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1. DoT notifies 'Telecommunications (Administration of Digital Bharat Nidhi) Rules, 2024'

Introduction

The first set of rules under the Telecommunications Act, 2023, 'Telecommunications (Administration of Digital Bharat Nidhi) Rules, 2024' have been notified.



Digital Bharat Nidhi

Digital Bharat Nidhi would replace the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF). It is a pool of funds generated by a 5 percent Universal Service Levy charged upon all the telecom fund operators on their adjusted gross revenue (AGR).

Salient features of the rules

1. The Universal Service Obligation Fund created under the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 has now been rechristened as Digital Bharat Nidhi vide section 24(1) of the Telecommunications Act, 2024, and it now addresses new areas which may require support from Digital Bharat Nidhi in changing technological times.
2. The rules provide for powers and functions of administrator, who will be responsible for overseeing the implementation and administration of the Digital Bharat Nidhi. The rules also provide for criteria for undertaking schemes and projects under Digital Bharat Nidhi and selection process for implementers.
3. The rules stipulate that funds from the Digital Bharat Nidhi will be allocated to projects aimed at improving telecommunication services in underserved and remote areas and for underserved groups of the society, such as, women, persons with disabilities and economically and socially weaker sections.
4. The schemes and projects funded under the Digital Bharat Nidhi need to meet one or more of criteria stipulated in the rules. These include projects for provision of telecommunication services, including mobile and broadband services and telecommunication equipment required for delivery of telecommunication services, and enhancing telecom security; improving access and affordability of telecom services and introduction of next generation telecommunication technologies in underserved rural, remote and urban areas.

5. The criteria for undertaking schemes and project under Digital Bharat Nidhi also include promoting innovation, research and development; promotion and commercialisation of indigenous technology development and associated intellectual property including creation of regulatory sandboxes, where necessary; developing and establishing relevant standards to meet national requirements and their standardisation international standardisation bodies; to encourage start-ups in telecommunications sector; to create bridge between the academia, research institutes, start-ups and industry for capacity building and development; and to promote sustainable and green technologies in telecommunications sector. These projects are aimed at achieving the goal of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

6. It is also provided that any Implementer, receiving funding from the Digital Bharat Nidhi for establishing, operating, maintaining or expanding a telecommunication network, shall share and make available such telecommunication network/services on an open and non-discriminatory basis.

Background

The Telecommunications Act, 2023, was passed by the Parliament in December 2023, received the assent of President of India on December 24, 2023.

Guided by the principles of Samavesh (Inclusion), Suraksha (Security), Vridhhi (Growth), and Tvarit (Responsiveness), the Act aims to achieve the vision of Viksit Bharat (Developed India). The provisions related with Digital Bharat Nidhi (DBN) are contained in Section 24-26 ,Chapter V of the Act.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Economics

Source: PIB

2. Sudan Conflict: 500 Days of War

Why is Sudan at War?

The war in Sudan began in April 2023 due to a power struggle between General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, head of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), and General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, head of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The conflict stems from tensions over Sudan's political future and the move towards civilian rule, which dates back to the 2019 overthrow of President Omar al-Bashir. A brief power-sharing agreement was disrupted by a military coup in 2021, leading to escalating tensions and eventually, war.

Current Situation

The conflict has led to the deaths of over 15,000 people, though some estimates suggest the toll could be as high as 40,000. The war has created one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, with 25 million people in urgent need of assistance, nearly 9 million internally displaced, and over half the population lacking access to healthcare. The situation is further worsened by environmental disasters like floods, which have decimated communities and hampered relief efforts.

What Happens Next?

If the conflict continues, millions could die from starvation by 2027. The war also poses a significant geopolitical risk, with the potential to spill over into neighboring countries and trigger mass migration towards Europe. The disruption of vital operations, such as those of the Suez Canal, could have global ramifications. International intervention is urgently needed to prevent further disaster and stabilize the region.



Relevance: GS Prelims; International Issues
Source: The Hindu

3. Hayao Miyazaki wins Magsaysay Award: Why his animated films resonate with audiences across ages

Introduction

Japanese filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki, considered one of the greatest animators and directors, has won the 2024 Ramon Magsaysay Award. Named after the former President of the Philippines, the awards "honor greatness of spirit shown in service to the peoples of Asia", covering fields such as community service and arts.

The award citation called Miyazaki "one of the industry's foremost exponents of animated films made expressly for children but with a much broader appeal."



Who is Hayao Miyazaki?

Miyazaki was born in 1941 in Tokyo. His father was the director of a company that manufactured parts for fighter planes during World War II. In his book *Starting Point: 1979 to 1996*, Miyazaki wrote that some of his earliest memories are of "bombed-out cities". By age four, he had witnessed the bombing of Utsunomiya.

Despite having an affinity for manga (a popular style of Japanese comics and graphic novels), Miyazaki initially had trouble drawing people. He spent years drawing planes, battleships and tanks, which found their way into his cinema as well. After studying economics and political science, he began his career as an animator in 1963.

Before the creation of his production company Studio Ghibli, Miyazaki's major projects included the long-running series *World Masterpiece Theater*; and *Future Boy Conan*, which he directed. In the 1969 film *The Wonderful World of Puss 'n Boots*, he worked with other top animators in Japan to execute distinct visual sequences.

What is Studio Ghibli?

Miyazaki, along with director Isao Takahata and producer Toshio Suzuki, founded Studio Ghibli in 1985 under the publishing company Tokuma Shoten. Most of their films were directed by Miyazaki, with Takahata being the second-biggest contributor.

The Magsaysay Award citation notes: "More than being commercial successes—three Ghibli productions are among Japan's ten top-grossing films—these are works that display a deep understanding of the human condition, engaging their viewers to reflect on their own situation and exercise their humanity."

Their most famous film is perhaps *Spirited Away* (2001). It tells the story of Chihiro, a 10-year-old girl who mysteriously gets trapped in the world of 'Kami' (spirits of Japanese folklore) and must try to return to the human world. *Spirited Away* was the first non-English film to win the

Academy Award for Best Animated Feature, although Miyazaki refused to attend the award ceremony over his opposition to the Iraq War.

Studio Ghibli has also become synonymous with gentle, aesthetically pleasing visuals — many of which are meticulously hand-drawn by Miyazaki even in the digital age.

Relevance: GS Prelims; International Awards

Source: Indian Express

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