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Why is in news? New Telecom Bill aims protection of users from cyber fraud says Communications Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) issued the draft Indian Telecommunication Bill, 2022. The proposed Bill aims to bring in sweeping changes to how the telecom sector is governed, **primarily by giving the Centre more powers in several areas to do so.**

the Indian Telecommunication Bill, 2022, the Centre aims to consolidate and amend the existing laws governing the provision, development, expansion and operation of telecommunication services, telecom networks and infrastructure, in addition to assignment of spectrum.

The draft Bill, **consolidates three separate acts** that govern the telecommunications sector — **Indian Telegraph Act 1885, Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act 1933, and The Telegraph Wires, (Unlawful Protection) Act 1950.**

Key changes: Is inclusion of new-age over-the-top communication services like WhatsApp, Signal and Telegram in the definition of telecommunication services.

The Centre is also looking to amend the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India Act (TRAI Act) to dilute certain function of being a recommendatory body. The current TRAI Act mandates the telecom department to **seek the regulator's views before issuing a new licence** to a service provider. The proposed Bill does away with this provision.

It has also removed the provision that **empowered TRAI to request the government** to furnish information or documents necessary to make this recommendation.

Additionally, the new Bill also proposes to **remove the provision** where if the DoT cannot accept TRAI's recommendations or needs modification, **it had to refer back the recommendation for reconsideration by TRAI**.

The DoT has also proposed that if a **telecom entity in possession of spectrum goes through bankruptcy or insolvency**, the assigned **spectrum will revert to the control of the Centre.**

It also proposes to **replace the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)** with the Telecommunication Development Fund (TDF).

USOF is the **pool of funds generated by the 5 per cent Universal Service Levy that is charged upon all telecom fund operators on their Adjusted Gross Revenue.** The USOF has largely been used to aid rural connectivity. However, with the TDF, the objective is also to boost connectivity in underserved urban areas, R&D, skill development, etc.

And still the bill is in the draft stage and consideration stage, will see what are the changes going to happen and becomes a act.

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