

NEWS TODAY

TRAI RELEASED REPORT, “LEVERAGING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) AND BIG DATA IN TELECOMMUNICATION SECTOR”

Key Highlights of report

● Opportunities in the adoption of AI and Big data in telecom sector:

- Potential to improve **efficiency, productivity and automation**.
- Expected to enhance **network speed, capacity and latency** by providing actionable insights.
- Offers intelligent automated systems in **designing, deployment, maintenance and managing** network complexities including proactively securing the network.

● Constraints:

- Policy and regulatory challenges due to **absence of a Data Protection Bill** in India.
- **Limited AI expertise** and knowledge, access to quality data and AI specific infrastructure.
- Limited access to **data**, inadequate computing **infrastructure**, and limited **R&D efforts**.
- **Interoperability and compatibility** among different AI systems and data sources.
- **Lack of industry-wide standards** hampers the exchange of information

● Recommendations:

- Need for global collaboration and global regulations to ensure that it is used in a **responsible and ethical manner**.
- Need to adopt a regulatory framework that should be **applicable across sectors**.
- Establish an **independent statutory authority** (designated as “Artificial Intelligence and Data Authority of India (AIDAI)) for ensuring **development of responsible AI**.
 - Create a **Multi Stakeholder Body (MSB)** that will act as an advisory body to the proposed statutory authority.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

- AI refers to the **ability of machines to perform tasks that would normally require human intelligence** such as learning, problem solving, and decision making.
- **Principles of Responsible AI**
 - Inclusive growth, sustainable development and well-being,
 - Human-centred values and Fairness,
 - Transparency and Explainability,
 - Robustness, Security and Safety,
 - Accountability

JOINT PARLIAMENT COMMITTEE (JPC) CLEARS ALL CHANGES ON CONTENTIOUS FOREST CONSERVATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2023

● Highlights of bill:

- **Amends the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980** to make it **applicable to certain types** of land.
 - These include **land notified as a forest** under the Indian Forest Act, 1927 or in **government records** after the 1980 Act came into effect.
- **Inserts a preamble** to the act.
- **Exempts certain types of land** from the purview of the Act.
 - These include land **within 100 km of India’s border** needed for national security projects, small roadside amenities, and public roads leading to a habitation.
- Allows **running zoos, safaris and eco-tourism** facilities to be carried out in forests in addition to activities (like establishing check posts) provided under the act.

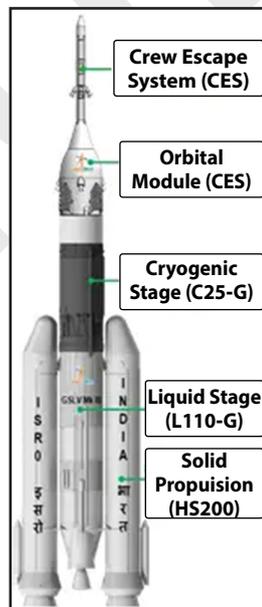
Arguments given by JPC in favour of the amendments	Concerns raised by various stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Necessary to meet the “national targets of Net Zero Emission by 2070; ● Help in creation of carbon sink amounting to 2.5-3 billion tonnes of CO2-equivalent by 2030 under the Nationally Determined Contribution targets. ● Supports the country’s objective to increase forest and tree cover up to a third of its land area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proposed amendment subverts the FCA’s primary objective “to provide for conservation of forests” and to “check further deforestation”. ● Amendments would undo the provisions existing in the Act and reduce its ambit by privatising large portions of forests in lieu of creating plantations.

MINISTRY OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS (MCA) EXEMPTS REGIONAL RURAL BANKS (RRBS) FROM CCI'S MERGER CONTROL REGIME

- The exemption **from prior scrutiny and approval** of Competition Commission of India (CCI) would be **available for five years**.
 - Competition Commission of India (CCI) has the mandate to examine whether mergers and consolidation **will lessen competition or affect consumer interests**.
- The decision is seen as a prelude to the next round of **consolidation among RRBS**.
- **About Consolidation of RRBS:**
 - The process was initiated in a phased manner **since 2005** in light of the high number (196) of RRBS at that time.
 - Currently, there are **about 43 RRBS** (as of 2021).
 - **Importance:**
 - Strengthens the banking sector;
 - Minimizes overhead expenses,
 - Optimizes the use of technology,
 - Enhances the capital base and area of operation.
- **About RRBS**
 - They were established in **1975 on the recommendation of the Narsimham Working Group**.
 - **Objective:** To cater to the financial inclusion needs of the small and marginal farmers, agricultural laborers, artisans, and weaker sections of society.
 - The central government usually holds **50% of RRBS, while the relevant sponsor banks and state governments own 35% and 15%, respectively**.

