



**TATHASTU**  
Institute of Civil Services

# **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS**



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S.NO.	TOPIC
1.	POST OFFICE BILL, 2023
2.	EU AI ACT: FIRST REGULATION ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
3.	PRELIMS POINTERS

## POST OFFICE BILL, 2023

SOURCE: [INDIAN EXPRESS](#)

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The Bill seeks to **repeal the 125-year-old the long-standing Indian Post Office Act of 1898**, drawing attention due to its historical significance.
- Contains provisions allowing the **Centre to intercept, open, or detain any item.**

### POST OFFICE BILL, 2023 OVERVIEW:

- **Repealing a 125-Year-Old Act:**
  - ✓ The Bill seeks to repeal the **long-standing Indian Post Office Act of 1898**, a central government departmental undertaking drawing attention due to its historical significance.
  - ✓ **Previous attempts to amend the 1898 Act** faced obstacles and lapses.
  - ✓ It falls under the **Union List of the Constitution.**
  - ✓ Under the new legislation, **India Post, a central government departmental undertaking, will no longer be under the exclusive privilege** of the government for conveying letters.
  - ✓ Instead, services provided by **India Post will be outlined in Rules.**
  - ✓ The bill **appoints a Director General of Postal Services** to lead India Post, **granting powers to establish regulations**, including tariffs for services and postage stamp supply.

## Postal Services Bill 2023

Replacing Indian Post Office act 1898

### KEY FEATURES OF THE BILL:

- **Exclusive Privileges:**
  - ✓ The 1898 Act granted **exclusive privileges to the central government** for conveying letters.
  - ✓ The Bill, however, **eliminates these privileges**, emphasizing India Post's **exclusive privilege to issue postage stamps.**
- **Prescribed Services:**
  - ✓ While the Act **specified services such as delivering postal articles and money orders**, the Bill empowers India Post to provide services as prescribed by the central government.
- **Director General's Regulations:**
  - ✓ Both the Act and the Bill **allow for the appointment of the Director General of Postal Services.**
  - ✓ The Bill expands the Director General's regulatory powers **to cover various activities related to postal services.**
- **Interception Powers:**
  - ✓ The Act **permitted interception based on public emergencies** or public safety grounds.
  - ✓ The Bill **broadens the scope, allowing interception for reasons like state security**, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, emergency, public safety, or contravention of laws.



- **Examination of Postal Articles:**
  - ✓ The **Bill removes the power of officers** to examine postal articles and suggests empowering officers to deliver suspicious articles to customs authorities for examination.
- **Exemptions from Liability:**
  - ✓ Both the Act and the Bill exempt the government and officers from liability for loss or damage to postal articles.
  - ✓ The Bill **introduces the central government's authority to prescribe liability through Rules.**
- **Removal of Offences and Penalties:**
  - ✓ **The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2023**, removed offences and penalties under the 1898 Act.
  - ✓ The **Bill does not reintroduce offences**, except for **the recovery of unpaid amounts** as arrears of land revenue.

#### KEY ISSUES AND ANALYSIS OF THE BILL:

- **Lack of Procedural Safeguards:**
  - ✓ The Bill **lacks specified procedural safeguards for intercepting articles** transmitted through India Post, potentially violating freedom of speech, expression, and the right to privacy.
  - ✓ The absence of safeguards **goes against established principles**, as demonstrated by Supreme Court rulings **mandating safeguards for interception of telecommunications.**
- **Grounds for Interception:**
  - ✓ The **inclusion of 'emergency'** as a ground for interception may **surpass reasonable restrictions under the Constitution.**
  - ✓ The broad term 'emergency' **lacks explicit definition**, raising concerns about **its constitutionality and potential infringement on freedom of speech and expression.**
- **Exemption from Liability:**
  - ✓ The Bill exempts **India Post from liability**, with liability to be prescribed through Rules by the central government, **leading to a possible conflict of interest.**
  - ✓ **Consumer rights may be inadequately protected**, and the conflict of interest arises as the central government, administering India Post, determines liability.
- **Regulation of Postal Services vs. Courier Services:**
  - ✓ **Distinct regulatory frameworks for public and private postal services** create disparities in interception provisions and consumer protection.
  - ✓ While the 1898 Act regulates India Post, **private courier services lack specific legislation.**
  - ✓ The **Bill retains provisions exempting the government from liability**, unlike private courier services regulated by the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.
- **Removal of Offences and Penalties:**
  - ✓ The **Bill does not introduce offences or penalties**, potentially **impacting the right to privacy**, with no consequences for unauthorized opening of postal articles.
  - ✓ The absence of penalties for offenses such as **illegal opening of postal articles raises concerns about the protection of individuals' privacy.**
- **Clarity on Consequences:**





