flows
 - ♦ Integration of AI governance with **national security objectives**

Challenges Specific To India

- **Financial & Critical:** AI models like Mythos pose risks to **financial systems and critical infrastructure**.
 - ♦ The government has initiated **high-level consultations** to assess threats.
- **Regulatory:** Fragmented regulatory frameworks; and insufficient preparedness for AI-driven cyber threats.
- **Strategic:** India's large digital ecosystem like UPI, Aadhaar, telecom networks makes it particularly vulnerable.
 - ♦ At the same time, its scale positions it as a key stakeholder in **global AI governance**.

Related Global Efforts in AI, Cybersecurity, and Governance

- **Trends in Global Governance:** Across jurisdictions, some common trends are visible, like:
 - ♦ Shift from **voluntary guidelines to binding regulations**
 - ♦ Adoption of **risk-based frameworks**
 - ♦ Growing importance of **AI safety testing before deployment**
 - ♦ Recognition of **dual-use nature of AI in cybersecurity**
- **Risk-Based Regulatory Model (EU):** The EU has taken the lead with the **AI Act**, which adopts a **risk-based classification**:
 - ♦ High-risk AI (critical infrastructure, law enforcement) faces strict compliance
 - ♦ Emphasis on **transparency, accountability, and human oversight**.

Multilateral Initiatives

- **G7 Hiroshima AI Process:** Focus on **safe, secure, and trustworthy AI**; and encourages **voluntary codes of conduct**.
- **OECD AI Principles:** Promote **responsible AI use**, human rights, and transparency
- **United Nations Efforts:** Discussions on **global AI governance frameworks**; and emphasis on **inclusive participation of developing nations**.
- **Cybersecurity-Specific Global Cooperation:**
 - ♦ **NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre:** Focus on AI-enabled cyber threats
 - ♦ **Global Forum on Cyber Expertise (GFCE):** Capacity building for cybersecurity; and increasing emphasis on **AI-driven cyber defence collaboration**.

India's Perspective

- **Policy:** India emphasises the need for **secure digital infrastructure** and responsible AI deployment, and has taken several steps to address cybersecurity and AI governance:
 - ♦ **National Cyber Security Policy (2013)** and subsequent updates
 - ♦ **Digital Personal Data Protection Act (2023)**
 - ♦ NITI Aayog's **National Strategy for AI**

Way Forward: Global Governance

- **International Cooperation:** Establish **global norms and treaties** for AI use; and promote **information sharing** on cyber threats.

- **Risk-Based Regulation:** Categorise AI systems based on risk (low, medium, high); and impose stricter controls on high-risk systems.
- **Public-Private Collaboration:** Governments and tech companies need to collaborate on **secure deployment**; Initiatives like controlled access (e.g., Mythos testing) can help.
- **Strengthening Domestic Frameworks:** Update cyber laws to include AI-specific provisions; and build **institutional capacity** for monitoring and enforcement.
- **Inclusion of Developing Countries:** India and other emerging economies need to have a **seat at the global table**, as they are major data providers and AI markets.

Source: IE

INDUSTRY BODY FLAGS CONCERN OVER PROPOSED PESTICIDES BILL

Context

- An industry body of pesticide manufacturers has urged the Union Agriculture Secretary to **bring in targeted changes in the draft Pesticides Management Bill** to ensure farmers **get faster access to effective crop protection technologies**.

About

- The Agriculture Ministry released the **draft Pesticides Management Bill, 2025**, seeking public comments on the legislation that aims to replace the **Insecticides Act, 1968, and the Insecticides Rules, 1971**.
 - ♦ It aims to combat the growing menace of spurious pesticides and strengthening farmer welfare through **stricter regulation and the use of technology**.
- **Concerns of Stakeholders:**
 - ♦ It called for inclusion of **a time-bound Protection of Regulatory Data (PRD) framework** for new molecules and new uses.
 - ♦ Bringing new use to India **requires major investment** in safety, efficacy, residue and environmental data.
 - ♦ Without a clear framework governing how that data is used, there is limited incentive to introduce newer technologies early in the Indian market.
 - ♦ The association has therefore proposed a **limited, time-bound PRD framework of**

about five years from first registration, which would create a more predictable pathway for newer solutions to reach farmers faster.

