

## CCIA Explainer

# India's 2026 AI- and Content-Related Amendments to IT Rules

On February 10, 2026, the Government of India notified AI- and content-specific amendments to its overall framework addressing online safety, the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 (“**IT Rules Amendments**”).<sup>1</sup>

The IT Rules Amendments introduce new obligations for intermediaries, particularly significant social media intermediaries, regarding “synthetically generated information” (SGI). The amendments require platforms to:

- 1) ensure that AI-generated or algorithmically altered audio-visual content is clearly labelled with visible or audible disclosures and embedded provenance metadata (Rule 3(3)(a)(ii); Rule 4(1A)(c));
- 2) obtain user declarations on whether uploaded content is synthetic; and
- 3) apply reasonable technical verification measures prior to publication (Rule 4(1A)(a)–(b)).

The amendments also require intermediaries to deploy technical tools, including automated mechanisms, to prevent the creation or dissemination of unlawful synthetic content and to act expeditiously when violations are identified (Rule 3(3)(a)(i); Rule 3(1)(cb)). In parallel, the amendments shorten several response timelines across the framework for all content (not just SGI), including requiring removal or disabling of access to specified information within two or three hours of receiving lawful orders (Rule 3(1)(d)) and reducing certain complaint-handling and compliance deadlines elsewhere in the due diligence regime (Rule 3(2)).

## Industry Concerns

Specific industry concerns with the IT Rules Amendments include:

**First, lack of due process and regulatory transparency.** The notified amendments introduce substantial new obligations not reflected in the October 2025 consultation draft,<sup>2</sup> which specifically focused primarily on synthetically generated information. The final rules instead broaden intermediary duties across the content-moderation framework for all content, including proactive monitoring, labelling, and accelerated response requirements for content removal from 24-36 hours to 2-3 hours (Rules 3, 4(1A), and 3(3)). With the rules entering into force only ten days after notification on February 20, 2026, services have little opportunity for technical implementation or meaningful consultation, raising concerns about regulatory predictability. In many cases (e.g., AI-generated text), there are no standardized techniques for

<sup>1</sup> See <https://egazette.gov.in/WriteReadData/2026/269993.pdf>; <https://www.meity.gov.in/static/uploads/2025/10/065b6deb585441b5ccdf8be42502a49c.pdf>; and <https://www.meity.gov.in/static/uploads/2025/10/708f6a344c74249c2e1bbb6890342f80.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup>

<https://www.meity.gov.in/static/uploads/2024/03/Press-Note-dated-6-June-22-and-Proposed-draft-amendment-to-IT-Rules-2021.pdf>.

determining whether an output was artificially generated, so compliance with any monitoring requirement or evaluating the validity of a complaint may not be possible.

**Second, a one-size-fits-all compliance framework** applicable across the AI stack, from data center to application. The amendments apply uniform due-diligence, labelling, and removal obligations without distinguishing between infrastructure providers, model developers, and user-facing platforms, including through obligations tied to user declarations, metadata tagging, and verification of synthetic content (Rule 4(1A); Rule 3(3)). This is particularly problematic for providers operating upstream who often lack visibility into user outputs or the technical ability to implement content-level controls, creating significant legal uncertainty.

**Third, reduced procedural safeguards and heightened removal pressures.** The amendments significantly compress response timelines for intermediary action and expand obligations to disable access, suspend accounts, and report offences (see Rule 3 amendments, including shortened timelines and expanded takedown duties). The combination of imperfect technical means for identifying SGI, and these accelerated timelines will incentivize precautionary removals or over-compliance by intermediaries seeking to preserve liability protections, both chilling speech and restricting legitimate commercial activity.

**Fourth, operational and innovation impacts for globally integrated services.** The amendments introduce prescriptive product and compliance requirements, including pre-publication verification of synthetic content, mandatory labelling and provenance measures, and automated detection tools tied to domestic legal standards (Rule 4(1A); Rule 3(3)). Implementing these obligations across globally integrated platforms may require service-specific redesign, additional compliance infrastructure, and ongoing monitoring investments, undermining cross-border service delivery. The disproportionate impact this rule will have on U.S. suppliers, leaders in this area, also raises broader trade concerns.

## Recommendation

CCIA is seriously concerned about the scope, process, and operational implications of the February 2026 amendments. Given the breadth of new obligations and the limited implementation window, **industry strongly recommends that the Government of India reopen a formal consultation period to engage with stakeholders and pause implementation** to allow for a more transparent and workable regulatory framework.