

TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA



- It was established under the **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act, 1997**, passed by Parliament.
- **Mandate:** To regulate telecom services in India, including tariff fixation/revision, this was earlier the domain of the Central Government.
- TRAI's mission is to **create and nurture conditions for growth of telecommunications** in the country in a manner and at a pace which will enable India to play a leading role in emerging global information society.
- **Functions of TRAI:**
 - **Scope of regulation:** Covers areas like tariffs, quality of service, interconnection, spectrum management, and consumer protection in the telecom sector.
 - **Policy role:** Issues regulations, recommendations, and orders that guide telecom policy-making and market practices.
- **Composition of TRAI**
 - **Chairman:** It consists of a Chairperson, a maximum of two full-time members, and two part-time members.
 - **Tenure:** Members serve for three years or until the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.
 - Appointments are made by the **Central Government**.
- The TRAI Act was amended by an ordinance, and established a **Telecommunications Dispute Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT)**.
 - TDSAT was set up to adjudicate any **dispute between a licensor and a licensee**, between two or more service providers, between a **service provider and a group of consumers**, and to hear and dispose of appeals against any direction, decision or order of TRAI.



PRODUCTION LINKED INCENTIVE SCHEME FOR THE FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRY (PLISFPI)

- It was launched by the **Ministry of Food Processing Industries**.
- It is a major initiative aimed at strengthening **India's food processing sector**, promoting Indian brands in global markets, and creating global food manufacturing champions.
- It focuses on **increasing value addition in food processing sector**, expanding processing capacity, generating employment, particularly in rural areas & off-farm sectors.
- **Financial Outlay and Time Period:** The scheme is being implemented for a period of six years from **FY 2021–22 to FY 2026–27**.
- **Objectives:**
 - **Support Food manufacturing entities** with stipulated minimum Sales and willing to make minimum stipulated investment for expansion of processing capacity and Branding abroad to incentivise emergence of strong Indian brands.
 - **Strengthen select Indian brand** of food products for global visibility and wider acceptance in the international markets;
 - **Increase employment opportunities** of off-farm jobs,
 - Ensuring remunerative prices of farm produce and higher income to farmers.
- **The components of the Scheme are:**
 - **Incentivising manufacturing of four major food product segments** Ready to Cook/ Ready to Eat (RTC/RTE) foods, Processed Fruits & Vegetables, Marine Products and Mozzarella Cheese.
 - To production of Innovative / Organic products of SMEs
 - **To support branding and marketing** abroad to incentivize emergence of strong Indian brands for in-store Branding, shelf space renting and marketing.
- Under the scheme, a total of 128 companies have been approved, covering 274 units across the country.

ARTEMIS II: PUSHING HUMAN LIMITS BEYOND EARTH

- The **Artemis II mission** astronauts travelled about 406,771 km from Earth, setting a new record for the farthest human spaceflight.
- The **Orion spacecraft** reached this distance while looping around the far side of the Moon.
 - The previous record was set by Apollo 13 (1970), which went farther due to an emergency deviation.
- In contrast, Artemis II's distance was planned, but it is not the main objective—rather a result of its mission trajectory.

Artemis II Flight Path: Free-Return Trajectory

- Artemis II is a crewed **lunar flyby mission**, not a landing mission. Unlike earlier missions like Apollo 8, which used a circular lunar orbit, Orion follows an elliptical free-return trajectory.
- This path uses the Moon's gravity to slingshot the spacecraft back to Earth, reducing the need for engine burns.

How the Free-Return Trajectory Works in Artemis II?

- **High Earth Orbit (HEO) Phase**
 - The mission begins with Orion entering an elliptical orbit around Earth, extending to about 74,000 km.
 - This phase provides a 42-hour window for astronauts to test critical systems like environmental control and life support.
- **Translunar Slingshot Phase**
 - After system clearance, Orion is propelled toward the Moon, targeting a point about 10,300 km beyond the lunar far side.
 - The Moon's gravity then captures and slingshots the spacecraft around it, directing it back toward Earth without requiring additional propulsion.

Why the Free-Return Trajectory is Advantageous?

- The flight path provides a built-in safety mechanism, ensuring the spacecraft can return to Earth even if engines fail, preventing astronauts from being stranded.
- It is highly fuel-efficient, as it avoids the heavy deceleration and acceleration burns required for a circular lunar orbit.
- By using the Moon's gravity for direction change, the mission conserves propellant.
- Lower fuel needs also reduce launch weight and allow reserve fuel for emergencies.

Next Steps in the Artemis Programme

- The main goal of **Artemis II** is to test whether the Orion spacecraft and its systems can safely support human life in deep space conditions.
- Orion's return will provide critical data on performance and life-support systems for future missions. These insights will help prepare upcoming missions aimed at returning humans to the Moon and building a Moon Base.

POSHAN PAKHWADA



- It is celebrated in the **month of March/April for 15 days.**
- **Aim:** It aims to raise awareness about the **importance of nutrition** and promote healthy eating habits through Jan Andolan and Jan Bhagidari.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Women and Child Development
- The **theme** for Poshan Pakhwada 2026 (**9th to 23rd April**) is “Maximizing Brain Development in the First Six Years of Life”.
- The key focus **areas under this year's theme include:**
 - **Maternal and Child Nutrition:** Promoting optimal nutrition during pregnancy, exclusive breastfeeding, and age-appropriate complementary feeding.
 - **Early Stimulation for Brain Development (0–3 years):** Encouraging responsive caregiving and early learning interactions.
 - **Play-Based Education in Early Years (3–6 years) :** Supporting holistic development and school readiness.

