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## 1. Verification of EVM Burnt memory

### Why in News?

In a first, 11 candidates in the recently-concluded 2024 Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections have applied for verification of the burnt memory of the Ballot Units and Control Units of electronic voting machines (EVMs), and of Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) units.



The remedy of verification was made available to losing candidates by the Supreme Court this April. The candidates would have to bear expenses of the verification process, but they would be refunded if any tampering was found.

### Burnt memory of EVMs and VVPAT units

The "burnt memory" of EVMs (Electronic Voting Machines) and VVPATs (Voter Verified Paper Audit Trails) refers to the non-volatile memory in these devices where data is stored permanently, even when the device is powered off.

This memory contains critical information such as:

- EVMs: Votes cast during the election, the configuration of the machine, and other operational details.
- VVPATs: Printed records of the votes cast, which serve as a verifiable paper trail for the electronic votes.

The process aims to verify the integrity and accuracy of the election results recorded in the EVMs and VVPATs.

### April 2024 order of the Supreme Court

The Supreme court in its 2024 order held

#### 1. Rejected the plea for 100% verification of VVPAT slips

On April 26, 2024, the Supreme Court upheld the EVM-VVPAT system and rejected a plea to return to ballot papers and for 100% counting of VVPAT slips.

#### 2. Verification of the burnt memories of EVMs and VVPATs

The court directed the Election Commission of India (ECI) to allow verification of EVM and VVPAT burnt memories.

This verification can be requested by second- and third-placed candidates. It applies to up to 5% of machines in an Assembly constituency or Lok Sabha segment.

The burnt memory/microcontroller in 5% of the EVMs, including the control unit, ballot unit, and VVPAT, should be checked for tampering by engineers from the EVM manufacturers upon written request by the second- or third-placed candidates.

Candidates must identify the EVMs by polling station or serial number and can be present during the verification.

### 3. Cost of the process

Requests for verification must be made within seven days of the result declaration. The candidates must bear the verification costs, which will be refunded if tampering is found.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: Indian Express

## 2. The Telecommunications Act, 2023: Ushering in new era of connectivity

### Why in News?

The Telecommunications Act, 2023 aims to amend and consolidate the law relating to development, expansion and operation of telecommunication services and telecommunication networks; assignment of spectrum and for matters connected therewith. The Telecommunications Act, 2023 also seeks to repeal existing legislative framework like Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 and Indian Wireless Telegraph Act, 1933 owing to huge technical advancements in the telecom sector and technologies.



The Telecommunications Act, 2023, was passed by the Parliament in December 2023, received the assent of the President of India on 24.12.2023 and was published in the official Gazette on 24.12.2023.

The salient features of the sections that have been brought into force

with effect from 26.06.2024:

**1. RoW framework:** Right of Way provides for effective RoW framework, both on public and private property. The definition of public entities has been broadened to include government agencies, local bodies and PPP projects like airports, seaports, and highways.

Public entities shall be obligated to provide right of way except in special circumstances. The fee for right of way would be subject to a ceiling. The Act provides complete framework for RoW in respect of private property based on mutual agreement.

The Act also provides that the RoW to be granted shall be non-discriminatory and as far as practicable on a non-exclusive basis. It also provides that telecommunication infrastructure

shall be distinct from the property it is installed on. This will help reduce the disputes when property is sold or leased.

**2. Common ducts:** In line with PM Gati Shakti vision, the law provides for Central Government to establish common ducts and cable corridors.

**3. Telecommunication standards:** Telecom is a global industry. To ensure national security and promote India's technology developers, the Act lays down powers to set standards and conformity assessment measures for telecommunication services, telecommunication networks, telecommunication security, etc.

**4. National Security and Public safety:** The Act provides strong provisions to take necessary measures for national security and public safety.

**5. Inclusive service delivery, Innovation and technology development:** The Act expands the scope of Universal Service Obligation Fund to include supporting universal services in underserved rural, remote, and urban areas; supporting research and development of telecommunication services, technologies, products and pilot projects. The Act also provides legal framework for Regulatory Sandbox to facilitate innovation, and deployment of new technology.

**6. Protection of users:** Telecommunication is a powerful tool for empowerment of masses. However, it can be misused to cause harm to users. The Act provides measures for protection of users from unsolicited commercial communication and create a grievance redressal mechanism.

**7. Digital by design:** The Act provides that the implementation shall be digital by design bringing online dispute resolution and other framework.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: PIB

### 3. G-7 meet in 2024

#### Introduction



Leaders of the Group of Seven, the U.S., Canada, Germany, France, Japan, the U.K. and Italy, met in Italy's Apulia region from June 13-15, along with the European Union leadership, for a summit to discuss a host of issues. India has been invited to the outreach 11 times, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi attending it for the fifth time.

#### What was the G-7 summit hoping to achieve?

Bridging differences between the "West and the Rest", finding new ways to fund support for the Ukraine war, investing in Africa and grappling with migration, climate change and artificial intelligence challenges, were all on the agenda for G-7 leaders.

They agreed to make \$50 billion more available for Ukraine, carving it out from frozen sovereign wealth funds of Russia, held a special "Energy for Growth in Africa" summit to spur investments in clean energy, attacked China for coercive trade practices, and met with leaders of 10 countries, including India, and multilateral organisations, as part of the "G-7 Outreach", to discuss the concerns of the Global South.

### **How important is India to the G-7 process?**

India has been an important part of the G-7 process for several years now, coming to the grouping's attention in the 2000s for its steady growth figures during the global financial collapse. India is not only a key member of the Global South, and has hosted the "Voice of Global South" conference since 2023, it is also a member of the G-20 troika, along with Brazil and South Africa. Besides, Prime Minister Modi is a central figure at such outreaches, though India is not a member of the G-7.

Other countries whose leaders attended the outreach were Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Jordan, Kenya, Mauritania, Tunisia, Türkiye and the United Arab Emirates, along with heads of the African Development Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations and the World Bank.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Organisations

Source: The Hindu