

GOVERNMENT'S PERSPECTIVE: IT RULES ARE A STEP TOWARDS DENYING MISINFORMATION

Context

Misinformation is a **clear and present danger** to the goal of safe and trusted internet. The immunity provided to intermediaries had become a **hurdle to fixing accountability**. The new IT rules are a step towards enforcing accountability **without curbing the fundamental rights of citizens**.

Government's 'Digital India' Campaign

- The PM launched **Digital India in 2015**.
- The objective of the campaign is to use the internet to **bridge the distance between the government and citizens** and to deliver **responsive governance**.

Evolution of the Internet after the Digital India Campaign

- Over the last nine years, the internet has made India **the world's largest connected democracy**.
- There are over **83 crore internet users in India** at present.
- By 2025, India will achieve **Universal Access** which means every Indian will be on the internet.

The use of social media platforms as a misinformation tool

- Social media platforms have been used by state and non-state actors:
 - To **carry out misinformation operations for cyberwarfare**.
 - To create civil unrest in society.
 - For radicalisation and terror recruitment.

How is India affected by misinformation on social media platforms

- In 2019, a network of accounts and pages managed from Pakistan were detected engaging in **malicious, coordinated activity against India** on social media platforms.
- More recently, The Washington Post exposed **Khalistani elements using bots to conduct misinformation operations** against the Indian government, including giving calls to violence.

- Misinformation is a great challenge and cannot be left unchecked, especially in India, because of the scale and diversity of its users ranging from children to the elderly.

Actions taken by India to curb misinformation

- On April 6, 2023, the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) notified **the IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules 2023** to amend the IT Rules 2021.
- This amendment authorises the central government to designate a "fact check unit" to identify "fake or false or misleading" information in respect of "any business of the central government."

Criticism of new IT Rules 2023

- Do not define **what constitutes "fake or false or misleading."**
- These rules **violate the Supreme Court's Shreya Singhal vs Union of India (2013) judgement**, which laid down strict measures for blocking contents.
- They pose a **challenge to Freedom of Speech**. The government could flag any news or article that is **critical to the government policies** as fake, false, or misleading.

Conclusion

The government says that its determined efforts to curb misinformation continue **without ever diminishing Indian constitutional values and fundamental rights** to ensure the internet never becomes a safe haven for those who seek to misuse it.

These rules represent a partnership between the government and social media platforms in keeping internet safe for all Indians.

Foreign Exchange Management Act case against BBC India

- The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has registered a case against the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) India under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) for alleged foreign exchange violation.

- BBC is the national broadcaster of the United Kingdom, based at Broadcasting House in London.
- The probe is essentially looking at purported foreign direct investment (FDI) violations by the company.

Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA)

● **About**

- FEMA came in 1999 as a successor to the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act or FERA of 1973, with changing economic conditions in a post-liberalisation India.
- The act seeks to regulate foreign exchange transactions, currency transactions, and foreign payments in order to promote orderly development and maintenance of the foreign exchange market in India.

● **Objective**

- The objective of FEMA is:
 - to facilitate external trade and payments,
 - to promote the orderly development and maintenance of foreign exchange market in India, and
 - to regulate the transactions related to foreign exchange.

● **Functions**

- The FEMA regulates various aspects of foreign exchange transactions, including acquisition and holding of foreign exchange, payment and settlement of foreign exchange transactions, export and import of currency, and other related activities.
- The act also empowers the RBI to make rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of the act. Violation of the provisions of FEMA can result in penalties and fines.

What was Foreign Exchange Regulation Act or FERA?

● **Background**

- FERA was designed for an era in India marked by a shortage of foreign exchange.
- It was aimed at conserving forex to ensure it was utilised only in the interest of the development of the country.

● **About**

- FERA came into effect in 1973 and was aimed at regulating foreign exchange transactions and payments in the country.

- The act provided the Indian government with extensive powers to regulate foreign exchange transactions.
- This included the power to impose restrictions on the use of foreign exchange, to regulate the flow of foreign exchange, and to prohibit transactions that were deemed to be against the national interest.

