

EC DELISTS 111 PARTIES FOUND 'NON-EXISTENT'

In News:

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) recently delisted 111 more registered unrecognised political parties (RUPPs).
 - These parties were discovered to be non-existent upon verification of their registered addresses.
- Furthermore, the ECI referred three parties allegedly involved in financial impropriety to the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, for necessary legal and criminal action.

Registration of political parties in India:

Process

- **Article 324** of the Indian Constitution grants the ECI the authority to register political parties.
 - The registration of all political parties is governed by the provisions of **Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951**.
- According to the ECI, any party seeking registration must file an application (to the Secretary to the ECI) within 30 days of its formation.
- According to current guidelines:
 - the applicant is required to publish a proposed party name in two national daily newspapers and two local daily newspapers,
 - and provide two days for submitting objections, if any, with regard to the proposed registration of the party before the Commission within 30 days from the publication.
 - The notice for publication is also available on the ECI's website.

Importance of registering with the ECI:

- Although, registration with the ECI is **not mandatory**, but such registration has advantages if the party intends to use the provisions of the RPA, 1951.
- Candidates nominated by a political party registered with the ECI will be **given preference over purely independent candidates** when it comes to the allocation of free symbols.
- Section 13 A of the Income-tax Act allows registered political parties to claim an **income tax exemption on donations**.

- More importantly, these registered political parties can **eventually be recognised as a state or a national party** if they meet the conditions outlined by the Commission in the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968. **For example,**
 - If a party is designated as a ‘**state party**,’ it is entitled to the exclusive use of its reserved symbol for candidates nominated in the state in which it is designated.
 - If a party is recognised as a ‘**national party**’ it is entitled for exclusive allotment of its reserved symbol to the candidates set up by it throughout India.
 - Recognized 'state' and 'national' parties require **only one proposer** to file a nomination and are entitled to two sets of electoral rolls free of charge as well as broadcast or telecast facilities over state-owned Akashvani or Doordarshan during general elections.

Conditions for Recognition as a State Party	
1	Secure at least 6% of the valid vote & win at least 2 seats in an Assembly General Election
2	Secure at least 6% of the valid vote & win at least 1 seats in a Lok Sabha General Election
3	Win at least 3% of the seats or at least 3 seats , whichever is more, in an Assembly General Election
4	Win at least 1 out of every 25 seats from a state in a Lok Sabha General Election
5	Secure at least 8% of the total valid vote in an Assembly or a Lok Sabha General Election
Conditions for Recognition as a National Party	
1	Secure at least 6% of the valid vote in an Assembly or a Lok Sabha General Election in any four or more states and won at least 4 seats in a Lok Sabha General Election from any State or States
2	Win at least 2% of the total Lok Sabha seats in a Lok Sabha General Election and these seats have to be won from at least 3 states
3	The party is recognized as a State Party in at least four states

Deregistration of political parties:

- While the ECI has the power to register political parties under the RPA, 1951, it **does not have the power to deregister parties that are inactive.**

- The ECI can only delist the inactive parties and refer the matter to the Central Government for further action.

News Summary:

- A review of financial documents from some of the RUPPs that are publicly available reveals some glaring irregularities, such as
 - Documents listing two different people as party president,
 - The use of RUPPs as "shell companies" to "white-wash" black money while engaging in no or little political activity,
 - Claiming tax exemptions without bothering to meet the statutory requirements of filing timely contribution reports and submitting annual audit reports.
 - On this basis, the ECI shared a list of RUPPs that did not submit their contribution reports in FY 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20, respectively, for requisite action under the RPA and the IT Act.
 - A list of RUPPs which claimed IT exemption without submitting contribution reports has also been sent to the Revenue Department.
 - Meanwhile, the ECI stated that the RUPP scrutiny and clean-up exercise that commenced recently will be thoroughly followed up on.
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ASSAM ON BOARD, RATION CARD NOW USABLE PAN-INDIA

In News:

- Assam has become the last and the 36th state to implement the One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) scheme.
- With this, the scheme now covers all the states and UTs, making distribution of subsidised and free foodgrain security portable throughout the country.

In Focus: One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC)

- It is aimed at enabling migrant workers and their family members to buy subsidised ration from any fair price shop anywhere in the country.
- All eligible ration cardholders or beneficiaries covered under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013 can access their entitlements from anywhere in India.

- The facility was started as inter-State portability of ration cards in 4 States w.e.f. August 2019.
 - These four states were Andhra Pradesh-Telangana and Gujarat-Maharashtra.
- Department of Food and Public Distribution is the nodal agency responsible for implementation of this scheme.

Key Features

- The beneficiaries under the system are ration cardholders who are eligible to get food grains from fair-price shops (FPS).
 - Ration cardholders can buy up to 5 kg of rice at Rs 3/kg, wheat at Rs 2/kg, and coarse grains at Rs 1/kg per month.
 - This was mandated under the NFSA passed in 2013.
- These beneficiaries can claim either full or part foodgrains from any FPS in the country.
 - This can be done through existing ration card with biometric/Aadhaar authentication in a seamless manner.
- The scheme also allows their family members back home, if any, to claim the balance foodgrains on same the ration card.