ISRO HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE SERVICE MODULE PROPULSION SYSTEM (SMPS) TEST FOR GAGANYAAN

- This service module of Gaganyaan caters to the **requirements of the Orbital Module, performing orbit injection, circularisation, on-orbit control, de-boost manoeuvring, etc.**
- **About Gaganyaan mission:**
 - Envisages demonstration of human spaceflight capability by launching **crew of 3 members to an orbit of 400 km for a 3 days mission**.
 - As part of it, **two unmanned missions and one manned mission** are approved by the government.
 - **LVM3 (Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mk III)** is identified as the launch vehicle for Gaganyaan mission. It is a three stage vehicle: **solid, liquid and cryogenic**.
 - **Critical technologies include**
 - **Human rated launch vehicle** for carrying crew safely to space,
 - **Life Support System** to provide an earth like environment to crew in space,
 - Crew **emergency escape** provision and
 - **Evolving crew management** aspects for training, recovery and rehabilitation of crew.
- **Significance**
 - Give a boost to India's ambition of **setting up its own space station**.
 - Become **the fourth nation to do so after the United States, China, and Russia**.
 - **Re-establish India's space research position amongst developed countries.**



THE FIRST-EVER “CREDIT GUARANTEE SCHEME” FOR LIVESTOCK SECTOR LAUNCHED

- **Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying (DAHD), Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying** is implementing the Credit Guarantee Scheme under **Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF)**.
 - Scheme aims to **strengthen the credit delivery system and facilitate the flow of credit** to the MSMEs engaged in Livestock sector.
 - DAHD has **established a Credit Guarantee fund Trust** of Rs. 750.00 crores, which will **provide credit guarantee coverage of up to 25% of the credit facilities extended to the MSMEs**.
- **Significance of scheme**
 - **Facilitates access to finance for un-served and under-served livestock sector,**
 - **Making availability of financial assistance** from lenders to mainly first-generation entrepreneurs and under privileged section of society.
- AHIDF is a **special credit facility** for Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development.
 - It is a **central sector scheme** under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan
 - **Key Features:**
 - **Interest Subvention of 3%**
 - **Loan up to 90%** of the total project cost from any Scheduled Bank, National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC).
- **Livestock in India**
 - It **contributes 4.11% to the GDP and 25.6%** to the total Agriculture GDP.
 - Livestock provide **employment to the rural family and act as insurance during crop failures**.

NEW CATEGORY OF MUTUAL FUNDS (MFS) UNDER THE ESG (ENVIRONMENT, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE) SCHEME

• SEBI decided to allow MFs to introduce **five new categories under the ESG** (Environment, Social and Governance) scheme - **exclusions, integration, best-in-class and positive screening, impact investing and sustainable objectives.**

➤ Currently, mutual funds **can launch only one ESG scheme under the thematic category of equity schemes.**

• It aims to facilitate **green financing** with emphasis on **enhanced disclosures** for transparency and mitigate **green washing.**

➤ **Green washing** is the practice of making false or misleading statement about environmental benefits of a product or practice.

• ESG Scheme

➤ It aims to **promote sustainable and responsible business practices** covering a range of issues like climate change, pollution, human rights, business ethics, corporate governance, etc.

➤ In 2012, **SEBI issued guidance note on ESG disclosures** for companies listed on Indian Stock Exchanges to disclose ESG performance in annual reports.

• ESG Reporting in India

➤ **National Voluntary Guidelines (NVGs) 2009:** Ministry of Corporate Affairs issued NVGs on corporate social responsibility.

➤ With effect from the financial year 2022-2023, filing of **Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report (BRSR)** has been made mandatory for the top 1000 listed companies by SEBI.