- ✓ The Bill **lacks clarity on consequences for officers committing fraudulent or willful acts** causing loss, delay, or mis-delivery of services.
- ✓ **Without specified consequences**, the Bill **leaves ambiguity regarding accountability for officer misconduct**, potentially undermining the protection of consumer rights.

#### WAY FORWARD AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Incorporate Procedural Safeguards:**
  - ✓ Introduce **well-defined procedural safeguards in the bill** to govern the interception of articles transmitted through India Post.
  - ✓ Clearly articulated safeguards, **including the necessity for interception**, limited validity of orders, and **oversight by high-ranking officials or review committees**, will help protect fundamental rights and prevent misuse.
- **Precise Definition of Grounds for Interception:**
  - ✓ Define and narrow down **the grounds for interception, particularly the term 'emergency,'** to ensure its constitutionality and prevent arbitrary use.
  - ✓ Clarity in defining grounds **reduces ambiguity, aligning interception practices with constitutional principles** and preventing potential overreach.
- **Balanced Approach to Liability:**
  - ✓ **Strike a balance between exempting India Post from liability** and ensuring adequate consumer protection.
  - ✓ **This approach avoids conflicts of interest, enhances consumer rights**, and ensures that individuals have recourse in case of lapses in postal services.
- **Uniform Regulatory Framework:**
  - ✓ **Establish a uniform regulatory framework** for both public postal services and private courier services, ensuring consistency in interception provisions and consumer protection.
  - ✓ Consistency in **regulations promotes fairness, equal treatment for consumers**, and a level playing field between different service providers.
- **Reintroduce Offences and Penalties:**
  - ✓ **Reintroduce specific offences and penalties within the bill** to address unauthorized actions, such as the unapproved opening of postal articles.
  - ✓ Clear consequences for misconduct provide deterrence, uphold the right to privacy, and maintain public trust in the integrity of postal services.
- **Define Consequences for Officer Misconduct:**
  - ✓ Clearly define the **consequences for officers engaging in fraudulent or willful acts** that cause loss, delay, or mis-delivery of service.
  - ✓ Clarity in consequences **ensures accountability, discourages misconduct, and strengthens** the ethical standards within the postal system.
- **Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement:**
  - ✓ **Conduct public consultations and engage stakeholders**, including legal experts, civil society, and consumer advocacy groups, to gather diverse perspectives on the bill.
  - ✓ Inclusive consultations enhance the bill's robustness, **address concerns from various quarters, and contribute to a more comprehensive and well-balanced legislative framework.**
- **Regular Review Mechanism:**
  - ✓ Establish a **mechanism for regular reviews of the bill's implementation and its impact on fundamental rights, consumer protection**, and the evolving landscape of postal services.
  - ✓ Periodic reviews ensure the bill **remains aligned with changing needs**, technological advancements, and constitutional principles over time.



## EU AI ACT: FIRST REGULATION ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

SOURCE: [THE HINDU](#)

### WHY IN NEWS?

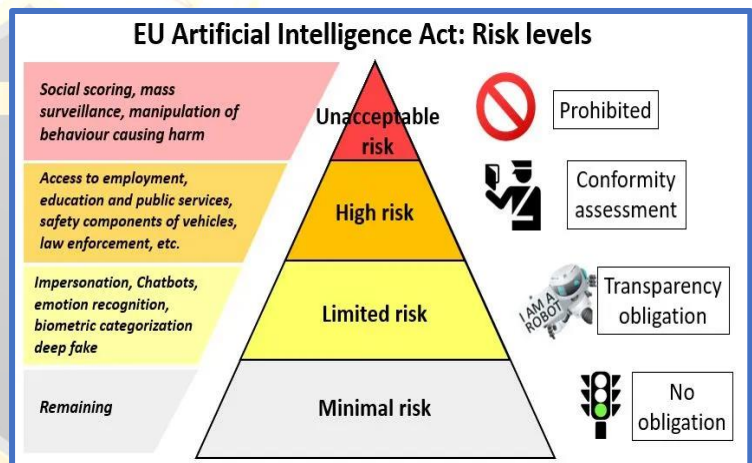
- **The European Union's (EU) AI Act is a substantial legislative move to regulate artificial intelligence technologies within the EU.**
- The use of artificial intelligence in the EU will be **regulated by the AI Act, the world's first comprehensive AI law.**
- **Balancing innovation and ethical AI development**, the act aims to create a regulatory framework, **mitigate AI-related risks**, and offer clear guidelines for **developers, users, and regulators.**

