

ONLINE CONTENT CURBS: FEARS OF PRE-CENSORSHIP RISE

- The proposed amendments to the IT Rules are being criticised for going beyond regulating content to monitoring who creates and posts it.
- This raises concerns about the government's intent, as existing laws already provide ample powers to act against harmful or misleading content.
- **Existing Legal Powers for Content Regulation**
 - **Section 69A** of the IT Act empowers the government to block online content.
 - **Section 79(3)(b)** allows central and state authorities to direct platforms to remove content.
- **Various Concerns**
 - While the government attributes increased content blocking to issues like deepfakes and misinformation, critics argue that censorship in India often functions as a political tool, raising concerns about selective enforcement.
 - The new rules may enable the government to seek details of users posting news-related content, even if they are not professional publishers.
 - This could undermine online anonymity and discourage open expression.
- **Role of Inter-Departmental Committee**
 - A proposed Inter-Departmental Committee, led by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB), would:
 - Review flagged content
 - Recommend actions such as apology, modification, or takedown
 - This adds a new layer of oversight with direct intervention in content creation.

Psychological Impact of Proposed IT Rules on Online Expression

- **Expansion of Regulatory Scope** - The proposed rules extend beyond professional publishers to cover all **user-generated content** related to news and current affairs. This includes satire, commentary, fact-checking, and even sharing or analysing news links on social media platforms.

- **Blurring the Line Between Users and Publishers** - By bringing ordinary users under regulatory scrutiny, the rules effectively treat individual creators, comedians, and commentators like formal news entities, significantly expanding compliance expectations.
- **Rise of Self-Censorship** - Experts warn that such oversight could create a psychological tendency toward self-censorship. Most individuals lack the resources or willingness to challenge government action. Fear of penalties or scrutiny may discourage open expression.
- **Impact on the Digital Ecosystem** - Increased caution among users could lead to a less vibrant and diverse online space. This runs counter to the government's push for a thriving creator-driven digital economy ("orange economy").
- **Limited Resistance from Tech Companies** - Despite concerns, major tech platforms are unlikely to strongly oppose the rules publicly, as they have generally avoided direct confrontation with government policies in India.

Parallels Between IT Rules Amendments and the Withdrawn Broadcasting Bill

- The proposed IT Rules amendments are widely seen as a continuation of the government's earlier attempt to regulate digital content through the now-withdrawn Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill, 2024.
- **Key Features of the Withdrawn BSR Bill**
 - The draft BSR Bill had proposed:
 - Expanding the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting's (MIB) jurisdiction to include social media users and online creators
 - Broadly defining "digital news broadcasters"
 - Introducing mandatory government registration
 - Setting content evaluation standards
 - These provisions raised concerns about excessive regulatory control over digital content.

INDIA'S RURAL MODELS ARE SHAPING DEVELOPMENT DIPLOMACY

- The launch of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) in 2011 marked a transformative moment in India's approach to rural poverty.
- Introduced under the Ministry of Rural Development, the programme aimed to **tackle multidimensional poverty** by promoting sustainable livelihoods, financial inclusion, and skill development.
- Over the past 15 years, the NRLM has not only exceeded expectations domestically but has also emerged as an influential model for development across the Global South.

Scale and Impact of NRLM in India

- **Expanding Reach and Participation**
 - By mid-2025, the mission had expanded to 742 districts, reaching over 100 million rural households and mobilising more than nine million Self-Help Groups (SHGs). This large-scale mobilisation reflects the programme's ability to penetrate deeply into rural India.
- **Financial Inclusion and Women's Empowerment**
 - Over 50 million women have accessed bank credit, while more than 20 million SHG members now earn annual incomes exceeding ₹1,00,000.
 - Additionally, women banking correspondents operate in over 60% of local governments, strengthening grassroots financial systems and boosting female labour force participation.
- **Institutional and Financial Achievements**
 - The programme has facilitated ₹51,368 crore in capitalisation support and enabled bank linkages worth ₹12 lakh crore.
 - The **Union Budget 2026–27** further reinforced its importance with an allocation of **₹19,200 crore**.
 - These achievements highlight not only financial expansion but also the creation of a robust institutional ecosystem.

