

“Happiness is not the absence of problems; it's the ability to deal with them.” Steve Maraboli

NATIONAL

DOT RELEASES DRAFT NATIONAL TELECOM POLICY

The draft of National Telecom Policy (NTP) 2018 aka National Digital Communications Policy 2018 has been released for public consultations by the Department of Telecom (DoT).

The key strategies in the draft talks of recognizing spectrum as a key natural resource for public benefit to achieve India's socio-economic goals

The policy aims to accomplish some of the strategic objectives by 2022 including: Provisioning of Broadband for all, creating four million additional jobs in the digital communications sector, enhancing the contribution of the digital communications sector to eight percent of India's GDP from around six percent in 2017, enhancing India's contribution to global value chains ensuring digital sovereignty

Features of the draft NTP, 2018:

There would be the optimal pricing of the spectrum to ensure sustainable and affordable access to digital communications.

Enabling light touch licensing/ de-licensing for broadband proliferation Promoting the co-use/ secondary use of spectrum.

Constituting a Spectrum Advisory Team (SAT) consisting of experts, industry, and academia to facilitate the identification of new bands, applications and efficiency measures to catalyze innovation and efficient spectrum management.

It proposes identifying and making available new spectrum bands for access and backhaul segments for timely deployment and growth of 5G networks and making available harmonized and contiguous spectrum required for deployment of next-generation access technologies.

Setting up National Broadband Mission:

The draft talks of establishing a 'National Broadband Mission – Rashtriya Broadband Abhiyan' to secure universal broadband access for implementation of broadband initiatives, to be funded through USOF and

PPP:

BharatNet for providing 1Gbps to Gram Panchayats upgradeable to 10 Gbps

GramNet for connecting all key rural development institutions with 10Mbps upgradeable to 100 Mbps

NagarNet for establishing one- million public Wi-Fi Hotspots in urban areas

JanWiFi for establishing two-million Wi-Fi Hotspots in rural areas Implementing a 'Fibre First Initiative' to take Optical fiber to the home, to enterprises, and to key development institutions in tier I, II and III towns and to rural clusters

Setting up Telecom Ombudsman:

It talks about establishing effective institutional mechanisms to protect consumers' interests including a Telecom Ombudsman and a centralized web-based complaint redressal system.

The Telecom Commission has already approved setting up of the Telecom Ombudsman and has asked TRAI to take care of it.

Roadmap for Green Telecom in India

The Policy talks of incentivizing the use of renewable energy technologies in the communications sector.

This includes utilization of small cell fuel batteries, lithium-ion batteries or other similar technologies and promoting research and development of green telecom.

Universal Service Obligation Fund:

USOF was formed by the Central Government in 1999 to help fund projects to provide widespread and non-discriminatory access to quality ICT services at affordable prices to people in rural and remote areas. The money

for this fund comes through a Universal Access Levy (UAL) charged from the telecom operators as a percentage of various licenses fees being paid by them.

The amount from UAL is deposited into the Consolidated Fund of India and requires prior parliamentary approval to be dispatched.

UNION CABINET HAS GIVEN ITS APPROVAL FOR EXTENDING PMVVY

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for extending the investment limit from Rs 7.5 lakhs to Rs 15 lakhs as well as extension of time limits for subscription from 4th May 2018 to 31st March, 2020 under the Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY) as part of Government's commitment for financial inclusion and social security.

PMVVY:

PMVVY is a Pension Scheme exclusively for the senior citizens aged 60 years and above.

The Scheme can be purchased offline as well as online through Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India which has been given the sole privilege to operate this Scheme.

Scheme provides an assured return of 8% p.a. payable monthly (equivalent to 8.30% p.a. effective) for 10 years.

Pension is payable at the end of each period, during the policy term of 10 years, as per the frequency of monthly/ quarterly/ half-yearly/ yearly as chosen by the pensioner at the time of purchase.

The scheme is exempted from Service Tax/ GST.

On survival of the pensioner to the end of the policy term of 10 years, Purchase price along with final pension installment shall be payable.

SUPREME COURT ASKS HIGH COURTS TO FAST-TRACK TRIAL UNDER POCSO ACT

The Supreme Court has issued a slew of directions to all high courts of the country regarding trial in sexual assault cases involving children.

All high courts must ensure that the cases of sexual assault of children are fast-tracked and decided by special courts.

High courts should instruct the trial courts not to grant unnecessary adjournments during trial of cases under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

High courts may constitute a committee of three judges to regulate and monitor the trials of sexual assault cases of children.

The State police chiefs should constitute special task forces to investigate cases.

Nearly 32% of cases filed under the POCSO Act, which deals with sexual abuse of minors, were pending police investigation at the end of 2016 while 89% were pending trials.

POCSO Act:

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO Act) 2012 was formulated in order to effectively address sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children.

The Act casts the police in the role of child protectors during the investigative process.