### WHAT IS THE EU'S ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ACT?

- **Overview:**
  - ✓ The EU's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Act is a **legislative initiative designed to enhance Europe's standing as a global hub for AI excellence.**
  - ✓ It focuses on **ensuring that AI technologies developed and deployed in Europe align with the region's values and regulations**, emphasizing ethical considerations.
  - ✓ The Act **aims to unleash the potential of AI for industrial use while upholding fundamental rights.**

### Key Elements of the AI Act:

- **Objective:**
  - ✓ The **primary goals** of the AI Act are to **strengthen Europe's global position in AI**, ensure adherence to European values and regulations, and leverage AI's potential for industrial applications.
- **Risk Classification System:**
  - ✓ A central feature of the AI Act is a **risk classification system that assesses the potential risks posed by AI technologies to health, safety, and fundamental rights.**
  - ✓ The framework categorizes AI systems into four risk tiers: **unacceptable, high, limited, and minimal.**
- **Risk-Based Framework:**
  - ✓ AI systems are **subject to varying requirements** based on their risk level.
  - ✓ Those with **limited and minimal risk**, such as spam filters or **video games**, face fewer obligations, primarily **transparency-related.**
  - ✓ Conversely, systems categorized as posing an **unacceptable risk**, including government social **scoring and real-time biometric identification** in public spaces, are generally prohibited with minimal exceptions.
- **Transparency Obligations:**
  - ✓ AI systems with **limited and minimal risk** are allowed for use with relatively fewer requirements, primarily centered around transparency.
  - ✓ Users must be informed about the **capabilities and limitations of these AI systems.**
- **Prohibitions on Unacceptable Risk:**





- ✓ Systems categorized as **posing an unacceptable risk**, such as those involved in government social scoring or **real-time biometric identification**, are generally prohibited.
- ✓ The Act emphasizes **stringent measures to prevent the deployment of AI technologies** that could pose severe risks to individuals.

### GLOBAL POTENTIAL & THE CHALLENGES OF THE AI ACT:

#### ➤ Challenges in Defining and Categorizing AI Applications:

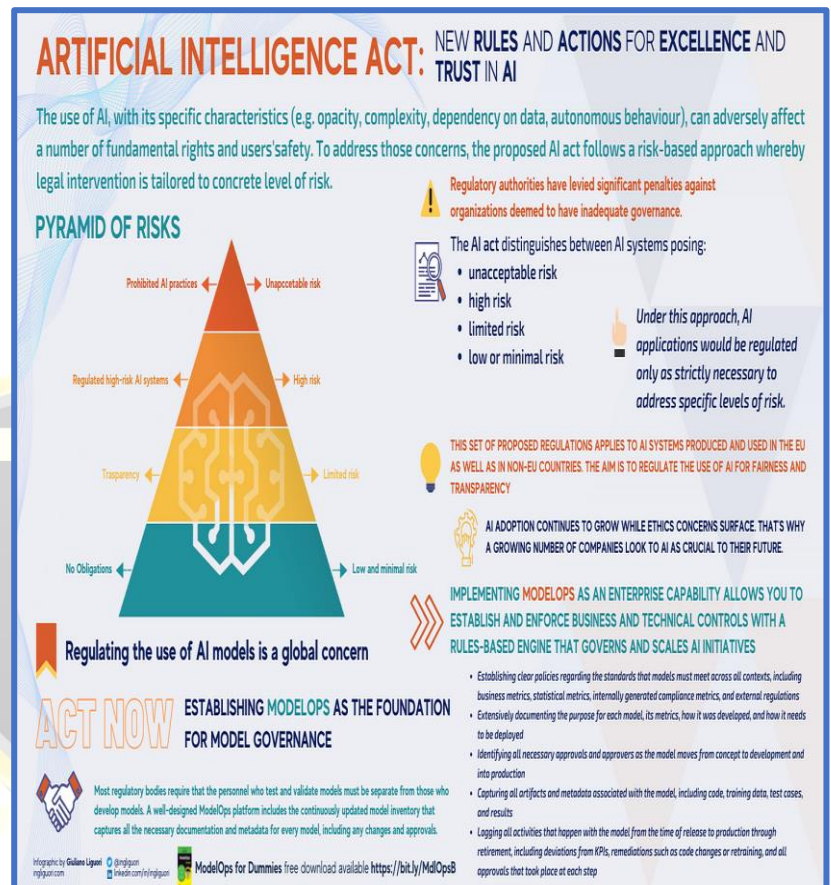
- ✓ Critics argue that defining and categorizing AI applications accurately may be challenging due to the evolving nature of AI technologies, leading to potential uncertainties in regulatory implementation.