Major Features of the Bill

- **Central Pesticides Board (CPB):** It shall be constituted within a period of six months from the date of commencement of this Act.
 - ♦ It is an apex regulatory body, providing scientific and technical guidance.
- **Registration Committee:** To be constituted within a period of six months from the date of commencement of this Act, it is a specialized panel to handle applications and decisions regarding pesticide registrations.
- **Reform-oriented measures:** It includes the use of technology and digital processes to streamline regulatory procedures.
- **Pesticide Registration:**
 - ♦ Mandatory digital registration for anyone intending to import or manufacture pesticides.
 - ♦ Registration decisions are based on safety, efficacy, and necessity.
- **Licenses and Compliance:**
 - ♦ Licensing required for manufacturing, selling, stocking, displaying, transporting, or undertaking pesticide-related commercial operations.
 - ♦ Licensing Officers empowered to grant, amend, suspend, or cancel licenses.
 - ♦ Detailed obligations for licensees, including record-keeping and compliance with infrastructure and safety norms.
- **Review, Suspension, and Cancellation:**
 - ♦ Registration and licenses can be reviewed or revoked if pesticides pose unacceptable risks or if conditions of registration/licensing are violated.
 - ♦ Products may be banned following formal cancellation procedures.
- **Enforcement and Monitoring:**
 - ♦ Pesticide inspectors and licensing officers have powers to enforce compliance.
 - ♦ State Governments must provide periodic reports.
 - ♦ The Central Government can require data and take action to enforce law provisions.
- **Penalties:** The draft allows state-level authorities to impose higher penalties in cases of compounding offences, strengthening enforcement at the local level.

Significance

- **The Bill modernizes pesticide governance by:**
 - ♦ Introducing digital processes for registration and licensing.
 - ♦ Strengthening regulatory oversight and safety protocols.
 - ♦ Creating clear institutional structures for decision-making.
 - ♦ Focusing on environmental and human health protection.

Source: TH

NEWS IN SHORT

BRICS-MENA ENVOYS EXPRESS CONCERN OVER WAR IN WEST ASIA

Context

- Deputy Foreign Ministers and Special Envoys of the **BRICS grouping and MENA (Middle East and North Africa)** expressed “deep concern” about the U.S.-Israel war against Iran.

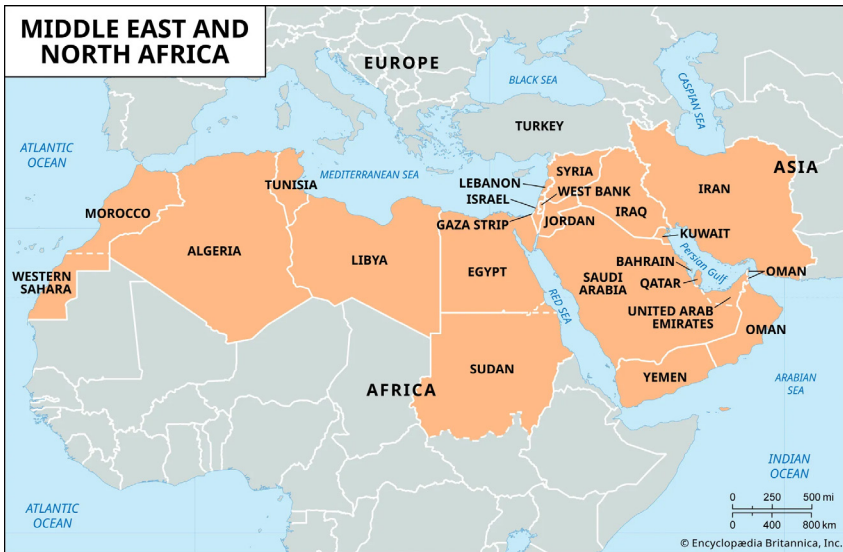
About BRICS

- **BRICS** is an acronym that refers to a group of **five major emerging national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.**
 - ♦ **Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates** have joined BRICS as new full members .
- BRICS represents around **41%** of the global

population, around **24%** of the global GDP and around **16%** of global trade.

- **Origin:** As a formal grouping, BRIC started after the meeting of the Leaders of Russia, India and China in St. Petersburg on the margins of the **G8 Outreach Summit in 2006.**
 - ♦ The term was originally coined by economist **Jim O’Neill in 2001.**
 - ♦ The grouping was formalized during the 1st meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers on the margins of **UNGA in New York in 2006.**
 - ♦ Initially, the grouping was termed BRIC as **South Africa was inducted in 2010** and from there on it has been referred to as **BRICS.**
- BRICS countries have come together to deliberate on important issues under the **three pillars of:**
 - ♦ political and security,
 - ♦ economic and financial and
 - ♦ cultural and people-to-people exchanges.
- **Summits:** The governments of the BRICS states have met annually at formal summits **since 2009.**
- **Decision Making:** All decisions are taken by BRICS member states in full consultation and consensus.
- **New Development Bank:** Formerly referred to as the BRICS Development Bank, is a multilateral development bank established by the BRICS states.
 - ♦ The Bank shall support public or private projects through loans, guarantees, equity participation and other financial instruments.