The Act further makes provisions for avoiding the re-victimization of the child at the hands of the judicial system. It provides for special courts that conduct the trial in-camera and without revealing the identity of the child, in a manner that is as child-friendly as possible.

The Act also provides for mandatory reporting of sexual offences.

The Act defines a child as any person below eighteen years of age. It defines different forms of sexual abuse, including penetrative and non-penetrative assault, as well as sexual harassment and pornography. It deems a sexual assault to be "aggravated" under certain circumstances, such as when the abused child is mentally ill or when the abuse is committed by a person in a position of trust or authority like a family member, police officer, teacher, or doctor.

UNION CABINET APPROVED FORMATION OF GROUP 'A' SERVICE INDIAN PETROLEUM & EXPLOSIVES SAFETY SERVICE

The Union Cabinet has approved the Cadre review and formation of Group 'A' service of the technical cadre of Petroleum & Safety Organization (PESO) in the name of Indian Petroleum & Explosives Safety Service (IPESS).

To remove acute stagnation in all grades and uplift the morale of the workforce and enhance its performance, it has been decided to form Group 'A' Service of the technical cadre of PESO in the name of IPESS and restructure the newly-formed service. The measure will enhance the capacity and efficiency of the organization and it will also enhance career progression of its Group 'A' officers.

PESO:

PESO is a subordinate office under Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP).

The organization is serving the nation since 1898 as a nodal agency for regulating safety of substances such as explosives, compressed gases and petroleum.

The organization deals with wide range of subjects related to explosives, petroleum, compressed gases, pressure vessels, gas cylinders, cross-country pipelines, Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), Auto Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Auto LPG) etc.

UNION CABINET APPROVED CONTINUATION OF PRADHAN MANTRISWASTHYA SURAKSHA YOJANA(PMSSY)

In a major boost to the expansion of healthcare infrastructure in the country, the Union Cabinet Chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the continuation of Pradhan MantriSwasthya Suraksha Yojana(PMSSY) beyond 12thFive Year Plan to 2019-20.

PMSSY:

The Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) was announced in 2003 with objectives of correcting regional imbalances in

the availability of affordable/ reliable tertiary healthcare services and also to augment facilities for quality medical education in the country.

It is a central sector scheme.

The scheme has two components: Setting up of new AIIMS and upgradation of government medical colleges.

Setting up of new AIIMS would not only transform health education and training but also address the shortfall of health care professionals in the region. Construction of new AIIMS is fully funded by the Central Government. The Operations & Maintenance expenses on new AIIMS are also fully borne by the Central Government.

GOVT TO TABLE DNA PROFILING BILL IN MONSOON SESSION

The government has informed the Supreme Court that it will introduce a DNA profiling Bill in the Monsoon Session of the Parliament

The government was responding to a PIL in 2012 on the use of DNA profiling for identifying unclaimed bodies, especially to match them with cold cases of missing persons

The court said that with the competent authority undertaking to bring about legislation there was no need for a mandamus from the Supreme Court in this issue

The Law Commission of India in its 271st report had prepared the draft Bill named The DNA Based Technology (Use and Regulation) Bill, 2017 after examining various judicial pronouncements and constitutional provisions

The exercise was initiated by the Commission after the Department of Biotechnology forwarded its draft of 'The Use and Regulation of DNA based Technology in Civil and Criminal Proceedings, Identification of Missing Persons and Human Remains Bill, 2016'

Recommendations of Law Commission:

The Commission recorded that DNA profiling was indeed used for disaster victim identification, investigation of crimes,

identification of missing persons and human remains and for medical research purposes.

The Commission said the procedure for DNA profiling if given statutory recognition, should be done legitimately as per constitutional provisions.

The Bill provides for the setting up of a statutory DNA Profiling Board to spell out procedures and standards to establish DNA laboratories and grant of accreditation to these labs.

The Board should also be tasked with advising the Centre and the State governments on the operation of these labs and ethical/human rights issues relating to DNA testing in consonance with international standards.

The Board should also have the responsibility to supervise, monitor, inspect and assess the laboratories.

EXERCISE VIJAY PRAHAR-2018

Over 20,000 troops of the strike formations of the Army's South Western Command are engaged in the "Vijay Prahar" exercise near Suratgarh in Rajasthan.

The exercise is being held in the wake of the IAF testing its might in the "Gagan Shakti" exercise in the western sector of Rajasthan.

During the exercise, the formations are practising and operationalising certain concepts of operating in the (a) network-centric environment, (b) integrated employment of modern-day sensors with the weapon platforms, (c) employment of attack helicopters in the air cavalry role and (d) a bold offensive of application of the Special Forces.

Aim:

To fine-tune the Army's jointmanship with the Indian Air Force (IAF).

The IAF carried out the Gagan Shakti exercise and demonstrated its capabilities and strength.

In the immediate wake of Gagan Shakti, this exercise is being held for testing and refining army's jointmanship and maximising the impact of the joint operations.