#### ➤ Concerns about Competitiveness:

- ✓ Stringent regulations may be viewed as a potential hindrance to the competitiveness of European businesses in the global AI market, potentially stifling innovation and driving AI development outside the EU.

#### ➤ Burden on Smaller Businesses:

- ✓ Compliance with the EU AI Act may impose a significant burden on smaller businesses and startups, affecting their ability to compete with larger counterparts.



### Potential Global Implications:

#### ➤ Global Impact on AI Development:

- ✓ The EU AI Act is **expected to have a global impact**, influencing the development and deployment of AI technologies beyond the EU's borders.
- ✓ Its regulatory framework may **set a precedent for other regions**.

#### ➤ Establishing Global Norms:

- ✓ **Prioritizing ethical considerations** and fundamental rights, the **EU AI Act contributes to establishing global norms for AI development**, encouraging collaboration and consistent standards across borders.

### Administrative Aspects:

#### ➤ Enforcement and Reporting:

- ✓ Individuals have the **right to report non-compliance**, and market surveillance authorities in EU member states will enforce the AI Act.
- ✓ **Specific fines, with limits for SMEs and startups**, are outlined based on the **nature of violations**.

#### ➤ EU AI Act Penalties:



- ✓ **Fines for non-compliance could range from \$8 million to almost \$38 million**, depending on the violation and company size.
- ✓ The EU will establish a **centralized 'AI office' and 'AI Board'** to oversee enforcement.

## LEGAL PROVISIONS GOVERNING AI IN INDIA:

### ➤ **Current Regulatory Landscape:**

- ✓ As of now, **India lacks specific regulations** dedicated to AI.
- ✓ The government has expressed concerns **about the absence of such laws**.
- ✓ **IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw mentioned the challenges posed by moral and ethical issues** related to AI growth in India.

### Relevant Provisions:

### ➤ **Information Technology Act, 2000:**

- ✓ **While not explicitly mentioning AI**, the IT Act addresses **electronic transactions and digital governance**.
- ✓ **Sections 43A and 73A are relevant**, dealing with compensation for data privacy breaches and penalties for unauthorized access, respectively.

### ➤ **Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019:**

- ✓ Under consideration, this **bill focuses on comprehensive data protection**.
- ✓ **It includes provisions related to AI**, emphasizing explicit consent for processing personal data through AI algorithms impacting individual rights.

### ➤ **Indian Copyright Act, 1957:**

- ✓ This act protects original works but **raises questions about AI-generated content**.
- ✓ In the case of **Gramophone Company of India Ltd. v. Super Cassettes Industries Ltd. (2011)**, the Delhi High Court ruled that AI-generated music lacks human creativity and is ineligible for copyright protection.

### ➤ **National e-Governance Plan:**

- ✓ Aiming to **digitally empower society**, this plan incorporates **AI to enhance the efficiency of e-governance, automate processes**, and improve decision-making in various government departments.

### ➤ **AIRAWAT (AI Research, Analytics, and Knowledge Assimilation Platform):**

- ✓ **Launched by Niti Ayog, AIRAWAT addresses the requirements of AI in India**, emphasizing research and knowledge assimilation in the AI domain.

