

RAJYA SABHA DEFECTIONS AND DISQUALIFICATION UNDER ANTI-DEFECTION LAW

Seven Rajya Sabha MPs from the Aam Aadmi Party—including Raghav Chadha and Harbhajan Singh—have joined the Bharatiya Janata Party, sharply reducing AAP’s strength in the Upper House to just three members.

Anti-Defection Law in India: Key Provisions and Criticism

- The anti-defection law is contained in the **Tenth Schedule**, added by the **52nd** Constitutional Amendment Act 1985 to curb political defections and ensure stability in legislatures.
- **Changes Introduced by the 91st Amendment (2003)**

The 91st Constitutional Amendment Act 2003 strengthened the law in two major ways:

- **Stricter Merger Rule** - At least two-thirds of a party’s members in a House must defect together to qualify as a valid merger. If fewer members switch, they face disqualification proceeding. This replaced the earlier rule that allowed a one-third split, which had been widely misused.
- **Cap on Council of Ministers** - Total number of ministers capped at 15% of the strength of Lok Sabha or State Assembly. Minimum of 12 ministers allowed in smaller states. This aimed to reduce political inducements and office-based defections.
- **Flipsides of the Anti-Defection Law: Erosion of Legislative Independence**
 - While the anti-defection law was designed to curb political instability and horse-trading, it has significantly restricted the autonomy of legislators.
 - Members risk disqualification even for defying the party whip, limiting their ability to represent constituency interests or independent judgment.
 - This has led to increased centralisation of power within party leadership, making elected representatives largely subordinate to party decisions rather than accountable to voters.

- **Role of the Rajya Sabha Chairman**
 - Until a ruling is made, the defecting MPs will officially remain AAP members, even if they functionally align with the BJP.
 - The Chairman has the authority to either:
 - Accept the move as a merger, protecting them from disqualification, or
 - Reject it and proceed with disqualification proceedings
 - The decision can subsequently be challenged in court.
- **Impact on Voting and Parliamentary Dynamics**
 - During the interim period, a **constitutional anomaly arises**: although technically AAP members, the MPs may vote with the NDA, increasing its effective strength in the Rajya Sabha.
 - AAP can still issue a **party whip**, and any defiance by the defecting MPs could become separate grounds for disqualification.
 - The Chairman will also decide such cases, adding another layer of uncertainty.
 - The situation highlights legal grey areas in the anti-defection framework, where the final outcome depends on the Chairman's interpretation of the merger clause and subsequent judicial scrutiny.

Anti-Defection Law: Consequences if Two-Thirds Threshold Is Not Met

- If fewer than two-thirds of members had defected, the rebels would have been **liable for disqualification** under the Tenth Schedule.
- Any member could petition the Rajya Sabha Chairman to act against them for switching sides or defying the party whip.
- However, the law **does not prescribe a time limit** for the presiding officer's decision, allowing delays that can let members continue in office despite being liable for disqualification.
- Judicial review is possible only after the Chairman's ruling, creating scope for prolonged uncertainty, even though the Supreme Court of India has advised that such cases be decided within a reasonable time.

ANTHROPIC'S 'MYTHOS' TOOL TRIGGERS GLOBAL REGULATORY ALARM

Anthropic's new AI model **Claude Mythos** has triggered global concern due to its advanced capabilities, marking a significant leap over earlier systems.

In India, the issue has gained urgency, with FM Nirmala Sitharaman chairing a high-level meeting over potential threats to the banking sector, and the government engaging directly with Anthropic's leadership.

Concerns have intensified further with reports that China has developed a similar system, **Qihoo 360**, capable of identifying software vulnerabilities at scale. While such tools offer breakthroughs in cyber defence, they also raise fears of misuse, cyber risks, and global technological competition.

About Mythos

- Mythos is the latest model in Anthropic's Claude AI family, currently released only in a limited preview.
- It represents a major leap in artificial intelligence capability, particularly in cybersecurity.
- What sets Mythos apart is its ability to **autonomously detect critical vulnerabilities in widely used software and infrastructure** at a speed far exceeding human researchers.
- At the same time, it can also fix these vulnerabilities when used defensively—but poses serious risks because it can exploit them if used maliciously, making it a powerful yet potentially dangerous tool.

Why Mythos Has Alarmed Policymakers Worldwide?

