

IT Rules 2021

❖ Context

- The **Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (I&B)** has ordered the **blocking of 22 YouTube based news channels**, four of which were being run from Pakistan and the rest from India under the IT Rules, 2021.
- This is the **first time action has been taken against Indian YouTube news publishers** since the notification of the IT Rules, 2021.

❖ Key Highlights

- Guidelines under IT Rule 2021 aim to **regulate social media, digital news media, and over-the-top (OTT) content providers**.
- It **creates a level playing field** in terms of rules to be followed by online news and media platforms vis-à-vis traditional media outlets.

❖ Salient Features of IT Rule 2021

- Social media norms to be **administered by the Ministry of Information and Technology**.
- **Due diligence to be followed by intermediaries:** The intermediaries including the social media intermediaries have to follow due diligence.
 - If it is not followed, **safe harbor provisions** will not apply to them.
- **Grievance Redressal Mechanism:** It empowers the users by mandating the intermediaries, including social media intermediaries, to **establish a grievance redressal mechanism** for receiving resolving complaints from the users or victims.
 - Intermediaries shall **appoint a Grievance Officer** to deal with such complaints and **share the name and contact details of such officer**. Grievance Officer shall acknowledge the complaint within **twenty four hours** and resolve it within **fifteen days** from its receipt.
- Appoint a **Chief Compliance Officer** who shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with the Act and Rules.
- Appoint a **Nodal Contact Person** for 24x7 coordination with law enforcement agencies.

- **Online Safety:** If there are **complaints against the dignity of users, particularly women** – about exposed private parts of individuals or nudity or sexual act or impersonation etc - social media platforms will be **required to remove that within 24 hours after a complaint is made**.
- **A monthly Report:** They also will have to **publish a monthly report** about the number of complaints received and the status of redressal.
- **Identification of the First Originator:** Significant social media intermediaries shall **enable identification of the first originator of the information**.
 - It is required only for the purposes of prevention, detection, investigation, prosecution or punishment of an offense.
- **Physical Contact Address:** Significant social media intermediaries shall have a **physical contact address in India** published on its website or mobile app or both.
- **Voluntary User Verification Mechanism:** Users who wish to verify their accounts voluntarily shall be provided an appropriate mechanism to verify their accounts and provided with demonstrable and visible mark of verification.

Electoral Bond Scheme

❖ Context

- The Supreme Court has agreed to hear a pending plea challenging the Electoral Bond scheme 2018.

❖ Key Highlights

- The Government **notified** the scheme of Electoral Bonds in **Jan 2018**.
- An Electoral Bond is a **bearer instrument** in the **nature of a Promissory Note** and an **interest free** banking instrument.
- A **citizen of India** or a **body incorporated in India** will be **eligible to purchase** the bond.
- It would be issued/purchased for any value, in multiples of `1,000, `10,000, `1,00,000, `10,00,000 and `1,00,00,000 from the **specified branches of the State Bank of India (SBI)**.
- The 29 specified SBI branches are in cities such as New Delhi, Gandhinagar, Chandigarh, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Mumbai, Jaipur, Lucknow, Chennai, Kolkata and Guwahati.
- The purchaser would be allowed to buy electoral bond(s) only on **due fulfilment of all the extant KYC norms and by making payment from a bank account**.

- It will **not carry the name of the payee**. Thus, the political party might not be aware of the donor's identity.
- Electoral Bonds would have a **life of only 15 days** during which it can be used for making donation only to the **political parties** that:
 - Are **registered under section 29A** of the Representation of the Peoples Act, 1951 (43 of 1951). Which **secured not less than one per cent of the votes polled** in the last general election to the House of the People or a Legislative Assembly.
- The bonds under the Scheme are **available for purchase for a period of 10 days** each in the months of January, April, July and October, in **the beginning of the quarter**.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An additional period of 30 days is specified by the Central Government in the year of the General election to the House of People. The bond has to be encashed by an eligible political party only through a designated bank account with the authorised bank. <p>❖ Taxability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A donor get a deduction and the recipient, or the political party, get tax exemption, provided returns are filed by the political party. <p>❖ Criticism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since neither the purchaser of the bond nor the political party receiving the donation is required to disclose the donor's identity, the shareholders of a corporation will remain unaware of the company's contribution. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voters, too, will have no idea of how, and through whom, a political party has been funded Since the identity of the donor has been kept anonymous, it could lead to an influx of black money and money laundering. <p>❖ SC interim order of 2019</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On April 12, 2019 the Supreme Court asked all the political parties to submit details of donations received through electoral bonds to the ECI. It also asked the Finance Ministry to reduce the window of purchasing electoral bonds from 10 days to five days. |
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De-Notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes

- ❖ **Context**
- Recently, a standing committee of Parliament, has criticized the functioning of the development programme for denotified, nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes.

