

## Draft Broadcasting Rules 2026 - Explained

June 13, 2026 • vajiramandravi.com



### Draft Broadcasting Rules Latest News

- The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) has released the **Draft Telecommunications (Television, Radio and Associated Services) Rules, 2026**, for stakeholder consultation to establish a common regulatory framework for television and radio broadcasting services.

### Broadcasting Regulation in India

- Broadcasting refers to the transmission of audio and audio-visual content through platforms such as television, radio, Direct-to-Home (DTH), IPTV, and digital broadcasting services.
- Since broadcasting influences public opinion, education, culture, and information dissemination, the sector is regulated through a legal and policy framework administered by the **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** (MIB).
- Historically, India regulated broadcasting through multiple policy guidelines issued separately for television, FM radio, community radio, DTH, and other services.

- These regulations were primarily rooted in the **Indian Telegraph Act, 1885**, creating a fragmented compliance system over time.
- The enactment of the **Telecommunications Act, 2023**, which replaced the colonial-era Telegraph Act, created the need for a modern and harmonised regulatory structure for broadcasting services.

## Need for a Unified Broadcasting Framework

- India's broadcasting ecosystem currently operates under several separate guidelines issued over different periods.
- For example, television uplinking and downlinking, DTH services, FM radio, IPTV, and community radio are governed by different policy documents and licensing systems.
- This fragmented structure creates several challenges:
  - Overlapping regulatory requirements
  - Multiple approval and licensing procedures
  - Higher compliance burden for broadcasters
  - Lack of regulatory consistency across broadcasting platforms
- The government argues that a unified framework would simplify administration, reduce ambiguity, and improve ease of doing business while ensuring stronger public service obligations.

## Draft Broadcasting Rules 2026: Key Provisions

- The proposed **Draft Telecommunications (Television, Radio and Associated Services) Rules, 2026** seek to create a **single regulatory framework** for broadcasting services.
- The draft rules propose to consolidate multiple earlier guidelines, including:
  - Satellite TV Uplinking and Downlinking Guidelines (2022)
  - DTH Broadcasting Guidelines (2001)
  - Headend-in-the-Sky (HITS) Guidelines (2009)
  - FM Radio Phase III Policy Guidelines (2011)
  - Community Radio Policy Guidelines (2024)
  - Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) Guidelines (2008)
- This consolidation aims to **establish a uniform regulatory structure for television and radio broadcasting under the Telecommunications Act, 2023**.
- The rules would apply to services such as:
  - Television channels
  - FM radio broadcasters
  - Community radio stations
  - DTH operators
  - IPTV providers
  - HITS platforms

## Public Service Broadcasting Obligations

- A major feature of the draft rules is the strengthening of public service broadcasting requirements.

- Under the proposal, television broadcasters would be required to telecast at least 30 minutes of content every day between 6 AM and 11 PM on subjects of national importance and social relevance.
- Similarly, private radio broadcasters would need to air at least one hour of such programming daily.
- The draft identifies themes, including:
  - Education and literacy
  - Agriculture and rural development
  - Health and family welfare
  - Women and child welfare
  - Science and technology
  - Environmental protection
  - National integration and cultural heritage
  - Welfare of the weaker sections
- Importantly, the draft changes the language from broadcasters “may” carry public service programming to “shall” carry such programming, making it mandatory rather than optional.
- Television channels meant exclusively for foreign audiences may receive exemptions, provided national security or sovereignty concerns are not affected.

## Ease of Doing Business Reforms

- The draft rules also seek to reduce procedural complexity in the broadcasting sector. Key reforms include:
  - Digital authorisation and approval mechanisms to simplify licensing.
  - Removal of the requirement for executing the Grant of Permission Agreement (GOPA) in some cases.
  - Streamlined dispute-resolution and adjudication processes.
  - Greater regulatory clarity for broadcasters operating across multiple services.
- The government believes these measures will improve investor confidence and reduce compliance costs.

## Concerns and the Way Forward

- While the draft rules aim to modernise broadcasting regulation, some concerns remain.
- Critics argue that mandatory public service obligations may increase operational burdens for private broadcasters.
- Questions have also been raised about maintaining editorial independence while complying with prescribed themes.
- At the same time, supporters contend that broadcasters, as public communication platforms, should contribute to awareness regarding education, health, social welfare, and national integration.
- The government has opened the draft for public consultation, and stakeholder feedback may shape the final framework.

**Source:** PIB | TH

---

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/draft-broadcasting-rules-2026/>

© Vajiram & Ravi. For personal use only.