- Anthropic claims that Mythos has identified serious flaws across major operating systems and web browsers, including vulnerabilities that had remained undetected for decades.
- The speed and scale of discovery have raised immediate global concerns.
- Compared to its predecessor **Opus 4.6**—which had near-zero success in exploit development—Mythos demonstrates a dramatic leap.
- It can convert vulnerabilities into working exploits at a far higher success rate, placing it in an entirely different capability class.

Mythos AI in Real-World Testing: Validation of Cybersecurity Risks

- **Strong Performance in Cybersecurity Benchmarks** - Independent testing found that Mythos solved 73% of expert-level cybersecurity challenges, far outperforming earlier AI models.
- **Improved Reasoning and Problem-Solving Ability** - Mythos showed the ability to sustain performance across complex, multi-layered problems, indicating significant improvements in reasoning, planning, and technical depth.
- **Lowering the Barrier for Cybercrime** - The model's ability to handle complex operations suggests that even less-skilled actors could conduct sophisticated cyberattacks, significantly increasing global cybersecurity risks.

India's AI Policy Reassessment After Mythos Concerns

- Following concerns over Mythos, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman directed banks to maintain a high degree of vigilance and develop coordinated mechanisms to counter emerging cybersecurity threats.
- The Mythos episode is prompting India to **recalibrate its AI strategy**, balancing innovation with stronger governance, coordination, and risk mitigation frameworks.
- **Shift from Light-Touch Regulation**
 - India had so far followed a light-touch approach to AI regulation, focusing on innovation and economic growth.
 - However, the risks highlighted by Mythos may push policymakers toward a more cautious and security-oriented framework.
- **Creation of Institutional Mechanisms**
 - The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has set up:
 - AI Governance and Economic Group: An inter-ministerial body to coordinate AI policy.
 - Technology and Policy Expert Committee: To provide technical and regulatory guidance.

PROJECT DANTAK



- It is an overseas project of the **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)** under the **Ministry of Defence of India**.
- **Background:** It was established in **1961** as a result of an agreement between **Jigme Dorji Wangchuck**, the third king of Bhutan and then Prime Minister of India **Jawahar Lal Nehru**.
- It is primarily focused on **developing infrastructure** and providing connectivity in remote areas of Bhutan.
- **Achievements**
 - It was tasked to construct the **pioneering motorable roads in Bhutan**.

What is Border Road Organisation?

- It is a **road construction executive force** in India that provides support to the Indian Armed Forces.
- BRO was entirely brought under the **Ministry of Defence in 2015**.
- **Establishment:** It was formed on **7 May 1960** to secure India's borders and develop infrastructure in remote areas of the north and northeastern states of the country.
- It **develops and maintains road networks** in India's border areas and friendly neighboring
- **Motto:** *Shramena Sarvam Sadhyam* (everything is achievable through hard work).

ATLAS DRONE SWARM SYSTEM



- It is a **mobile battlefield platform** designed to **deploy and coordinate large numbers of drones** from a **single command point**.
- The system is **manufactured by China Electronic Technology Group Corporation (CETC)**, a **state-owned** defence electronics conglomerate working closely with the **Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA)**.

- **Mounted on vehicles**, the system is intended to **launch up to 96 drones in a coordinated swarm**, with **control consolidated under one operator**.
- Built around a **Swarm-2 combat vehicle**, a **command unit**, and a **support vehicle**, Atlas is designed for **reconnaissance**, **electronic disruption**, and **coordinated strikes**.
- **Features:**
 - The system enables **flexible grouping of drones into different operational formations**, including coordinated defensive structures and precision strike patterns.
 - **Each drone** within the Atlas system **can carry different payloads**. The drones can reportedly be equipped with **electro-optical reconnaissance payloads**, **strike munitions**, and **relay communications packages**, allowing the swarm to be configured for surveillance, attack support, battlefield sensing, and communications extension.
 - The system is designed for **swarm-level coordination**, where **drones can adapt formations** and **execute tasks collectively** while **retaining individual autonomy**.

