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1. NHPC Limited Granted 'Navratna' Status

Introduction

The Government of India has awarded NHPC Limited the prestigious 'Navratna' status. This decision was made by the Department of Public Enterprise under the Ministry of Finance on August 30, 2024. Being a 'Navratna' company gives NHPC greater operational and financial independence.



Statement from CMD Shri R.K. Chaudhary

Shri R.K. Chaudhary, Chairman and Managing Director of NHPC, called this achievement a historic moment for the company. He thanked the Ministry of Power for their trust and support, which led to NHPC receiving the Navratna status. He highlighted NHPC's significant role in India's power sector, especially in developing hydropower. He also mentioned that NHPC is committed to green energy, expanding into wind and solar power.

Benefits of Navratna Status for NHPC

Receiving Navratna status provides NHPC with several advantages:

- 1. Faster Decision-Making:** Enables quicker responses to market changes.

- 2. Increased Efficiency:** Improves overall operational effectiveness.
- 3. Employee Empowerment:** Grants more authority and responsibility to employees.
- 4. Support for Investments:** Facilitates major capital expenditure and investment projects.
- 5. Growth and Expansion: Helps expand market reach and achieve long-term growth.**
- 6. Joint Ventures and Overseas Offices:** Allows NHPC to establish partnerships and offices abroad.
- 7. Access to New Markets:** Opens up opportunities in new regions and sectors.
- 8. Innovation and Technology:** Promotes technological collaborations and strengthens market position.
- 9. Mergers and Acquisitions:** Enables strategic mergers and acquisitions to increase market share.

NHPC's Current Projects and Future Plans

NHPC currently has an installed capacity of 7,144.20 MW and is working on projects totaling 10,442.70 MW. Key projects include:

- 1. Subansiri Lower Project:** A 2,000 MW hydropower project in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.
- 2. Dibang Multi-purpose Project:** A 2,880 MW project in Arunachal Pradesh.

Additionally, NHPC is developing projects with a total capacity of over 50,000 MW at various stages. The company aims to achieve an installed capacity of 23,000 MW by 2032 and 50,000 MW by 2047.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Economics

Source: PIB

2. X Platform Banned in Brazil Amidst Musk-Judge Standoff

Introduction

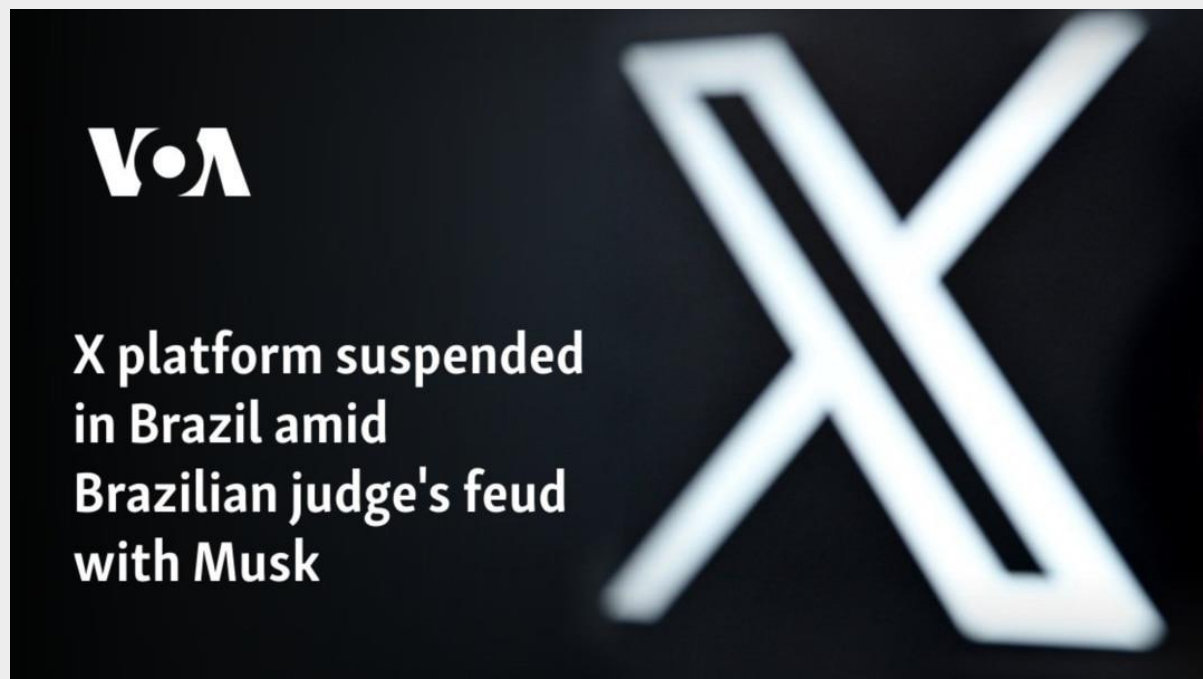
Elon Musk's social media platform, X (formerly Twitter), was banned in Brazil starting early Saturday after a ruling by Brazilian Supreme Court judge Alexandre de Moraes. The decision follows a prolonged conflict between Musk and the judge over disinformation issues in Brazil.

