

TELECOM BILL 2023

Why in news?

- The Telecommunications Bill, 2023 was introduced in the Lok Sabha by Union minister for Communications, Electronics & Information Technology.
- Among its many significant provisions is one on national security, which allows the government to temporarily take control of telecom services in case of an emergency.

Reasons behind the introduction of the Telecommunications Bill, 2023

- Telecommunication sector is a key driver of economic and social development. It is the gateway to digital services.
- Security of our country is vitally dependent on safety of telecommunication networks.
- Therefore, there is a need to create a legal and regulatory framework that focuses on safe and secure telecommunication network that provides for **digitally inclusive growth**.
- The nature of telecommunication, its usage and underlying technologies have undergone massive changes, especially in the past decade. Therefore, there is a need for enacting a legislation that serves the needs of our society.

Key highlights of the Telecommunications Bill, 2023

- **Repeals the existing laws**
 - The bill repeals the **Indian Telegraph Act, 1885**, the **Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1933**, and the **Telegraph Wires (Unlawful Possession) Act, 1950**.
 - It also amends the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) Act, 1997.
- **Authorisation for telecom-related activities**
 - Prior authorisation from the central government will be required to
 - provide telecommunication services,
 - establish, operate, maintain, or expand telecommunications networks, or
 - possess radio equipment.
- **Assignment of spectrum**

- Spectrum will be assigned by auction, except for specified uses, where it will be allocated on an administrative basis.
- The central government may re-purpose or re-assign any frequency range.
- **Powers of interception and search:**
 - Messages or a class of messages between two or more persons may be intercepted, monitored, or blocked on certain grounds.
- **Extraordinary powers of the government**
 - The government may take temporary possession of any telecom infrastructure, network, or services on occurrence of any public emergency or public safety. Telecom services may be suspended on similar grounds.
 - An officer authorised by the government may search premises or vehicles for possession of unauthorised telecom network or equipment.
- **Powers to specify standards**
 - The central government may prescribe standards and assessments for telecom equipment, infrastructure, networks, and services.
- **Offences and penalties:**
 - The Bill specifies various criminal and civil offences.
 - Providing telecom services without authorisation, or gaining unauthorised access to a telecom network or data, are punishable with imprisonment up to three years, a fine up to two crore rupees, or both.
 - Breaching terms and conditions of authorisation is punishable with a civil penalty up to five crore rupees.
 - Possessing unauthorised equipment, or using unauthorised network or service, is punishable with a penalty of up to ten lakh rupees.



SWARVED MAHAMANDIR

Prime Minister Monday recently inaugurated the world's largest meditation centre, Swarved Mahamandir, in Varanasi.

About the Swarved Mahamandir:

- It is the world's largest meditation centre, where 20,000 people can sit together and meditate.
- **Location:** It is located in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
- It aims to illuminate humankind with its spiritual aura and engulf the world in a state of peaceful alertness.
- The temple is **named after the Swarved**, a spiritual literature written by Sadguru Shri Sadafal Deoji Maharaj, the creator of Vihangam Yoga and an eternal yogi.
- The temple **propagates Swarveda teachings**, with a focus on **Brahma Vidya**, a body of knowledge that enables spiritual seekers to sustain a state of perfect Zen, a state of unyielding constancy in peace and happiness.

Features:

- It is a **seven-floor** superstructure.
- It has a beautiful design with **125-petal lotus domes**.
- The **ceiling and doors** with intricate carvings are made of **teakwood**.
- The **pink sandstone decor** surrounds the temple walls, and there is an exquisite **garden with medicinal herbs**.
- **Verses of the Swarveda** have been carved upon the walls of the Mahamandir.

Key Facts about Vihangam Yoga:

- It is an **Indian modality of Yoga** and meditation, founded by Sadguru Sadafal Deo Ji Maharaj in 1924.
- The name is composed of two root words: “Vihag”, which means bird, and “Yog”, which means union.
- The name symbolises the idea of a bird that leaves the earth and flies high and free in the sky – the goal of Vihangam Yoga being our soul to be free of the attachment to the physical world and realise its true, free nature.
- Only then can one’s individual consciousness can unite with the universal consciousness (the Supreme Being) and reach permanent peace and bliss.

