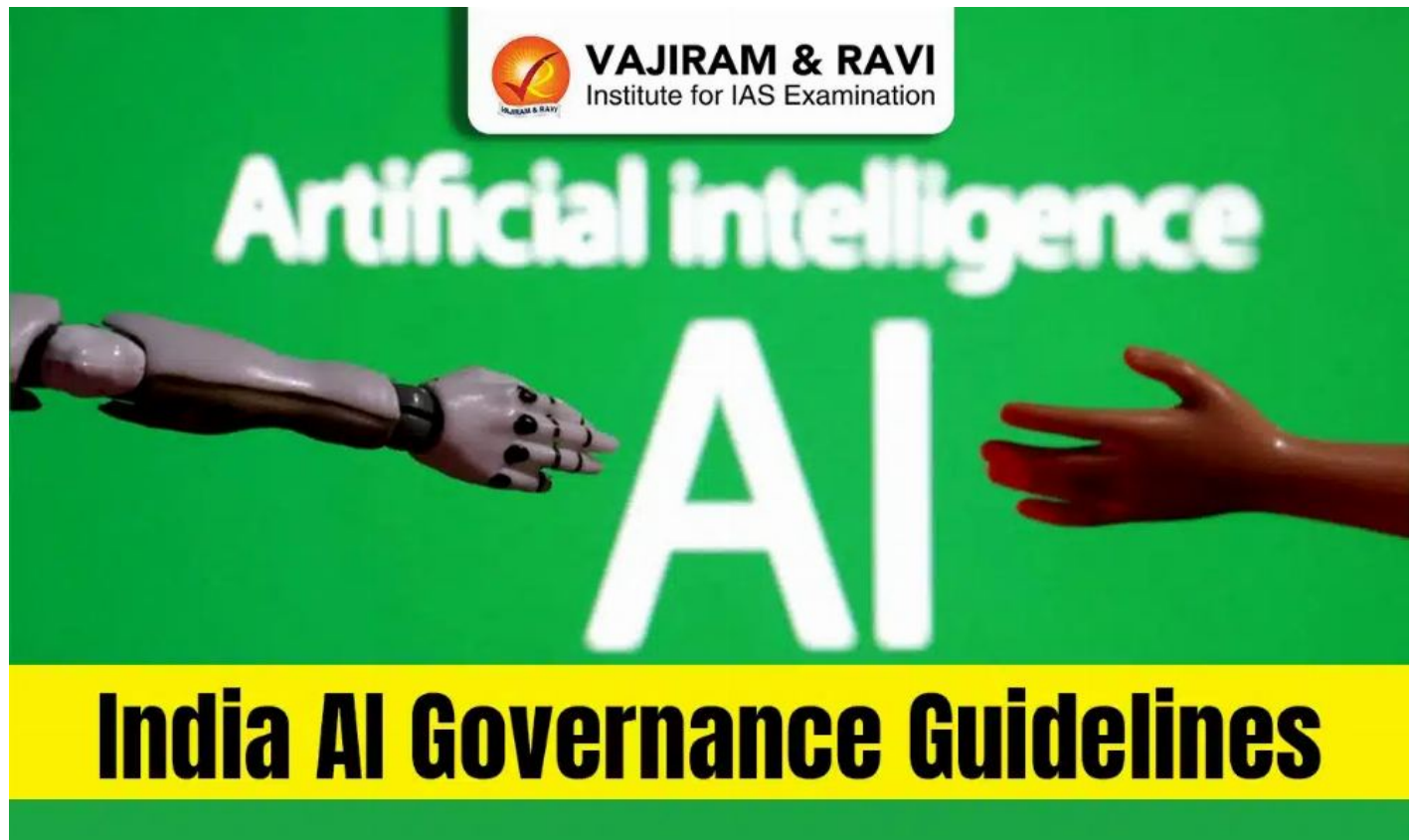


India's New AI Governance Guidelines: Innovation with Guardrails

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India AI Governance Guidelines Latest News

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) released the **India AI Governance Guidelines**, advocating a light-touch, innovation-friendly approach to regulating artificial intelligence.
- The document, a revised version of the January 2025 draft, was prepared by a **committee led by Balaraman Ravindran**, head of the Department of Data Science and AI at IIT Madras, while the earlier framework was overseen by Principal Scientific Adviser Ajay K. Sood.
- These guidelines are **independent of the recently released draft IT Rules amendment (2021)**, which seeks to mandate labelling of AI-generated content on social media.

Key Highlights of the India AI Governance Guidelines

- The goal is to harness AI's transformative power for **inclusive development and global competitiveness** while addressing risks to individuals and society.