Feature	FERA	FEMA
Introduction	Enacted in 1973	Enacted in 1999
Objective	To regulate foreign exchange transactions and payments	To facilitate external trade and payments, to promote the orderly development and maintenance of foreign exchange market in India, and to regulate the transactions related to foreign exchange
Emphasis	Control and Regulation	Management and Liberalization
Enforcement	More strict and restrictive	More liberal and flexible
Penalty	More severe	More moderate
Penalty Enforcement	Penalties and Fines only	Imprisonment, Penalties and Fines
Approach	Rule-based	Principle-based
Adjudication	Through FERA courts	Through FEMA adjudicating authorities and Appellate Tribunal
Foreign Investment	FERA was seen as a hindrance to foreign investment in India	FEMA seeks to encourage foreign investment in India by simplifying the rules and regulations related to foreign exchange transactions

What is the difference between FEMA and FERA?

- Overall, FEMA is a more modern and liberalized law compared to FERA, which was considered to be more restrictive and focused on control and regulation.
- FEMA seeks to promote foreign investment in India by simplifying the rules and regulations related to foreign exchange transactions, while FERA was seen as a hindrance to foreign investment in India.

AD HOC JUDGES

Recently, in a rare instance, the Supreme Court collegium has recommended the appointment of a retired district judge as a judge of the Madhya Pradesh HC, citing legitimate expectation and delay in the selection process.



About Ad hoc judges:

- **Constitutional Provisions:** The appointment of ad-hoc judges has been provided in the Constitution under **Article 224A** (appointment of retired Judges at sittings of High Courts).
- Under this Article, the Chief Justice of a High Court for any State can request a person to act as a judge of the High Court.
- For this, the **prior consent of the president** is required.
- The person should have held the office of judge of that court or of any other High Court.

- Such a judge is entitled to **allowances as determined by the President.**
- He will also enjoy all the jurisdiction, powers and privileges of a judge of that high court.

The Chief Justice of a High Court may start the procedure of recommending a name if:

- The number of **vacancies is more than 20%** of the sanctioned strength.
- Cases in a particular class are pending **for over five years.**
- More than **10 % of pending cases** are over five years old.
- Percentage of the rate of disposal is beneath the institution of the cases either in a particular subject matter or in the court.

ANIMAL HEALTH SYSTEM SUPPORT FOR ONE HEALTH

Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying will launch the “Animal Pandemic Preparedness Initiative (APPI)” Animal Health System Support for One Health (AHSSOH) project under the aegis of National One Health Mission on 14th of April 2023 at India Habitat Center, New Delhi.

The One Health Triad



About Animal Health System Support for One Health:

- It is a **collaborative project** between the **Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying** and the **World Bank.**
- It is aiming to create an ecosystem for a **better animal health management system** using the **One Health approach.**
- It will be **implemented in five States** and it envisages improving capacity building of stakeholders involved in animal health and disease management.
- **Duration of the project:** It will be implemented over a **five-year period** as **Central sector scheme** with a financial provision of Rs. 1228.70 Cr.
- The project calls for participation by Human Health, Forest and Environment Department at the national, regional as well as local for creating and strengthening the One Health architecture including community engagement.

What is Animal Pandemic Preparedness Initiative (APPI)?

- The Department Animal Husbandry has conceived a focused framework of the for future **animal pandemic and epidemics**.
 - Few key activities under APPI which are at different stages of execution are as follows:
 - Defined **joint investigation and outbreak response** teams (National & state)
 - Design an overall **integrated disease surveillance system** (built on National Digital Livestock Mission)
 - Strengthening the Regulatory system (e.g., Nandi online portal and Field trial guidelines)
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KIBITHOO VILLAGE

Union Home Minister recently urged people to visit Kibithoo village in Arunachal Pradesh to enjoy its natural beauty and take inspiration from its history.



Why in News:

- During his trip, the home minister had said that Kibithoo should not be termed as India's last village but first village as the Sun's rays fall first in this village in the country.

About Kibithoo Village:

- **Location:** It is located in Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh.
- It lies on the **right bank of the Lohit River**.
- **Elevation:** 1305 meters.
- The **Meyors tribe** form bulk of its population.
- It is one of the **most remote Circle Headquarters in Arunachal Pradesh** and the **only Circle Headquarters facing the border of India and China**.
- It has also been the **witness of the war between India and China** in the year 1962.

Key facts about Lohit River:

- It is the **farthest east tributary of Brahmaputra River**.
 - **Origin:** Tirap Phasi Ranges located in the **Eastern Tibet**.
 - It **enters India via Kibithoo village** lying at the border post in Arunachal Pradesh.
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- The river after entering the country **travels through Mishmi Hills** of Anjaw and then move towards Lohit district.
 - **The river travels all along** from Tibet to Arunachal Pradesh **for about two hundred kilometers, before merging in Brahmaputra River, Assam.**
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GOND PAINTING

Recently, the famous Gond painting of Madhya Pradesh has received the prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) tag.