**DIGITAL PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION ACT, 2023** || TRILEGAL

**IMPACT ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

**WHEN DOES THIS ACT APPLY TO YOU?**

IF YOU (1) COLLECT, STORE, ANALYSE, SHARE OR OTHERWISE PROCESS ANY PERSONAL DATA WITHIN INDIA, OR OUTSIDE INDIA IN CONNECTION WITH ANY ACTIVITY RELATING TO THE OFFERING OF GOODS OR SERVICES TO DATA PRINCIPALS WITHIN INDIA, AND (2) DECIDE HOW AND WHY SUCH DATA IS PROCESSED.

**YOUR AI BUSINESS MAY BE COLLECTING PERSONAL DATA**

- By scraping non-public datasets.
- From users (e.g., prompts, inputs).
- From developers.
- From third parties (e.g., data brokers, businesses).

**THE ACT DOES NOT APPLY TO YOUR AI MODEL IF:**

- IT ONLY USES PUBLICLY AVAILABLE DATA**  
You can freely leverage personal data made public by the data principal or by any person legally obligated to do so (e.g., indexed webpages, non-private social media content, market disclosures).  
**Action Item:** Ascertain that the collected data is publicly available or use only anonymized datasets.
- IT IS USED ONLY FOR STATISTICS, RESEARCH OR ARCHIVAL**  
Such processing should adhere to prescribed standards and not take any decision specific to a Data Principal.  
**Action Item:** Identify processing activities that will fall within this scope.

## WAY FORWARD FOR AI REGULATIONS:

### ➤ **Global Collaboration:**

- ✓ The EU's AI Act sets the stage for **global collaboration** on AI regulations.



- ✓ Countries worldwide should consider **aligning their AI frameworks to create consistent standards.**
- ✓ Collaboration fosters a unified approach, **addressing global challenges and ensuring ethical AI development.**
- ✓ International cooperation can contribute to a harmonized regulatory environment.

➤ **Balancing Regulation and Innovation:**

- ✓ To foster a conducive environment for AI development, it is crucial to **strike the right balance between regulation and innovation.**
- ✓ While **regulatory measures are essential for responsible AI use**, overly restrictive regulations may stifle innovation.
- ✓ Policymakers globally should focus on **frameworks that encourage innovation while upholding ethical standards.**

➤ **Ethical Considerations and Fundamental Rights:**

- ✓ The EU's emphasis on **ethical considerations and fundamental rights should guide the development of AI regulations globally.**
- ✓ Prioritizing values such as **transparency, accountability, and protection of individual rights** ensures that AI benefits society without compromising ethical standards.

➤ **India's Adoption of AI Regulations:**

- ✓ **India should draw insights from the EU's AI Act** while tailoring regulations to its specific context.
- ✓ Given the increasing **use of AI in India**, the government should **actively consider the formulation of comprehensive AI regulations.**
- ✓ This includes **addressing moral and ethical concerns**, protecting fundamental rights, and promoting responsible AI deployment.

➤ **Establishing Regulatory Bodies:**

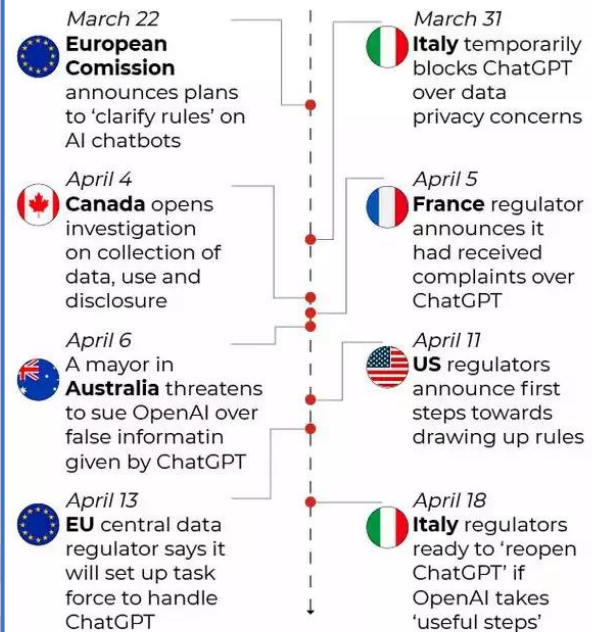
- ✓ Countries, including India, can consider **establishing dedicated AI regulatory bodies.**
- ✓ These bodies can **oversee compliance, conduct independent assessments**, and ensure the enforcement of AI regulations.
- ✓ Clear structures for oversight contribute to the **credibility and effectiveness of the regulatory framework.**

➤ **Encouraging AI Research and Development:**

- ✓ **Regulations should not act as barriers** but as enablers for AI research and development.
- ✓ **Governments should incentivize research initiatives**, encourage collaboration between academia and industry, and support startups in the AI sector.
- ✓ This approach fosters innovation while ensuring adherence to regulatory standards.