TORNADO



- It is a **vertical, land-based column** of violently rotating air that forms from the base of a thunderstorm to the ground.
- It is **characterised by a rapid cyclonic** circulation and is often seen as a cloud-filled condensation funnel extending from the sky to the ground.
- When such a rotating column of air forms over a water body, it is **known as a waterspout**.
- **Formation of Tornado:**

A collision of **warm, moist air** (usually from tropical regions) **with cool, dry air** (typically from polar or upper regions), especially in the presence of a low-pressure system or trough, leads to the formation of thunderstorms and may trigger tornadoes.

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- **Wind Speeds and Movement:** It typically exhibit wind speeds ranging from 105 to 322 km/h, but some extreme events can exceed this range.
- They can be **stationary or move at high speeds**, often advancing at around 97 km/h across the landscape.
- **Geographical distribution:** Tornadoes occur most commonly **in mid-latitude regions (between 20° and 60° latitude in both hemispheres)** where cold polar air meets warm tropical air, producing frequent thunderstorm activity.
- The United States experiences the highest frequency of tornadoes globally, particularly in the region known as **“Tornado Alley”**.

NASHA MukT BHARAT ABHIYAAN



- It was launched on in 2020 by the **Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment**.
- It was initially launched in most vulnerable districts and now it has been extended to all districts of **the country with effect from 2023**.
- **Objective:** It intends to reach out to the masses and spread awareness about substance abuse through various activities like:
 - **Awareness** generation programmes
 - Focus on higher educational Institution, university campuses and schools
 - Reaching out into the Community and identifying dependent population,
 - Focus on counselling & treatment facilities in hospitals & rehabilitation centres
 - Capacity building programmes for a service providers
- **Target group:** Special emphasis is laid on the participation of stakeholders such as **women, children, educational institutions, civil society organizations** who may be directly or indirectly affected by substance use

Key Features of NMBA App 2.0

- It is **now accessible to citizens** with features of undertaking **e-Pledge, access to IEC material, helpline support and deaddiction centre details**.

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- **Dedicated Access for Grant-in-Aid Institutions (GIAs):** GIAs will now be onboarded onto the platform with **role-based access**, enabling real-time reporting and monitoring of activities at the deaddiction facilities.
- **Real time status of Anudan (Grant) for GIA institutions:** It incorporates Anudan status of all GIAs accessible to DoSJE, States / UTs and GIAs,
- **Nearest De-addiction Centre:** It Allows users to identify the **nearest de-addiction centre**, enabling quicker referral and improved access to treatment services.

REGULATING PAYMENTS BANK - PAYTM PAYMENTS BANK LICENCE CANCELLED BY RBI

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the banking licence of Paytm Payments Bank Limited (PPBL) with immediate effect, more than two years after initially restricting it from accepting new deposits.
- The RBI will approach the High Court to wind up the bank's operations, ensuring depositor interests are protected through a structured process.
- This case has become a landmark instance of **regulatory enforcement** in India's fintech and digital payments sector.

What Are Payments Banks?

- Payments banks are a unique category of banks introduced by the **RBI** to promote **financial inclusion**.
- They operate under tight restrictions, for instance,
 - **Can** accept deposits only up to ₹2 lakh per customer.
 - **Cannot** offer loans or credit cards.
 - Primarily serve as platforms for remittances, utility payments, and digital transactions.
- PPBL was founded by One97 Communications (49% stake) and Vijay Shekhar Sharma (51% stake), operating within the larger Paytm ecosystem.

Challenges:

- **Regulatory arbitrage risk** in the fintech space, where rapid growth often outpaces compliance infrastructure.
- Difficulty in maintaining KYC standards at scale for digital-first banks.
- The tension between financial innovation and depositor protection.
- Risks of group entity entanglement in banking operations, undermining independence.
- **Systemic disruption** to millions of users dependent on integrated payment ecosystems.

Way Forward:

- This episode reinforces the need for **robust compliance** frameworks in payments banks before scaling operations.
- It highlights broad supervisory and enforcement powers of the RBI under the BR Act.
- Fintech companies must **institutionalise** independent compliance functions and maintain strict separation from parent entities.
- Policymakers may **re-examine** the regulatory framework for payments banks, balancing inclusion goals with governance standards.

Conclusion:

- The cancellation of licence underscores that digital innovation cannot substitute regulatory discipline.
 - While fintech firms are central to India's inclusive growth and cashless economy goals, public trust depends on transparency, governance, and depositor protection.
 - The episode reinforces the principle that in banking, **compliance** is as important as innovation.
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