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INSIGHT

Draft Amendments to India's Telecom Cybersecurity Rules Expand Regulatory Scope

India's Draft National Telecom Policy 2025 Charts Ambitious Digital Roadmap



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Draft Amendments to India's Telecom Cybersecurity Rules Expand Regulatory Scope

On 24 June 2025, the Ministry of Communications released draft amendments to the Telecommunications (Telecom Cybersecurity) Rules, 2024, proposing a significant expansion in scope. The amendments introduce the new category of "Telecommunication Identifier User Entities" (TIUEs), which would include OTT platforms, fintech services, and e-commerce portals that rely on telecom identifiers such as mobile numbers for authentication.

The Draft also proposes a Mobile Number Validation (MNV) Platform, under which TIUEs would be required to verify user identifiers through a centralised system maintained by telecom operators, with fees payable per request. Additionally, all used mobile devices would be subject to mandatory IMEI verification through a centralised database.

These proposals have sparked debate across the technology ecosystem. Concerns include the absence of a clear statutory basis for regulating TIUEs under subordinate legislation, risks of regulatory overlap with sectoral and data protection laws, and the possibility of duplicative compliance obligations. Startups and MSMEs in particular have raised alarms over the cost implications of per-request fees, while privacy advocates caution against the expansion of data collection without robust consent frameworks.

From a legal perspective, questions also arise as to whether such sweeping obligations can be validly introduced by way of subordinate legislation, and how the new framework will align with the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023. Critics warn that without harmonisation and strong privacy safeguards,

the Draft risks creating a fragmented compliance landscape that could stifle digital innovation.

If implemented in its current form, the Draft Amendments will fundamentally reshape the compliance obligations of digital platforms in India, bringing them closer under the telecom regulatory fold. Stakeholders have until August 2025 to provide their comments, after which the Ministry is expected to finalise the amendments.

India's Draft National Telecom Policy 2025 Charts Ambitious Digital Roadmap

The government has released the Draft National Telecom Policy 2025 (NTP-25), setting an ambitious vision to transform India into a digitally empowered economy. The policy outlines six missions, focusing on universal connectivity, secure networks, sustainability, and global digital leadership.

Concrete targets include:

- 100% 4G and 90% 5G coverage,
- one million new jobs, and
- a 150% increase in domestic telecom manufacturing.

Equally notable is the emphasis on fostering startups and innovation, with plans to double the number of telecom startups by 2030, and support 500 ventures in 6G, AI, IoT, and quantum communication. Sustainability features prominently, with commitments to reduce emissions, promote circular economy practices, and build a quantum-resilient, AI-secured telecom ecosystem.

The Draft, currently open for consultation, signals India's determination to combine self-reliance with global competitiveness in the digital era.



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