About Gond Painting:

- It is a famous folk art of **the Gond tribal community of central India.**
- It is done to **preserve and communicate the culture** of the Gond tribal community.
- **Themes:** Gond tribes are highly interlinked with nature and this appears in their paintings too they include **animals, mahua tree, mythological stories, Hindu gods, Local deities and folktales etc.**
- Each Gond artist uses his distinctive pattern and style to fill the images these **style signatures** are used in collage to make a complete picture such as Dots, fine Lines, Curved Lines, Dashes Fish Scales etc.

Key facts about Gond Tribe

- The Gonds are the **largest tribal Community in India** and can be traced to the pre-Aryan era.
 - The word Gond comes from Kond, which means green mountains.
 - They are a heterogeneous group **spreading over large areas** from the Godavari gorges in the south to the Vindhya Mountains in the north.
 - They live in the states of **Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, and Odisha.**
 - The majority speak various mutually unintelligible dialects of **Gondi.**
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WHAT IS THE ENERGY CHARTER TREATY (ECT)?

Denmark energy ministry recently said that the country is working towards exiting the Energy Charter Treaty.



About Energy Charter Treaty (ECT):

It provides a **multilateral framework for energy cooperation** that is unique under international law.

- It is designed to **promote energy security** through the **operation of more open and competitive energy markets** while respecting the principles of sustainable development and sovereignty over energy resources.
- It was **signed in December 1994** and entered into **legal force in April 1998**.
- It also established the **Energy Charter Conference, an inter-governmental organisation which meets on a regular basis** to discuss issues affecting energy cooperation.
- There are currently **53 signatories** and contracting parties to the ECT, **including both the European Union and Euratom**.
- **The Treaty's provisions focus on four broad areas:**
 - the **protection of foreign investments**, based on the extension of national treatment, or most-favoured-nation treatment (whichever is more favourable) and protection against key non-commercial risks;
 - **non-discriminatory conditions for trade** in energy materials, products and energy-related equipment based on WTO rules and provisions to ensure reliable cross-border energy transit flows through pipelines, grids and other means of transportation;
 - the **resolution of disputes between participating states**, and - in the case of investments - between investors and host states;
 - the **promotion of energy efficiency** and attempts to minimise the environmental impact of energy production and use;

EXERCISE ORION

Four Rafale fighter jets of the Indian Air Force (IAF) will soon depart to France to take part in multilateral exercise Orion at Mont-de-Marsan, an Air Force base of the French Air and Space Force (FASF).



About Exercise Orion:

- It is a **multinational exercise hosted by the French government.**
- It is reportedly the **largest ever multinational exercise being carried out by the French defence forces** which have involved their **Army, Navy and Air Force.**
- It includes ground troops, warships, aircraft carriers and combat aircraft and is meant to **boost military cooperation and interoperability** among participating nations.
- Besides the IAF and the FASF, **Air Forces from Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, U.K. and U.S.** would also be flying in this multilateral exercise.
- The **IAF contingent** will include **four Rafale aircraft, two C-17, two IL-78 aircraft** and 165 air warriors.
- This would be the **first overseas exercise for the IAF's Rafale aircraft.**

[RAMAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE \(RRI\)](#)

The Raman Research Institute (RRI) recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indian Navy's research and development establishment to develop secure maritime communications using quantum technology.



About Raman Research Institute (RRI):

- It is an **autonomous research institute engaged in research in basic sciences.**
- **Location: Bangalore**
- The institute was **founded in 1948** by the Indian physicist and Nobel Laureate Sir C V Raman, with **funds from private sources.**
- It was restructured in **1972 to become an aided autonomous institute receiving funds from the Department of Science and Technology of the Government of India.**

- The institute is **administered by a Governing Council**.
- Today, the **main areas of research** at the Institute are Astronomy & Astrophysics, Light & Matter Physics, Soft Condensed Matter, and Theoretical Physics.

What is Quantum Technology?

- It is based on the **principles of Quantum mechanics** (including **quantum entanglement and quantum superposition**) developed in the early 20th century to describe nature at the scale of atoms and elementary particles.
 - **Quantum entanglement** is known to be the exchange of quantum information between two particles at a distance, while **quantum superposition** is known to be the uncertainty of a particle (or particles) being in several states at once (which could also involve the exchange of quantum information for a particle that is known to be in several locations simultaneously).
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