Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2026

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Governance*

Why in News?

Recently, India has tightened social media rules, requiring platforms to remove unlawful content within 2–3 hours and regulate AI-generated information.

- **Aim –** To curb the rapid virality of unlawful content and ensure accountability of digital platforms.
- **Amendment to –** ***Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.***
- **Objective –** Introduce legal recognition and regulation of *synthetically generated information (SGI).*
- Streamline compliance timelines for social media platforms' censorship.
- **Key Features –**

Domain	Provisions
SGI Definition	• First formal definition and regulation of SGI in India, targeting deepfakes and AI impersonations while excluding routine edits and academic/training material.
Labelling	• Mandatory labelling of SGI with metadata or unique identifiers. • Removal or suppression of labels is prohibited.
Intermediary Duties	• Significant social media intermediaries must verify user declarations. • Also ensure clear disclosure of SGI, and take expeditious action, including removal, disabling access, or suspending accounts.
Safe Harbour	• ***Non-compliance may lead to loss of Safe Harbour protection*** under Section 79 of the IT Act.
Takedown Timeline	• *Takedown of unlawful content must be completed within 2–3 hours.* • ***Grievance redressal timelines shortened from 15 days to 7 days.***

Prohibited Content	• Platforms must block SGI involving - Non-consensual intimate imagery within *2 hours against the earlier 24 hours.* - Other forms of unlawful content within *3 hours against the earlier 36 hours.*

- **Concerns –** Tech companies have raised issues regarding the feasibility of rapid takedown, compliance burden, and potential risk of over-censorship.
- **Significance –** Establishes India's first legal framework for AI-generated content.
- Enhances citizen protection from unlawful digital content and strengthens platform accountability.

Reference

IE | IT Amendment Rules, 2026