Judge Orders Suspension of X

Judge Moraes ordered the suspension of X after Musk failed to appoint a new legal representative for the company in Brazil. The ban began to take effect on Saturday, with some users in Brazil unable to access the platform.

Musk's Reaction to the Ban

Musk, who also owns Tesla and SpaceX, reacted angrily to the ban, accusing Judge Moraes of trying to undermine democracy in Brazil. He criticized the judge as an "evil dictator cosplaying as a judge" and condemned the ban as an attack on free speech.



Ongoing Feud Over Disinformation

The conflict between Musk and Moraes has been ongoing for months. Moraes is leading efforts to combat disinformation in Brazil, while Musk, who identifies as a "free speech absolutist," has faced criticism for allegedly turning X into a platform for right-wing conspiracy theories.

Enforcement of the Ban

Moraes ordered the immediate suspension of X in Brazil and instructed the national communications agency to enforce the ban within 24 hours. He also threatened fines for anyone using methods like VPNs to bypass the ban. Although Moraes initially ordered Google, Apple, and internet providers to block access to X, he later rescinded that order.

Background and Broader Implications

Musk's conflict with the Brazilian judiciary began when Moraes ordered the suspension of several X accounts linked to supporters of former President Jair Bolsonaro, who spread disinformation about the 2022 election. In response to these actions, Musk shut down X's business operations in Brazil earlier this month.

Musk's satellite internet company, Starlink, also became involved when Moraes ordered the freezing of its accounts, alleging it was responsible for fines imposed on X. Musk is currently under investigation for allegedly participating in a disinformation scheme supporting Bolsonaro.

Brazilian President's Response

Brazilian President Lula da Silva responded to the situation, asserting that any foreign investor in Brazil, including Musk, must adhere to the country's laws and constitution. "Who does Musk think he is?" Lula remarked during a local radio interview.

Relevance: GS Prelims; International Issues

Source: The Hindu

3. Supreme Court pulled up AYUSH Ministry over Rule 170 of Drugs Act. Here's what it says

Introduction

Justices Hima Kohli and Sandeep Mehta, while hearing the ongoing Supreme Court case against Patanjali Ayurved, pulled up the AYUSH ministry for its July 1 notification asking state licensing authorities "not to initiate/take any action under" Rule 170 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.

The rule, introduced in 2018, is designed to prevent misleading advertisements of AYUSH products. The AYUSH ministry's July 1 notification reiterated its position made in a previous letter, dated August 29, 2023.



What is Rule 170?

In 2018, the government brought in Rule 170 to govern the manufacture, storage, and sale of medicines in the country, "specifically for controlling inappropriate advertisements of Ayurvedic, Siddha and Unani medicines".

The rule prohibits AYUSH drug manufacturers from advertising their products without approval and allotment of a unique identification number from the state licensing authority. The manufacturers have to submit details such as textual references and rationale for the medicine from authoritative books, indication for use, evidence of safety, effectiveness, and quality of drugs.

The rule states that the application will be rejected if the manufacturer does not provide their contact details, if the contents of the advertisement are obscene or vulgar, products for enhancement of male or female sexual organs, depicts photographs or testimonials from celebrities or government officials, refers to any government organisation, gives false impression or makes misleading or exaggerated claims.

The rule was introduced after a parliamentary standing committee highlighted the problem of misleading claims, and the need for the AYUSH ministry to proactively pursue the issue.

What are challenges to regulate AYUSH drugs?

Like allopathic medicines, manufacturers of AYUSH drugs also have to seek a license from the drug controller. As per the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, phase I, II, and III trials for approval of new allopathic medicines or equivalence studies for generic versions have to be conducted before a drug is cleared for marketing.

However, such trials are not necessary for AYUSH drugs. According to the aforementioned act, most AYUSH drugs can be approved simply based on the rationale provided in authoritative texts of that particular stream. Safety trials have to be conducted only for formulations that use around 60 specific ingredients listed in the act, such as snake venom, snake head, heavy metals such as arsenic and mercury, and compounds such as copper sulphate.

For licensing of drugs containing these ingredients and traditional drugs used for new indications, proof of effectiveness has to be provided as per the Act.

Why did AYUSH ministry direct licensing authorities to ignore the rule?

The Ayurvedic, Siddha and Unani Drugs Technical Advisory Board (ASUDTAB), an expert body that recommends actions relating to regulation of AYUSH drugs, in a meeting in May 2023 said that Rule 170 could be omitted as amendments in Drugs and Magic Remedies Act — another law to govern such misleading advertisements — were also being taken up by the health and AYUSH ministries.

It is in this context that the AYUSH ministry made its recommendation to ignore the rule.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: Indian Express