Global Expansion: NRLM Beyond India

- **Rising Interest in the Global South**
 - The NRLM's success has attracted attention from several African nations, including Ethiopia, Tanzania, Malawi, Kenya, and Rwanda.
 - Delegations from these countries have studied its implementation, focusing on its scalability and institutional mechanisms.
- **Why the Model Travels Well?**
 - The NRLM's adaptability stems from several factors:
 - Its emphasis on women's collective empowerment
 - Cost-effective, community-driven implementation
 - Compatibility with informal economies
 - Focus on long-term institution-building
 - These features make it suitable for countries with similar socio-economic conditions.
- **Shift Towards South-South Learning**
 - The growing adoption of NRLM principles reflects a broader shift in **development thinking**.
 - Countries in the Global South are increasingly turning to each other for contextually relevant solutions rather than relying solely on Western models.

Conclusion

- The National Rural Livelihood Mission has evolved from a national poverty alleviation initiative into a globally relevant **development model**.
- Its success lies in its integrated approach, combining financial inclusion, institutional development, and community empowerment.
- As countries across Africa and beyond look to replicate its framework, the NRLM stands as a **powerful example** of how locally rooted innovations can shape global development paradigms.

INDIA'S MIGRATION GOVERNANCE - FROM CRISIS RESPONSE TO CONTINUOUS ARCHITECTURE

- India's **evacuation** of over 4.75 lakh citizens from **West Asia** by March-end has been widely celebrated as a diplomatic and logistical achievement. However, beneath this visible success lies a more **uncomfortable policy question** — whether India's migration governance is built for sustained welfare or merely crisis response.

India and Gulf Migration - The Scale of Dependence:

- The Gulf region is not a peripheral concern for Indian policymakers — it sits at the heart of household welfare and macroeconomic stability.
- For instance,
 - The six GCC countries hosted nearly **99.35 lakh** Indians as of December 2025.
 - The region contributed **37.9%** of India's total remittance inflows in 2023–24.
 - Disruptions in West Asia transmit rapidly into districts, households, and state welfare systems.
- This dependence makes the region a **strategic vulnerability** as much as an economic asset.

The Crisis-Centric Framework - Strengths and Limits:

- India's current approach has demonstrated genuine strengths — **diplomatic reach**, consular coordination, and repatriation mechanisms. The Gulf evacuations are proof of that machinery working. But a framework that activates only at moments of disruption carries structural **blind spots**.
 - **For example:** It defers foundational questions: How were workers recruited? What protections existed abroad? What awaits them in return?

Challenges:

- Partial **institutional** visibility at each stage of the migration journey.
- Inter-ministerial **fragmentation** with no single nodal authority overseeing the worker's full lifecycle.

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- Uneven **state capacity** — Kerala's robust migration data infrastructure cannot be assumed elsewhere in major sending states like UP, Bihar, or Jharkhand.
- Absence of **anticipatory governance** tools — systems activate post-disruption rather than pre-empting stress.

Way Forward:

- **Overseas Mobility Facilitation and Welfare Bill:**
 - The pending bill offers a legislative opportunity to institutionalise welfare across the entire mobility arc — not just at the moment of departure or return.
 - It must embed protections that apply whether the worker moves domestically or internationally.
- **Unified migration data architecture:** Building a granular, dynamic, and interoperable migration information system is a prerequisite for anticipatory governance, and can enable early warning systems.
- **Continuum-based governance:** Covering pre-departure skilling and informed recruitment, destination-side welfare and legal recourse, and structured return and reintegration support.
- **Strengthening State-level institutions:** Replicating **Kerala's model** of sustained political attention to migration data and welfare institutions. The district administrations must be equipped to absorb and support returning migrants.
- **Bilateral labour agreements:** India's maturing diplomatic relationships with GCC countries must be leveraged to negotiate stronger worker protection clauses, portability of social security, and transparent recruitment standards.

Conclusion:

- The harder test for India is building a continuous, integrated governance architecture that treats mobility, whether across districts or across continents, as a connected social and economic system.
- This requires governing migration as a steady-state responsibility, not a crisis-triggered duty.