How does ONORC work?

- ONORC is based on technology that involves details of beneficiaries' ration card, Aadhaar number, and electronic Points of Sale (ePoS).
- The system identifies a beneficiary through biometric authentication on ePoS devices at FPS.
- The system runs with the support of two portals which host all the relevant data. These are:
 - Integrated Management of Public Distribution System (IM-PDS) (impds.nic.in) and
 - Annavitran (annavitran.nic.in).

Benefits

- Hassle free ration to migrants



Department of Food & Public Distribution
Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution
Government of India

ONE NATION, ONE RATION CARD (2/2)

To avail your ration, follow these simple steps:

- Visit PoS enabled Ration shop during working hours
- Share Aadhaar number or Aadhaar seeded ration card
- Undergo Aadhaar based biometric authentication at the shop
- Receive your NFSA food grain quota

AAY 35 KG per family per Month

PHH 5 KG per person per Month

RICE ₹3 per kg

WHEAT ₹2 per kg

COARSE GRAIN ₹1 per kg

- Previously, with the ration card, a beneficiary could only purchase subsidised food and grain from the PDS which was assigned to them in their locality.
- Due to this, there have been many issues faced by the migrants who shift to other cities for work.
- **Empowerment of the beneficiaries**
- Now the beneficiaries have the opportunity to choose their own dealer.
- With many cases of misallocation, the beneficiary can switch to another FPS shop instantly, if there is any case of foul play.
- **Step towards fulfilment of SDG**
- It will also help achieve the target set under SDG 2: Ending hunger by 2030. It also aims to address the poor state of hunger in India.
- **Improved efficiency**
- Seeding of Aadhar with ration card removed duplicate ration cards.
- Also, use of technology improved the efficiency of PDS network.

Performance so far

- **All States/UTs covered**
- With inclusion of Assam, the scheme now covers all the states and UTs.
- **Significant portable transactions**
- Since 2019, about 71 crore portable transactions have taken place delivering food-grains equivalent to about Rs 40,000 crore in food subsidy through portability.
- At present, a monthly average of about 3 crore portable transactions are being recorded.
- **During Covid-19**
- During the COVID-19 period from April 2020 till date, the ministry said about 64 crore portable transactions have been recorded.
- It delivered foodgrains equivalent to about Rs 36,000 crore in food subsidy through portability.
- **MERA RATION mobile application**
- The government has also rolled out the 'MERA RATION' mobile application to take maximum advantage of the ONORC plan.
- The mobile app is providing a host of useful real-time information to the beneficiaries and is available in 13 languages.

RUSSIA BECOMES 2nd-BIGGEST OIL SUPPLIER TO INDIA

Russia has overtaken Saudi Arabia to become India's second-biggest supplier of oil behind Iraq as refiners snap up Russian crude available at a deep discount following the war in Ukraine, industry data showed.

About:

- Indian refiners bought about 25 million barrels of Russian oil in May 2022, or more than 16% of all their oil imports.
- Russian-origin crude hit 5% of India's total seaborne imports in April for the first time, rising from under 1% throughout 2021 and Q1 2022. Iraq remained the top supplier to India in May and Saudi Arabia is now the third-biggest supplier.

BSF JURISDICTION LIMITS

A report that defines the extended jurisdiction of the Border Security Force (BSF) and its new logistical requirements in frontier States has been prepared and is soon expected to be submitted to the Union Home Ministry, officials said.



About:

- While in Punjab, West Bengal and Assam, the BSF jurisdiction, from the border towards the hinterland, was enhanced from the earlier 15 km to 50 km, in Gujarat the same limit has been reduced from 80 km to 50 km, while in Rajasthan the limit has been kept unchanged at 50 km.
- The Border Security Force (BSF) is India's border guarding organisation on its border with Pakistan and Bangladesh.
- It is one of the seven Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) of India, and was raised in the wake of the 1965. It comes under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

NEW NORMS FOR CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS

The Government of India has tightened norms for endorsers, including celebrities and sportspersons, as they are now required to make material connection disclosures and undertake due diligence while doing advertisements.



About:

- According to new guidelines released by the Consumer Affairs Ministry, endorsements must reflect the honest opinions, belief or experience of the endorsers.
- The endorsers have to make material connection disclosures and failing to do so will attract penalty under the Consumer Protection Act (CPA).
- Material disclosures mean any relationship that materially affects the weight or credibility of any endorsement which a reasonable consumer would not expect.
- Violation of these guidelines will attract a penalty of ₹10 lakh for the first offence and ₹50 lakh for the subsequent offence, under the CPA.
- The new guidelines “Prevention of misleading advertisements and necessary due diligence for endorsement of advertisements”, which came into effect in June 2022, have been issued to prevent misleading advertisements.