INDIA'S 1ST ARCTIC WINTER EXPEDITION

Why in news?

- Raman Research Institute (RRI) will participate in the first winter Indian expedition to the Arctic region.
 - RRI is an autonomous research institute engaged in research in basic sciences.
 - It was founded in 1948 by the Indian physicist and Nobel Laureate Sir C V Raman.
 - It was restructured in 1972 to become an aided autonomous institute receiving funds from the Department of Science and Technology, GoI.
- This will be for the first time that researchers will examine the characterisation of the radio frequency environment in the Svalbard region of the Arctic.

Why is the Arctic region being studied?

- The region above the **Arctic Circle, north of latitude 66° 34' N**, includes the Arctic Ocean.
- Scientific evidence has shown that the Arctic ice and the sea ice have the potential to affect humans outside the Arctic region, as sea levels rise, and to influence atmospheric circulations.
- Due to unprecedented changes owing to global warming, the Arctic could become a more habitable and less hostile place.

Why are expeditions to the Arctic challenging?

- There are challenges related to the environment.
 - At the research base Ny-Ålesund in Svalbard, Norway, the mean temperature in February – the year's coldest month – is minus 14 degrees Celsius.
 - On the other hand, the mean temperature during the warmest month, July, is 5 degrees Celsius.

- Due to a hostile environment, performing both outdoor and indoor scientific observations or sampling has remained largely limited to the summer months.
- So far, only **three research stations** have had permanent staff deployment in the Arctic round-the-year.
- With multiple state jurisdictions in the Arctic, there is limited space available for establishing independent research stations.
 - The Arctic Council promotes cooperation in this region.
- Geopolitical tensions, such as amid the ongoing Ukraine-Russia war, could cut off the Arctic regions from explorations.

Which countries are studying the Arctic?

- In 1990, the National Institute of Polar Research, Japan, was the first to establish a research station in Ny-Ålesund.
- Located 2,100 km north of Norway's capital Oslo, **Ny-Ålesund has ten countries:** China, Germany, France, India, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, South Korea and United Kingdom.
- They have set up eleven permanent research stations. Of these, only three stations have human presence around the year, until now.

WHAT IS THE TEMPO SATELLITE?



NASA's new satellite TEMPO measures air pollution hourly has shown significant progress and now the space agency officials are already thinking about ways to extend its life.

About the TEMPO satellite:

- Tropospheric Emissions Monitoring of Pollution (**TEMPO**) monitors major air pollutants across **North America**.
- Its monitoring range extends from Canada's oil sands to the Yucatán Peninsula and across the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean.

- It is part of a virtual constellation with South Korea's Geostationary Environment Monitoring Spectrometer (GEMS) and the European Space Agency's upcoming satellite, aiming for comprehensive air pollution monitoring over the Northern Hemisphere.
- It will make important scientific observations, including that of **ozone, nitrogen oxide, sulphur dioxide and formaldehyde levels**.
- It is capable of measuring air quality over North America hourly during the daytime with a resolution of several square miles.
- It monitors the effects of everything from rush-hour traffic to pollution from forest fires and volcanoes.
- The present pollution-monitoring satellites are in low Earth orbit (LEO), but this new monitoring instrument is **hosted in geostationary orbit**.
- It was designed for a 20-month operation.

[NATIONAL GEOSCIENCE DATA REPOSITORY PORTAL](#)

The Union Ministry of Mines is to launch the National Geoscience Data Repository (NGDR) Portal on 19th December 2023 in a ceremony in New Delhi.



About the National Geoscience Data Repository Portal:

- It is a comprehensive online platform for accessing, sharing, and analysing **geospatial information across India**.
- The NGDR initiative was spearheaded by the **Geological Survey of India (GSI)** and **Bhaskaracharya Institute of Space Applications and Geoinformatics (BISAG-N)**.
- It represents a significant leap forward in democratising critical geoscience data, empowering stakeholders across industries and academia with unprecedented access to invaluable resources.