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- **Role of Parents and Community in Minimising Screen Time:** Promoting healthy habits and active engagement.
- **Strengthening Anganwadi Centres through Community Participation:** Enhancing infrastructure and service delivery through Jan Bhagidari and CSR

PRADHAN MANTRI MUDRA YOJANA



- It was launched in **2015**.
- It is the **flagship programme of the central government** aimed at funding the **Unfunded microenterprises and small businesses**.
- Any **Indian citizen** who has a **business plan for a non-farm sector** income generating activity such as manufacturing, processing, trading or service sector can avail loans under this scheme.
- **Features of Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana:**
 - MUDRA loans are being offered in four categories namely, ‘Shishu’, ‘Kishor’, ‘Tarun’ and ‘TarunPlus’
 - **Shishu:** covering loans upto Rs. 50,000/-
 - **Kishor:** covering loans above Rs. 50,000/- and up to Rs. 5 lakhs
 - **Tarun:** covering loans above Rs.5 lakh and upto Rs.10 lakhs
 - **TarunPlus:** covering loans above Rs.10 lakh and upto Rs.20 lakhs
 - Loans cover term financing and working capital needs across **manufacturing, trading and service sectors**, including activities allied to **agriculture like poultry, dairy, and beekeeping, etc.**
 - These loans are given by **Commercial Banks, RRBs, Small Finance Banks, MFIs and NBFCs.**
 - MUDRA, which stands for **Micro Units Development & Refinance Agency Ltd**, is a financial institution set up by the Government of India under PMMY for **development and refinancing micro unit enterprises.**

DELIMITATION, WOMEN'S RESERVATION, POLITICAL DYNAMICS

- The Constitution (One Hundred and Sixth Amendment) Act, 2023, also known as the **Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam**, marks a historic step in India's democratic journey by mandating one-third reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.
- While the reform promises to address gender imbalance in political representation, its implementation raises significant questions regarding timing, methodology, and broader structural consequences.
- The **intersection of women's reservation** with delimitation and seat expansion suggests a deeper transformation of India's representative system.

Delimitation and Federal Concerns

- **Population-Based Representation Debate**
 - Delimitation raises a fundamental question: should representation be based solely on population, or should it also consider economic and social factors?
 - A strictly population-based approach would increase the representation of northern States with higher fertility rates, while reducing the relative influence of **southern States** that have stabilised population growth.
- **North-South Divide**
 - These dynamic risks intensifying the existing north-south divide, as southern States may feel penalised for successful population control.
 - Such an **imbalance** could strain India's federal structure and disrupt the equilibrium of inter-State representation.

Seat Expansion and Its Implications

- **Rationale and Concerns**
 - The proposed 50% increase in legislative seats is intended to ease the transition and maintain proportional representation. However, even with **proportional expansion**, more populous States would gain significantly in absolute terms.

- **Impact on Political Balance**

- In a first-past-the-post system, numerical strength determines electoral outcomes.
- As a result:
 - Northern States could gain disproportionate political influence.
 - Less populous regions may face structural disadvantages.
 - The balance of power within Parliament could shift significantly.

Operational Challenges in Women's Reservation

- **Rotation of Constituencies**

- A key unresolved issue is the mechanism for rotating reserved constituencies. This has significant implications for:
 - Political accountability
 - Continuity in governance
 - Constituency development
- Frequent rotation could disrupt **long-term representation**, while limited rotation might create unequal advantages.

- **Lack of Clarity**

- The Act provides only a broad framework, leaving critical operational details undefined.
- This lack of clarity could affect the effectiveness of the reform.

Conclusion

- The introduction of women's reservation is a **necessary and long-overdue step** toward gender equality in India's political system.
- However, its linkage with delimitation and seat expansion transforms it into a far-reaching structural reform with significant implications for federal balance and democratic representation.
- As India stands on the brink of a major reconfiguration of its electoral framework, the challenge lies in ensuring that the pursuit of gender justice is aligned with principles of **fairness, inclusivity**, and institutional integrity.

CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER - APPOINTMENT, POWERS AND REMOVAL PROCESS

- The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) is the head of the Election Commission of India, a constitutional body established under **Article 324** of the Constitution.
- The Commission is responsible for conducting free and fair elections to Parliament, State Legislatures, and the offices of the President and Vice-President.

Appointment of CEC

- The CEC is appointed by the President of India.
- As per the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners Act, 2023, the appointment is made on the recommendation of a selection committee comprising:
 - Prime Minister,
 - Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, and
 - One Union Cabinet Minister.
- This aims to bring transparency and balance in the selection process.

Tenure

- The CEC holds office for a term of **six years or until the age of 65 years**, whichever is earlier.
- The conditions of service cannot be varied to their disadvantage after appointment, ensuring independence.

Powers and Functions

- The Election Commission, headed by the CEC, enjoys wide-ranging powers under Article 324.
- These include:
 - Superintendence, direction, and control of elections.
 - Preparation and revision of electoral rolls.

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- Conduct of free and fair elections.
- Monitoring election expenditure and enforcing the Model Code of Conduct.
- The Commission also has plenary powers to act in areas where laws are silent, ensuring the integrity of the electoral process.

Removal Process

- The removal of the CEC is similar to that of a Supreme Court judge.
 - Under **Article 324(5)**, the CEC can be removed only on grounds of proved misbehaviour or incapacity. The process requires:
 - A motion passed in both Houses of Parliament.
 - Special majority (majority of total membership and two-thirds of members present and voting).
 - This high threshold ensures institutional independence and protects the office from arbitrary removal.
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