ALSO IN NEWS

 <p>Rule 176 and Rule 267</p>	<p>According to the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under Rule 267, a Rajya Sabha MP has the special power to suspend the pre-decided agenda of the House, with the approval of the Chairman. • Rule 176 allows for a short-duration discussion, not exceeding two-and-a-half hours, on a particular issue.
 <p>Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government introduced the Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2023 in Rajya Sabha which aims to tackle film piracy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It seeks to amend the Cinematograph Act 1952. ➤ Cinematograph Act, 1952 was enacted to make provision for the certification of cinematograph films. • The bill classifies films on the basis of age group, instead of the current practice of 'U', 'A', and 'UA'. • It seeks to bring about uniformity in the categorization of films and content across platforms. • The bill considers the act of piracy as an offense legally and will include even transmitting pirated content punishable.
 <p>Solar Technology Application Resource Centre [STAR C] Initiative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India is recently considering expanding International Solar Alliance's STAR-C initiative to Pacific Island countries. • About Solar Technology Application Resource Centre [STAR C] Initiative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is a project to build STAR centres which will act as hubs of technology, knowledge, and expertise on solar energy. ➤ The International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), with funding of the Government of France, are implementing the project. ➤ It performs the following four primary functions: Capacity Building, Testing, Innovation and Knowledge Management.

 <p>Heat Index</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IMD has recently launched Heat Index on an experimental basis to provide general guidance for the regions within in India, where apparent temperatures are on higher side causing discomfort to the poor It will provide information about the impact of humidity on the high temperatures, as an indication of human discomfort Color codes for Heat Index: Green: Experimental Heat Index (EHI) < 35°C; Yellow: EHI between 36-45 °C; Orange: EHI between 46-55 °C and Red: EHI between > 55°C
 <p>India Climate Energy Dashboard (ICED) 3.0</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NITI Aayog released the ICED 3.0. About ICED: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ One-stop platform for near real-time data on the energy sector, climate, and related economic datasets based on government published sources. ➤ Developed as a user-friendly platform, it enables users to freely access and analyse datasets using an analytical engine. ➤ Facilitates insights and enhance understanding about the energy and climate sectors while identifying the key challenges. ➤ Immensely useful in monitoring the progress of India's clean energy transition journey.
 <p>Cell Broadcast Alert System</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Telecommunications announced that it will be conducting a Cell Broadcast Alert System testing in collaboration with National Disaster Management Authority. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Its aim is to enhance emergency communication during disasters and ensure the safety and well-being of citizens. About Cell Broadcast Alert System: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A state-of-the-art technology that allows to send critical and time-sensitive messages for disaster management to all mobile devices within a designated geographical area (irrespective of whether the recipients are residents or visitors). ➤ Will ensure that important emergency information reaches as many people as possible in a timely manner.
 <p>Initiatives launched during Global Food regulators summit 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summit is an endeavour of the FSSAI to create a global platform of food regulators to exchange perspectives on strengthening food safety systems and regulatory framework. Key launches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Release of Food-o-Copoeia, a collection of food category-wise monographs and a single point reference for all applicable standards for a specific product category. ➤ Common regulators platform 'SaNGRAH', a database of Food Regulatory Authorities of 76 countries across the world, their mandate, food testing facilities etc.
 <p>Auroras on mercury</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During a close Mercury flyby, the BepiColombo spacecraft collected data that showed how electrons raining down on the planet's surface are triggering X-ray auroras. BepiColombo is a joint mission by the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) to the planet Mercury. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Auroras on Earth are triggered when a stream of charged particles emitted by the Sun interact with the ionosphere. ➤ But Mercury has a very thin atmosphere (called an exosphere). Auroras on the planet are created when solar wind, the stream of particles, interact directly with the planet's surface.
 <p>Places in news</p>	<p>Argentina (Capital: Buenos Aires)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argentina signs letter of intent with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to buy helicopters Political boundaries: The country is bounded by Chile to the south and west, Bolivia and Paraguay to the north, and Brazil, Uruguay, and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. <p>Geographical features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terrains: Rich plains of the Pampas in the northern half, flat to rolling plateau of Patagonia in the south, rugged Andes along the western border Highest point: Cerro Aconcagua Major rivers: Parana, Paraguay, etc. 