<p>❖ Key Highlights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee pointed out that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department has already delayed in formulation of the Scheme for welfare of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi Nomadic communities. The budgetary allocation has been reduced to Rs 28 crore for 2022-23 against the budgetary allocation of Rs 50 crore for 2021-22. At present 269 such Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic communities are specified and a survey is now under process to place these castes in SC, ST and BC categories. Scheme for economic empowerment of DNT communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It has been formulated to provide coaching, health insurance, facilitate livelihood and financial assistance for construction of homes for the members of DNT. The Development and Welfare Board for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities (DWBDNC): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was set up in 2019 under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Aim: To implement the welfare programmes. 	<p>❖ De-Notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Denotified Tribes (DNTs): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DNTs are communities that were 'notified' as being 'born criminal' during the British regime under a series of laws starting with the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871. Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They are defined as those who move from one place to another rather than living at one place all the time. These communities are the most vulnerable and deprived. The Renke commission estimated their population at around 10.74 crore based on Census 2001. A new Commission constituted in February 2014 identified 1,262 communities as de-notified, nomadic and semi-nomadic. NCDNT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (NCDNT) was constituted in 2006. It was headed by Balkrishna Sidram Renke. There is no permanent commission for these communities.
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News in Between the Lines

Weapons of Mass Destruction

❖ **Context**

- Recently, The **Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Amendment Bill, 2022** has been unanimously passed in Lok Sabha.

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❖ Key Highlights

- The Bill seeks to **amend The Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act, 2005.**
 - The 2005 Act prohibited the manufacturing, transport, and transfer of weapons of mass destruction, and their means of delivery.
- **Objective:**
 - To **provide against the financing of proliferation** of weapons of mass destruction and **their delivery systems** in line with India's international obligations.
- **Significance:**
 - In recent times, **regulations relating to proliferation** of weapons of mass destruction and their **delivery systems by international organizations have expanded.**
 - The **UNSCs targeted financial sanctions** and the **recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force** have mandated against financing of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

❖ Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)

- WMD is a **nuclear, radiological, chemical, biological or other weapon** that can kill and bring significant harm to a large number of humans.
- It can **cause great damage to human-made structures** (e.g., buildings), natural structures (e.g., mountains), or the biosphere.
- The **scope and usage of the term has evolved and been disputed**, often signifying more politically than technically.

❖ Context

- Recently, The PM of India has congratulated Indian music composer, **Ricky Kej** on winning the Grammy Award for his album Divine Tides.

❖ Key Highlights

- The **64th GRAMMY Awards** recognizes **recordings (including musical artists, compositions and albums)** released between September 01, 2020, to September 30, 2021.
- The Grammy Award is an award **presented by the Recording Academy** to recognize "**Outstanding Achievement in the music industry**" of the United States.
- The trophy depicts a **gilded gramophone.**
- The **First Grammy Awards** ceremony was held on **May 4, 1959.**

❖ Context

- Recently, German police said that they have taken down **Russian-language illegal darknet marketplace Hydra**, the largest such network in the world, and **seized bitcoins worth €23 million (\$25 million).**

❖ Hydra

- Founded in 2015.
- Hydra **sold illegal drugs, stolen credit card data, counterfeit currency and fake identity documents, masking the identities** of those involved using the Tor encryption network.
- The marketplace had around **17 million customer accounts** and over **19,000 vendor accounts**, according to the **BKA federal police.**

❖ Dark Net

- The darknet or dark web or deep web is the **hidden collective of internet sites only accessible by a specialized web browser like Tor, Freenet, I2P and Tails.** It is used for **keeping internet activity anonymous and private**, which can be helpful in both legal and illegal applications.
- While some use it to **evade government censorship**, it has also been known to be **utilized for highly illegal activity.**
- The dark web operates in secrecy using the **onion router (ToR).**

Grammy Award



Hydra and Dark Net



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CRIJAF SONA



❖ Context

- Government is implementing the **National Food Security Mission Commercial Crops - Jute (NFSM-CC-Jute)** since 2014-15 to increase productivity and to improve the quality of fibre.

❖ Key Highlights

- Under this programme, latest **agronomic technology** is disseminated to jute farmers through numerous awareness camps and necessary farm-level training
- One such technological intervention disseminated to the farmers of West Bengal is CRIJAF SONA. It has been developed by **ICAR Central Research Institute for Jute and Allied Fibres**.
- It is the **retting accelerator** that facilitates faster retting of the jute and mesta.

❖ Retting and Problems

- Retting is the **process of separating fibre from stem**. Under traditional water retting method, **bundles of stock** are **submerged in stagnant or slow moving water**. The water penetrates and swells inner cells, burst outermost layer and **increase the absorption of both moisture and decay-producing bacteria**.
- The **farmers of West Bengal** generally ret their jute plants on roadside ditches, canals, ponds and other stagnant water sources due to the lack of availability of slow flowing water sources, resulting in **very low quality of fibre** which fetches **very low price** in the market. CRIJAF SONA is **talc based retting consortium** made up of **three pectinolytic bacterial strains of B. pumilus** which is applied by evenly spreading over each of the layers of jute bundles.