## AI chatbots facing regulation speedbumps

TOI







- **Capacity Building and Training:**
  - ✓ **To ensure effective implementation of AI regulations**, capacity building and training programs are essential.
  - ✓ This includes training regulatory **authorities, businesses, and individuals on AI ethics**, compliance, and the responsible use of AI technologies.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:**
  - ✓ **A robust monitoring and evaluation mechanism should be established** to assess the impact of AI regulations.
  - ✓ This includes evaluating **the effectiveness of measures, identifying areas for improvement**, and ensuring that regulations align with evolving technological landscapes.





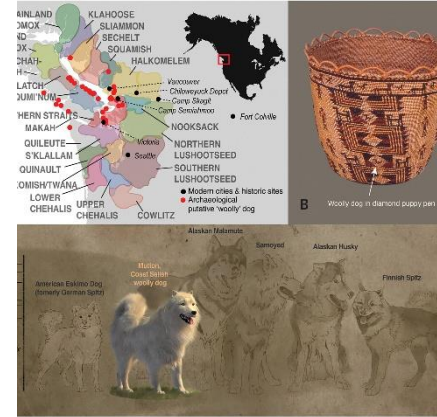
**PRELIMS POINTERS:**

TOPIC	DISCRIPTION
<b>HATTI COMMUNITY</b>	<p><b>WHY IN NEWS?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ The Centre is <b>reportedly considering granting "tribal" status to Himachal Pradesh's Trans-Giri region</b>, marking a shift in the government's stance.</li> <li>❖ The demand is intertwined with the plea <b>for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status</b> for the <b>Hatti community</b> residing in the area.</li> </ul> <p><b>HATTI COMMUNITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ The Hattis is a <b>closely-knit community known for traditional occupations like selling home-grown crops, vegetables, meat, and wool at local markets called 'haats.'</b></li> <li>❖ The Hattis, as of <b>the 2011 Census, numbered 2.5 lakh</b>, with an estimated present <b>population of around 3 lakh.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ The Hatti homeland spans the Himachal-Uttarakhand border in the <b>Giri and Tons river basin.</b></li> <li>❖ <b>Two Hatti clans in Trans-Giri and Jaunsar Bawar</b> share similar traditions, with historical ties before British conquest in 1814.</li> </ul> <p><b>REQUIREMENT OF TRIBAL AREA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ The government, in response to Parliament, <b>outlines criteria for declaring areas as Scheduled Tribes</b>, citing prerequisites <b>like tribal population preponderance, area compactness, viability, and economic backwardness.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>ST STATUS DEMAND</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ The <b>Hattis have been seeking ST status since 1967</b>, akin to those in <b>Jaunsar Bawar in Uttarakhand.</b></li> <li>❖ Political promises, including in BJP's manifestos, have been made to address this demand.</li> </ul>
<b>WOOLLY DOGS</b>	<p><b>WHY IN NEWS?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Researchers from the <b>Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History</b> conducted a <b>study on woolly dogs</b>, an <b>extinct breed</b> significant in <b>Indigenous Coast Salish communities</b> in the Pacific Northwest.</li> </ul> <p><b>ABOUT WOOLLY DOGS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Unique breed origins:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☛ Researchers, led by anthropologist Logan Kistler and biologist Audrey Lin, analyzed the <b>genetic clues in the pelt of "Mutton," the only known woolly dog fleece globally.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>❖ <b>Cultural significance:</b></li> </ul>





- ☛ Coast Salish tribal nations **bred woolly dogs for thousands of years**, valued for their **thick undercoats**.
- ☛ The dogs were **sheared like sheep**, and their wool was **used by Coast Salish weavers** for ceremonial and spiritual purposes.
- ❖ **Decline in the 19th century:**
  - ☛ By the mid-19th century, the **tradition declined**, and **Mutton, a woolly dog**, died in 1859.
  - ☛ Insights from genetic analysis and Coast Salish perspectives indicated a **decline likely due to European settlers' impacts, disease, and cultural changes**.