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ANNATTO



Annatto

- It is a natural food colouring and flavoring agent obtained **from the seeds of the achiote tree** (*Bixa orellana*).
 - **Achiote tree** is native to **tropical America** and is also cultivated in **Asia and Africa**, especially in areas where coffee is grown.
 - The ripe fruits of annatto on **drying yield annatto seed** which serves as the raw material for the production of annatto colour.
 - The **crop is completely rain-fed** and requires no pesticides or fertilizers, just pruning of branches as part of crop management.
- **Colour:** The bold red color comes **from carotenoids**, which are plant pigments that are found in the coating of the seed.
- **Applications:**
 - The annatto seed is widely used as a **natural food colour and dye**.
 - Its color can also be extracted from the **seed and then added to foods as a dye**.
 - Some also use annatto to boost the **flavor of certain dishes**.
 - It has a **mild, peppery flavor** when used in large amounts as well as a nutty and floral scent. Annatto is rich in several key **antimicrobial compounds**, which can limit the growth of bacteria, fungi, and parasites.
- It is safe for most people when used in normal food amounts. However, it might cause allergic reactions in some sensitive people.



Memristor

MEMRISTOR

Memristor' is a combination of 'memory' and 'resistor'.

- It is an **electronic component** whose **resistance depends on the history of current flow**, allowing it to "remember" past electrical states.
 - A resistor is a small device that applies a fixed amount of resistance to a current passed through it.

- **Features of Memristor:**
 - Unlike a resistor, a **memristor has variable resistance** and ‘remembers’ the resistance.
 - When the current is removed, the memristor ‘remembers’ the resistance it offered and maintains it.
 - Memristors are **nanomaterial** and don’t take up much space. Their **energy demand is also very small.**
 - They are usually **made of a thin layer of titanium dioxide (TiO₂)** sandwiched between two metal electrodes.
- **Applications of Memristor**
 - **Memory Devices:** Due to their ability to store previous resistive states, memristors are viable non-volatile random-access memories (NVRAM) for **computers, industrial automation systems.**
 - **Integrated Circuits:** Memristors have been identified as viable components for augmenting or potentially **replacing transistors in integrated circuits (ICs).**
 - **Neuromorphic Computing:** Researchers are exploring the viability of using memristors to build **neuromorphic (brain-like) systems for artificial intelligence.**

RED SEA



- It is a **semi-enclosed inlet** of the **Indian Ocean** between **Africa** and **Asia.**
- It is connected to the **Arabian Sea** and the **Indian Ocean** to the south through the **Gulf of Aden** and the narrow strait of **Bab el Mandeb.**
- The **northern portion** of the Red Sea is bifurcated by the **Sinai Peninsula** into the **Gulf of Aqaba** and the **Gulf of Suez**, where it is connected to the Mediterranean Sea via the famous Suez Canal.
- **Bordering Countries:** Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Sudan, Eritrea and Djibouti.

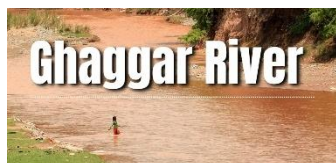
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- The **Red Sea's unique color changes** are due to **algae blooms**. Geologically, it lies in a fault depression between the Arabian and North African tectonic plates.
- It is known for its hot and salty waters and is a crucial maritime route between Europe and Asia.
- Five major types of mineral resources are found in the Red Sea region: petroleum deposits, evaporite deposits, sulfur, phosphates, and the heavy-metal deposits.
- **Islands:**
 - **Tiran Island:** Located near the mouth of the Gulf of Aqaba.
 - **Shadwan Island:** Located at the entrance of the Gulf of Suez

GHAGGAR RIVER



- The Ghaggar river is an **intermittent river** in India and Pakistan that flows only during the monsoon season.

Origin: It originates in the village of Dagshai in the **Shivalik Hills of Himachal Pradesh**.

- The river is known as Ghaggar before the Ottu barrage and as the Hakra downstream of the barrage.

Course:

- After passing through the Ambala and Hissar districts of Haryana, it eventually dries up in the **Great Indian (Thar) Desert**.
- The Hakra, which flows in Pakistan, is the continuation of the Ghaggar River in India, and they are together called the Ghaggar-Hakra River.

Tributaries: The main tributaries of the Ghaggar are the Kaushalya River, Markanda, Sarsuti, Tangri, and Chautang.