❖ Benefits

- Improves the **fibre quality** by at least 1- 2 grades.
- Increases **fibre yield** by 8-10 %.
- Reduces the **retting duration** by 6-7 days.
- Earn **additional income** of Rs. 12,000 - 15,000/ha.
- **No adverse effects on aquatic flora & fauna** (fish etc.). **No adverse effect on humans and animals** as it uses non-pathogenic microbes.

Gati Shakti Cargo Terminal



❖ Context

- Ministry of Railways informed Parliament.

❖ Key Highlights

- In order to boost investment from industry in **development of additional terminals for handling rail cargos**, a new 'Gati Shakti Multi-Modal Cargo Terminal (GCT)' policy was launched on 15.12.2021.
- It has been targeted to set up **100 GCTs within the next three financial years** i.e. 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25.
- Some of the salient features of Gati Shakti Cargo Terminals (GCTs) are:
 - **No departmental charges** will be levied on the applicant.
 - **No Land Licence Fees** to be charged for the Railway land used for connectivity. **No cost of commercial staff** to be charged.
 - All **common-user traffic facilities** at the serving station to be **constructed and maintained by Railway**.
 - Maintenance of all assets (track, signalling, OHE) by Railway at its own cost, excluding the yard and loading/unloading lines.
 - Railway will reserve the right to grant connectivity to another Terminal(s) from such portions of track being maintained by Railway.

❖ Multimodal vs Intermodal

- In multimodal transportation, **one contract covers the entire journey**. One carrier takes sole responsibility and ensures door-to-door delivery is completed, even if other carriers are used in the journey.
- In intermodal transportation, there is a **separate contract for each individual leg of the journey**. This means that there is more than one responsible entity for the successful delivery of the cargo.

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Joint Parcel Product



❖ Context

- Ministry of Railways informed Parliament.

❖ Key Highlights

- A 'Joint Parcel Product' (JPP) of India Post and Indian Railways is being developed, wherein **first-mile and last-mile connectivity** will be provided by the **Department of Posts**, and the **intermediate connectivity** from station to station will be provided by **Railways**.
- It aims to target the **business-to-business** and **business-to-customer market** by providing a complete parcel handling solution, i.e. **picking up from the premises of the sender, booking and door-step delivery to the recipient**. The project commenced on **pilot basis** on 31st March, 2022, first from **Surat to Varanasi**.

Himansh



❖ Context

- Ministry of Earth Science informed Parliament.

❖ Key Outcomes

- It is a **state-of-the-art field research station** established, by **Ministry of Earth Science' NCPOR** (National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research) in **2016** in Chandra basin, HP, in Western Himalayas for conducting field experiments and expeditions to glaciers to study melting of glaciers.
- Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, DST is also monitoring a few glaciers in Uttarakhand & Ladakh, which reveal that the:
 - **Dokriani Glacier** in the Bhagirathi basin is retreating at 15-20 m/a since 1995.
 - **Chorabari Glacier** in the Mandakini basin is retreating at 9-11 m/a during 2003-2017.
 - **Durung-Drung and Pensilungpa glaciers** in Suru basin, Ladakh are retreating at 12 m/a and ~ 5.6 m/a, respectively.

Stand-Up India Scheme



❖ Context

- The **6th anniversary** of the **Stand Up India scheme** is being celebrated. Stand Up India scheme was launched by Prime Minister on 5th April 2016.
- The scheme was launched to encourage entrepreneurship at the grassroots level especially for **promoting economic empowerment and employment generation** among **SC, ST and women entrepreneurs**.

❖ Key Highlights

- More than 1.33 lakh **new job-creators and entrepreneurs** have so far been facilitated under this Scheme. More than 1 lakh women promoters have benefitted from this Scheme during its six years of operation.
- "As more and more beneficiaries from the underserved segments of entrepreneurs are targeted for coverage, would make significant strides towards building an **Atmanirbhar Bharat**,"

❖ Stand-Up India?

- **Stand-up India aims to promote entrepreneurship among women, Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) categories**, helping them to **start a greenfield enterprise** in manufacturing, services or the trading sector and activities allied to agriculture.
- **Stand-up India facilitates bank loans** between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 1 crore to at least one SC/ST borrower and at least one female borrower per bank branch of **scheduled commercial (SC) banks**.

❖ Why Stand-Up India?

- **The Stand-Up India scheme** is based on recognition of the challenges faced by SC, ST and women entrepreneurs in setting up enterprises, obtaining loans and other support needed from time to time for succeeding in business. The scheme, which **covers all branches of SC Banks**, will be accessed in **three potential ways**: (1) **Directly at the branch** (2) Through **Stand-Up India Portal** (www.standupmitra.in) or, (3) Through the **Lead District Manager (LDM)**.

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