**GENETIC CHARACTERISTICS**

- ❖ **Woolly dogs diverged from other breeds around 5,000 years ago**, aligning with archaeological findings.
- ❖ Mutton's genetic similarity to **pre-colonial dogs** from Newfoundland and British Columbia suggests the **maintenance of unique genetic traits**.
- ❖ Mutton's genetic makeup, despite living after European breeds' **introduction**, **retained 85% of its ancestry from pre-colonial dogs**.

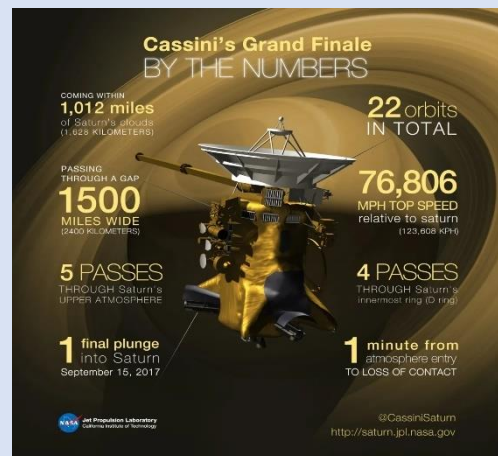
**NASA's Cassini mission**

**WHY IN NEWS?**

- ❖ A reanalysis of data **from NASA's Cassini mission** suggests the presence of various molecules in plumes **emitted from Saturn's moon Enceladus**.

**ABOUT ENCELADUS**

- ❖ **Discovery:**
  - ☛ Discovered in **1789 by astronomer William Herschel**.
  - ☛ sNamed after a **Giant in Greek mythology**.
- ❖ **Proximity and Brightness:**
  - ☛ **Second nearest major moon of Saturn**.
  - ☛ **Brightest among Saturn's moons**.
- ❖ **Activity and Composition:**
  - ☛ **Active moon with a global ocean beneath its crust**.
  - ☛ **Smooth and bright icy surface**.
  - ☛ **Most reflective body in the solar system**.
  - ☛ **Orbited Saturn from 2004 to 2017**.
  - ☛ **Completed 294 orbits around Saturn**.
- ❖ **Scientific Contributions:**
  - ☛ **Studied Saturn's atmosphere, rings, and moon interactions**.
  - ☛ **Discovered six named moons**.





- ☛ Identified Enceladus and Titan as potential sites for extraterrestrial life.

#### KEY FINDINGS

##### ❖ Molecules Identified:

- ☛ **Methanol, ethane, and oxygen**, along with previously identified **water, carbon dioxide, methane, ammonia, and molecular hydrogen**, are present in plumes from Enceladus.
- ☛ Additional hydrocarbons identified include **hydrogen cyanide (HCN), acetylene (C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>2</sub>), propylene (C<sub>3</sub>H<sub>6</sub>), and ethane (C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>6</sub>)**, along with traces of methanol and molecular oxygen.

##### ❖ Data Re-examination:

- ☛ Data from **Cassini's Ion and Neutral Mass Spectrometer (INMS)** collected during **flybys in 2011 and 2012** were re-examined.
- ☛ Statistical analysis techniques compared the data to a library of known mass spectra.

##### ❖ Definite Presence of Nitrogen:

- ☛ Definite **presence of nitrogen in the form of hydrogen cyanide (HCN)** was identified, resolving previous **difficulties in detecting HCN abundance**.

##### ❖ Composition Under Enceladus Surface:

- ☛ The **diverse chemical reservoir under Enceladus's surface** suggests a habitable environment.
- ☛ The composition could **potentially support microbial communities**, considering plausible mineralogical catalysts and redox gradients.

##### ❖ Potential for Life Support:

- ☛ The identified compounds might support microbial communities or drive **complex organic synthesis**, contributing to the potential origin of life.
- ☛ The ability to support life depends on the concentration of these compounds in **Enceladus's subsurface ocean**.