- The framework is structured into **four parts**: Key Principles, Key Recommendations, Action Plan, and Practical Guidelines.

Part 1 - Key Principles (Seven Sutras)

- The seven guiding *sutras* shape India's AI philosophy across all sectors:
 - **Trust is the Foundation**: Without public trust, innovation and adoption will stagnate.
 - **People First**: Human-centric design, oversight, and empowerment.
 - **Innovation over Restraint**: Prioritise responsible innovation rather than excessive caution.
 - **Fairness & Equity**: Ensure inclusivity and prevent discrimination.
 - **Accountability**: Clear allocation of responsibility and enforcement mechanisms.
 - **Understandable by Design**: Transparent, explainable AI systems for users and regulators.
 - **Safety, Resilience & Sustainability**: Build robust, secure, and environmentally responsible AI systems.

Part 2 - Key Recommendations (Six Pillars)

- **Infrastructure**:
 - Expand access to **data, compute, and digital public infrastructure (DPI)**.
 - Encourage investments and innovation through national platforms like **AI Kosh**.
- **Capacity Building**:
 - Strengthen **education, skilling, and awareness** programmes for citizens and regulators.
 - Empower small businesses and government officials to responsibly use AI.
- **Policy & Regulation**:
 - Adopt **agile, flexible, and balanced frameworks**.
 - Review existing laws, identify gaps, and introduce **targeted amendments** for AI-specific risks.
- **Risk Mitigation**:
 - Develop **India-specific risk assessment frameworks** based on real-world harms.
 - Introduce voluntary, techno-legal, and context-specific safeguards for sensitive AI use.
- **Accountability**:
 - Implement a **graded liability system** based on risk and function.
 - Increase transparency about actors in the AI value chain and their compliance.
- **Institutions**:
 - Adopt a **whole-of-government approach**.
 - Establish an **AI Governance Group (AIGG)** and **Technology & Policy Expert Committee (TPEC)** for oversight.
 - Strengthen the **AI Safety Institute (AIS)** to provide technical expertise on trust and safety.

Part 3 - Action Plan (Short, Medium & Long-Term Goals)

- **Short-term**
 - **Key Priorities** – Establish AIGG, TPEC, and risk frameworks; suggest legal changes; adopt voluntary commitments; expand infrastructure; launch awareness campaigns.

- **Expected Outcomes** – Strong institutions, trust-building, readiness for AI risk management.
- **Medium-term**
 - **Key Priorities** – Publish standards, operationalise AI incident systems, amend laws, pilot regulatory sandboxes, and integrate DPI with AI.
 - **Expected Outcomes** – Safe experimentation and improved accountability.
- **Long-term**
 - **Key Priorities** – Continuous review, horizon scanning, and new laws for emerging risks.
 - **Expected Outcomes** – Sustainable, future-ready AI governance ecosystem.

Part 4 – Practical Guidelines

- **For Industry:**
 - Comply with Indian laws and adopt **voluntary standards and transparency reports**.
 - Create **grievance redressal mechanisms** and apply **techno-legal risk mitigation tools**.
- **For Regulators:**
 - Support innovation while mitigating real harms.
 - Prefer **flexible, periodic, and non-burdensome frameworks** over heavy compliance.
 - Use **techno-legal approaches** (e.g., bias detection, privacy preservation) to implement policies.

India AI Governance Guidelines: Key Analysis

- **Shift from Risk Control to Innovation Enablement**
 - The new framework marks a departure from earlier drafts that focused heavily on risk mitigation.
 - It now prioritises “innovation with guardrails”, scaling back references to NITI Aayog and OECD principles that influenced the previous approach.
 - The emphasis is on creating an adaptive governance model that balances growth and safety in AI deployment.
- **No Immediate Plan for a Dedicated AI Law**
 - While acknowledging that future legislation may be needed, the report suggests drafting new laws only when “emerging risks and capabilities” warrant it.
- **Linked to Global AI Initiatives**
 - The launch aligns with preparations for the Delhi AI Impact Summit (February 2026) — part of a global series of AI governance events following those at Bletchley Park (UK), Seoul, and Paris.
 - The guidelines are designed to position India as a responsible yet innovation-driven global AI player.

Conclusion

- India’s AI Governance Guidelines propose a **balanced, agile, pro-innovation, and future-ready framework** — enabling AI-driven growth, inclusion, and competitiveness, while safeguarding individuals and society through **trust, transparency, and accountability**.

Source: **TH** | **PIB** | **LM**