

2. IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code)

Amendment Rules, 2023

Why in News?

- The Bombay High Court has recently said the IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2023 does not seem to offer protection to fair criticism of the government through parody or satire.

Highlights

- No platform can allow harmful unapproved online games and their advertisements.
- They should not share false information about the Indian government, as confirmed by a fact-checking unit.
- An online intermediary – including social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter and internet service providers like Airtel, Jio and Vodafone Idea – should make “reasonable efforts” to not host content related to the Central Government that is “identified as fake or misleading” by a “fact check unit” that may be notified by the IT Ministry
- Platforms providing online gaming will have to register with a Self-Regulatory Body (SRB) that will determine whether or not the game is “permissible.”
- The platform should ensure that online games do not involve any gambling or betting elements. They should also comply with legal requirements, standards, and safety precautions such as parental controls.
- If any piece of information is marked as fake by the upcoming fact check unit, intermediaries will be required to take it down, failing which they would risk losing their safe harbour, which protects them from litigation against third-party content.
- Social media sites will have to take down such posts, and internet service providers will have to block URLs of such content.
- To combat misinformation and fake news, the government and intermediaries can use technology solutions like algorithms and fact-checking websites.
- Intermediaries can also implement self-regulatory measures such as monitoring content and working with fact-checking websites.
- Additionally, raising public awareness about the dangers of censorship and promoting free speech can be achieved through social media campaigns, workshops, and discussions in public forums.