

## 2. The IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2023

**Prelims Syllabus:** Governance - Policies

**Mains Syllabus:** GS-III Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, Nano technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.



### Why in News?

- The MeitY notified amendments to the IT Rules 2021 related to online gaming.

### What are the Amendments?

- **Fixing responsibilities of intermediaries**
  - ✓ It is obligatory on the part of intermediaries – To make a reasonable effort to not host/publish/share any online game that
    - Can harm the user harm
    - Has not been verified by an online gaming self-regulatory body.
- To ensure that no advertisement of a non-permissible online game is hosted on its platform.
- In relation to online games involving real money, their responsibilities include
  - ✓ The displaying of a mark of verification by the self-regulatory body;
  - ✓ Informing their users of the policy for withdrawal or refund of the deposit, etc;
  - ✓ Obtaining the KYC details of the users; and

- ✓ Not giving credit or enabling financing by third parties to the users.
- To not publish, share or host fake, false or misleading information (will be identified by the notified Fact Check Unit of the Central Govt) in respect of any business of the Central Government.
- **Setting Role of Government:** May notify multiple self-regulatory bodies, which shall be representative of the online gaming industry but function at arm's length from their members.
- **Role/authority of the self-regulatory body:** To inquire and satisfy itself that the online game does not involve betting/gambling on any outcome.
  - ✓ To ensure that the online game complies with the rules/requirements under the law, including measures to safeguard through parental controls, etc.
- **Applicability of rules:** The obligations become applicable once a sufficient number of self-regulatory bodies have been designated so that the online gaming industry has adequate time to comply.

#### **Proposal on the fact-checking unit:**

- Earlier the Ministry had proposed that news identified as “fake” by the fact-checking unit of the PIB will not be allowed on online intermediaries.
- However, the final draft has removed the reference to PIB.
- The social media platforms have sent a proposal to the Centre to create a network of fact-checkers – Misinformation Combat Alliance – who will verify dubious content posted on their platforms.
- The alliance will act as a “certification body” that will verify who a “trusted” fact-checker is.

#### **What are the aim of these amendments?**

- To enforce greater due diligence by online gaming and social media intermediaries.
- To protect the safety and trust of the Digital Nagriks and provide every opportunity possible to create startups and innovate.
- Enable the Indian online gaming ecosystem to expand and grow and become an important catalyst to India's One trillion-dollar Digital economy goal by 2025-26.

#### **Way Forward:**

- A very strict fake news law is the need of the hour.
- Linking Aadhar to social media accounts, as suggested by Attorney General could be helpful.

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- Being a digitally responsible citizen –
    - ✓ By just rechecking the information from some authentic sources
    - ✓ By applying common sense without getting biased
  - **Some best practices:**
    - ✓ Facebook has partnered with a fact-checking website to check the authenticity of messages circulating through it.
    - ✓ In 2018, Google news trained 8000 journalists in different Indian languages to spread awareness about Fake news and fact-checking.