- MENA stands for the **Middle East and Northern Africa**, referring to the countries between Iran in the East and Tunisia and Morocco in the West.
- It is pivotal due to its **vast oil and natural gas reserves**, holding more than half of the world’s oil reserves and two-fifths of its natural gas reserves.
- This makes MENA a **crucial player in the energy markets** and offers significant investment opportunities, particularly in the oil and natural gas sectors.



The map shows the MENA region highlighted in orange, spanning from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Indian Ocean in the east. Key countries labeled include Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Yemen. Major bodies of water like the Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea, Persian Gulf, and Arabian Sea are also shown. A scale bar at the bottom right indicates distances up to 500 miles and 800 kilometers.

Source: TH

SAARC CURRENCY SWAP FRAMEWORK

Context

- India has approved the **first withdrawal of 30 billion rupees for the Maldives under the SAARC Currency Swap Framework**, reinforcing its ongoing financial support to the island nation.

SAARC Currency Swap Framework

- It is a recognised **bilateral swap arrangement** in the Global Financial Safety Net.
- It aims to **further strengthen India's ties with SAARC Countries** and promote regional integration and inter-dependence.
- The Framework is in place **since 2012** to provide SAARC countries a line of funding for short-term foreign exchange requirements.

SAARC

- The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established with the signing of the **SAARC Charter in Dhaka in 1985**.
- SAARC comprises eight Member States:** Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- The objectives of the Association as outlined in the SAARC Charter are:**
 - to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region;
 - to promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the countries of South Asia;
 - to promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific fields;
 - to strengthen cooperation with other developing countries;

Source: AIR

RBI CANCELLED PAYTM PAYMENTS BANK'S BANKING LICENCE

In News

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the banking licence of Paytm Payments Bank Limited, effectively barring it from carrying out any banking operations with immediate effect.

Payments Bank

- It is a specialized bank licensed by the RBI to offer basic banking services such as deposits,

payments, and remittances, but without issuing credit cards or offering loans.

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued guidelines for licensing of small finance banks and payments banks on November 27, 2014 .
- Key Features**
 - It Offers savings and current accounts and Facilitates bill payments and fund transfers
 - It can accept deposits only up to Rs two lakh per customer and are not allowed to offer loans or credit cards.
 - It Provides debit cards and mobile banking.

Source :Air

PROJECT DANTAK

In News

- Project DANTAK celebrated its Raising Day marking 65 years of its continuous service in Bhutan since 1961.

Project DANTAK

- Project DANTAK was established on 24 April 1961 through the vision of His Majesty the Third King of Bhutan and then Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to improve Bhutan's connectivity and support its socio-economic development.
- It was assigned the task of building the country's first motorable roads.
 - By 1968, it had completed key routes, including the Samdrup Jongkhar–Trashigang road and the Phuentsholing–Thimphu highway.
- It is led by the Border Roads Organisation(BRO).

Progress

- Project DANTAK has been a key driver of Bhutan's connectivity and socio-economic development, constructing over 1,500 km of roads, including the East–West Highway, and major infrastructure such as highways, airports, bridges, hospitals, schools, and communication networks.
- In recent years, it has focused on modernising infrastructure through road widening and upgrading major routes like Confluence–Haa and the Samdrup Jongkhar–Trashigang highway, improving safety and travel efficiency.
- It has also shown strong disaster response by quickly restoring connectivity after landslides and road damage.

Source :PIB

FTO RANKING

In News

- The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) has released the second phase ranking (April 2026) of the DGCA Approved Flying Training Organizations (FTOs).

FTO Ranking system

- It is compiled by The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) under the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA)
- It aims to improve transparency, enhance safety standards, and promote accountability across DGCA-approved flying training institutes.
 - ◆ The first phase of the ranking framework was published in October 2025.

Objectives

- The ranking system aims to help aspiring pilots and their families make informed choices by increasing transparency in pilot training and making a flying career more attractive to youth.

Latest Ranking

- The latest rankings show overall progress, with Avyanna Aviation Pvt. Ltd. achieving the top Category 'A' for the first time, while more institutes have moved into Category 'B' and fewer remain in Category 'C', indicating improving standards.

Impacts of FTO ranking system

- India's aviation training sector has improved significantly, with training flying hours increasing from 32% to 50%, expansion of aircraft fleets at flying training schools, and greater efficiency that has reduced the time needed for cadets to complete Commercial Pilot Licence requirements.
- The system has also helped aspiring pilots make informed choices using objective performance data and has strengthened pilot training infrastructure in line with India's goal of becoming a global aviation hub.

Source :PIB