About Geological Survey of India

- The Geological Survey of India (GSI) was set up in 1851 primarily to find coal deposits for the Railways.
 - Over the years, GSI has not only grown into a **repository of geo-science information** required in various fields in the country but has also attained the status of a geo-scientific organisation of international repute.
 - Its main functions relate to creating and updating of national geoscientific information and mineral resource assessment.
 - GSI's chief role includes providing objective, impartial and up-to-date geological expertise and geoscientific information of all kinds, with a focus on policy making decisions, commercial and socio- economic needs.
 - GSI also emphasises on systematic documentation of all geological processes, both surface and subsurface, of India and its offshore areas. The organisation carries out this work through geological, geophysical, & geochemical surveys using the latest and most cost-effective techniques and methodologies.
 - GSI is an attached office of the **Ministry of Mines**.
 - **Headquarters: Kolkata**
 - It has six regional offices located in Lucknow, Jaipur, Nagpur, Hyderabad, Shillong and Kolkata and state unit offices in almost all states of the country.
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WHAT IS THE INTERNET AND MOBILE ASSOCIATION OF INDIA (IAMAI)?



The Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), the representative body of nearly 600 internet firms and start-ups, recently welcomed the introduction of the Telecom Bill in Lok Sabha.

About the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI):

- Established in 2004, the IAMAI is a not-for-profit industry body registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

- It is the country's **only organisation representing the digital services industry**, with over 500 **Indian and multinational corporations** as its members, which include established companies in diverse sectors of the digital ecosystem as well as start-ups.
- **Mandate:** To expand and **enhance the online and mobile value-added services sectors**.
- It is dedicated to **presenting the unified voice** of the businesses it represents to the **government, investors, consumers, and other stakeholders**.
- The association **addresses the issues, concerns, and challenges of the Internet and Mobile economy** and takes a leading role in its development.
- The association's **activities include promoting the inherent strengths** of the digital economy, evaluating and **recommending standards and practices** to the industry, conducting **research, creating platforms** for its members, **communicating on behalf of the industry**, and creating a favourable business environment for the industry.;
- IAMAI has been **advocating free and fair competition, progressive laws** for the sector, and supporting **equitable access, the best quality of services** to consumers, and a safe and **secure internet** for users.

HOW MPS ARE SUSPENDED?

Why in News?

- In a major escalation of tensions between the Opposition and the government, 78 Members of Parliament were suspended from both Houses of Parliament.

Under What Rules MPs can be Suspended from Lok Sabha?

- The general principle is that it is the role and duty of the Presiding Officer — Speaker of Lok Sabha and Chairman of Rajya Sabha — **to maintain order so that the House can function smoothly**.
- In order to ensure that proceedings are conducted in the proper manner, the Speaker/Chairman is empowered to force a member to withdraw from the House.
- **Rule Number 373** of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business says –

- The Speaker, if he is of the opinion that the conduct of any Member is grossly disorderly, may direct such Member to withdraw immediately from the House.
- Any Member so ordered to withdraw shall do so forthwith and shall remain absent during the remainder of the day's sitting.
- **Rule Number 374** says –
 - The Speaker may, if deems it necessary, name a Member who disregards the authority of the Chair or abuses the rules of the House by persistently and wilfully obstructing the business thereof.
 - If a Member is so named by the Speaker, the Speaker shall, on a motion being made forthwith put the question that the Member (naming such Member) be suspended from the service of the House for a period not exceeding the remainder of the session.

Under What Rules MPs can be Suspended from Rajya Sabha?

- In the Rajya Sabha, the suspension of a member is governed by Rule 256.
- Unlike the Lok Sabha, the Rajya Sabha Chairperson does not have the power to suspend a member.
- The Rajya Sabha Chair can only suspend a member through a motion.
- **The Chair names a member, following which the House takes up a motion to suspend that member for a period not more than the remaining of the session, according to Rule 256(2).**
- While the Chair cannot suspend a member by themselves, the Chair can ask the member to leave the House.
- **Rule 255** dictates –
 - **The Chairman may direct any member whose conduct is in his opinion grossly disorderly to withdraw immediately from the Council.**
 - Any member so ordered to withdraw shall do so forthwith and shall absent himself during the remainder of the day's meeting.