Centre for Digital
Economy Policy Research

C-DEP.org

**Monthly Newsletter**
September 2023

## C-DEP Highlights

- **C-DEP Acknowledged in G20 Toolkit**

  C-DEP collaborated with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) in researching and drafting the G20 Toolkit for Digital Upskilling and Reskilling Programs unveiled during the G20 summit in Delhi.

  Included in the outcome document of the G20 Digital Economy Working Group (DEWG), the toolkit is aimed at promoting knowledge sharing among member states in the digital skilling field.

  **To read more about the toolkit, click here:**

- **Man, Machine and Algorithms: G20 Under India Takes Giant Step in Digital Skilling**

  The final outcome document of G20's Digital Economy Working Group (DEWG) adopted by the Digital Economy Ministers at the recently concluded G20 summit represented a significant boost to India's efforts to lead global conversations on the digital economy, wrote C-DEP's Senior Policy Analyst, V. Abhishek.
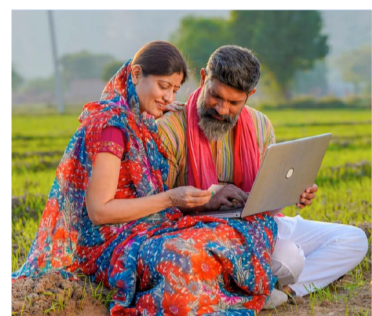
  **To read the article, click here:**

- **Need for Deploying Better-Quality Optical Fibre in the BharatNet Project**

  Considering that the country's digital infrastructure is built keeping in mind its long-term utilisation, it is essential that the fibre network being created by BharatNet lasts for at least 30 years to satisfy service level agreements with operators and realise its revenue potential, stressed a C-DEP representation to the Government of India.

  **To read the representation, click here:**

- **Dr. Jaijit Bhattacharya on India-China Solar Trade**

  C-DEP president shares his views on India's ambitious goal of achieving 500 GW of solar power by 2030, which according to him would require a strategic shift towards bolstering solar cell manufacturing capabilities. He also stresses on the importance of substantial investments in battery storage technology.

  **To view the TV discussion, click here:**

## Policy Headlines of the Month

### Telecom:

- **Centre mulls opening TRAI chairperson's post to private sector**

  The government is contemplating amending the TRAI Act, 1997, to open senior regulatory positions to the private sector. Currently, the act mandates that TRAI members must have held high-ranking government positions for at least three years. According to media reports, the government is planning to enhance private sector participation in key regulatory roles, fostering greater diversity and expertise in these positions.

- **TRAI Releases 5th Amendment to Interconnection Regulations**

  TRAI has issued Telecommunication(Broadcasting and Cable) Services Interconnection(Addressable Systems) (Fifth Amendment) Regulations, 2023 (4 of 2023). DRM, or Digital Rights Management, safeguards digital media by curbing unauthorised distribution and limiting consumer copying. DRM solutions emerged due to escalating online piracy, offering protection to commercially marketed content.

### Atmanirbhar Digital:

- **China faces EU anti-dumping inquiry**

  In her annual State of the European Union address, Ursula von der Leyen, the President of the European Commission, revealed that the Commission is initiating an anti-subsidy inquiry into electric vehicles originating from China. The anti-subsidy measure, which involves countervailing duties, represents one of the trade defense tools available to World Trade Organization (WTO) members for safeguarding domestic production against global trade imbalances.

- **Thailand launches inquiry into import of Chinese rolled steel**

  Thailand's commerce ministry has initiated an inquiry into the import of Chinese rolled steel, suspecting that it may be evading anti-dumping regulations. The investigation specifically targets hot-rolled steel sheets, both in coil and non-coil forms, originating from 17 Chinese manufacturers. In a statement, the ministry said there existed substantial evidence pointing towards circumvention of anti-dumping duties.

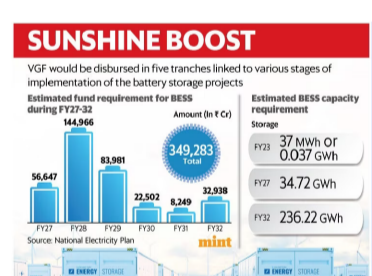- **India withdraws extra duties on eight US-origin products**

  India and the US have resolved longstanding WTO disputes, leading to India's withdrawal of extra duties on eight US origin products, such as apples, walnuts, and almonds. These retaliatory tariffs were initially imposed in 2019 in response to US steel and aluminum tariffs. However, following the US commitment to grant market access for steel and aluminum, India lifted these tariffs.

### Green Digital:

- **MeitY announces AI Gamechangers award**

  India will host the annual Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence summit in December, 2023. "At the summit, the Government of India aims to bring together AI experts from across the globe to solve contemporary AI challenge through an AI Gamechangers Award," the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has said in a statement.

- **Union Cabinet okays Viability Gap Funding (VGF) for Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)**

  The Union Cabinet has given the green light to the "Viability Gap Funding (VGF) for Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)" scheme, which aims to develop a substantial 4,000 MWh of BESS projects by 2030-31. It offers financial support of up to 40% of the capital cost as VGF, with an initial budget of INR 9,400 crore.

- **Gujarat Unveils Draft 2023 Renewable Energy Policy, Emphasises Wind-Solar Hybrids**

  Gujarat launched its Draft Renewable Energy Policy-2023, promoting wind, solar, and wind-solar hybrid projects. Effective until June 2028 or the introduction of a new policy, it targets 100 GW of renewable capacity by 2030, attracting INR 5 lakh crores in investments and utilising about 4,00,000 acres of land.

- **MeitY invites public comments on Draft National Strategy on Robotics**

  The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has invited public comments on the Draft National Strategy on Robotics. The deadline for submissions is October 31, 2023. The draft national strategy is a comprehensive policy document outlining India's vision and plan for the development, adoption, and integration of robotics technology across various sectors of the economy.

### E-commerce:

- **Independent regulator not proposed in upcoming e-commerce policy**

  The proposed e-commerce policy, which is under formulation, has no provision for setting up of an independent regulator for online retail platforms, a report quoting an official of the DPIIT has said. The official also said that regarding data related issues, e-commerce firms will have to comply with the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act.

### Electric Vehicles:

- **Delhi cabinet to consider EV policy**

  The draft of Delhi's 2020 Electric Vehicle (EV) Policy, designed to combat air pollution, is set for presentation to the cabinet. The policy entails a significant shift from CNG-run public buses to electric ones, with 800 electric buses already in operation out of a total fleet of 3700. Delhi aims to have 25% of all new vehicles to be electric by 2025.

- **Exempt EVs from road taxes, urges SMEV in a letter addressed to Nitin Gadkari**

  The Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles (SMEV) has urged the Indian government to create a nationwide policy for exempting electric vehicles (EVs) from road taxes. In a letter addressed to Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, SMEV emphasised the importance of a consistent and supportive policy framework to promote the transition to electric mobility in India.

- **West Bengal to use only electric vehicles in administrative functioning**

  The West Bengal government has taken a decision to only use EVs for all administrative functions to control rising pollution levels in the state. In case of emergencies, the administration will be able to hire petrol or diesel driven vehicles, but prior permission of the Finance department will be necessary for that.