

Bill No. XXXII of 2026

THE DIGITAL NETWORKING PLATFORMS
(ACCOUNTABILITY AND USER PROTECTION)
BILL, 2026

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to provide for accountability, transparency and due diligence obligations of Digital Networking Platforms; to protect users' rights; to prevent misuse of digital networking services for unlawful, harmful or deceptive purposes; and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Seventy-seventh Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

1. (1) This Act may be called the Digital Networking Platforms (Accountability and User Protection) Act, 2026.

Short title and commencement.

5 (2) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in Official Gazette, appoint.

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,—

(a) “content” means any information, data, message, text, image, audio, video, live stream, synthetic media, or any combination thereof, made available on a Digital Networking Platform; 5

(b) “Digital Networking Platform” means any online platform, website, application or digital service that—

(i) enables users to create, upload, share, disseminate, discover or interact with content; and

(ii) facilitates networking, communication, engagement or amplification among users or groups of users, 10

whether through text, audio, video, images, live transmission, algorithmic recommendation or any other digital means, and includes social networking services, content-sharing platforms, discussion forums, micro blogging services, video-sharing services and similar intermediaries, but does not include private one-to-one communication services used exclusively for personal communication, or internal enterprise communication tools used solely within an organisation; 15 20

(c) “due diligence” means reasonable and proportionate measures taken by a platform operator to comply with the obligations under this Act;

(d) “harmful content” means any content of a Digital Networking Platform which, while not unlawful under any law for the time being in force, is created, published or disseminated in a manner that is reasonably likely to cause significant and demonstrable harm to public order, electoral integrity, the safety of children, or the dignity and reputation of an individual, and includes— 25 30

(i) misinformation, being information that is false or materially misleading and presented as a statement of fact, where its dissemination is reasonably likely to cause such harm;

(ii) deepfakes, being digitally manipulated or fabricated digital content, including but not limited to images, videos or audio recordings, generated with the intent to convincingly and deceptively depict subjects or issues or represent individuals engaging in actions, making statements, or being in circumstances that did not occur or exist in reality, and which is reasonably likely to deceive the public; 35 40

(iii) impersonation, being the unauthorised use of the name, likeness, identity or identifying attributes of another person with intent to deceive users as to the source or authenticity of content; and 45

(iv) coordinated inauthentic behaviour, being organised use of multiple accounts, automated systems or fictitious identities acting in concert to mislead users regarding the origin, amplification or authenticity of content; 50

(e) “intermediary” shall have the meaning as assigned to it in clause (w) of sub-section (1) of section 2 of the Information Technology Act, 2000;

(f) “platform operator” means any person, company or other legal entity that owns, controls or operates a Digital Networking Platform;

5 (g) “prescribed” means prescribed by rules made under this Act;

(h) “significant Digital Networking Platform” means a Digital Networking Platform having such number of users or such systemic impact on public discourse as may be prescribed;

10 (i) “unlawful content” means any content of a Digital Networking Platform, the publication, transmission or dissemination of which is prohibited under any law for the time being in force in India; and

(j) “user” means any person who accesses, uses, creates, uploads or interacts with content on a Digital Networking Platform.

15 3. (1) Without prejudice to obligations under any other law for the time being in force, every platform operator shall—

Obligations of platform operators and significant Digital Networking Platforms.

20 (a) ensure procedural fairness and transparency in the moderation of content, including measures designed to prevent, detect and remove harmful and unlawful content, particularly where such moderation impacts public interest discourse;

(b) maintain internal records of systemic risks arising from the design algorithmic amplification or other operational features of the Digital Networking Platform; and

(c) take such other measures as may be prescribed.

25 (2) Every significant Digital Networking Platform shall, in addition to the obligations specified in sub-section (1), —

(a) conduct annual public-interest impact assessments in relation to matters including elections, public health and social harmony in such manner as may be prescribed; and

30 (b) publish, in such manner as may be prescribed, a summary of the findings of such assessments and the mitigation measures adopted in response thereto.

35 4. (1) Every significant Digital Networking Platform shall publish, in clear and plain-language, explanations describing the manner in which its automated systems may influence the visibility, prioritization or dissemination of content relating to matters of public interest, in such form and manner as may be prescribed.

Disclosure.

(2) The requirement of disclosure under sub-section (1) shall—

40 (a) be limited to the systemic effects of the automated systems;

(b) not duplicate transparency requirements under any other law for the time being in force; and

(c) not include proprietary information.

45 5. Whoever fails to comply with the provisions of this Act or the rules made there under shall be liable to pay as compensation to the person affected by such non-compliance, the amount specified under 45 of the Information Technology Act, 2000.

Compensation for non-compliance.

6. (1) The Central Government may, by notification published in the Official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this act.

Power to make rules.

50 (2) Every rule made under this Act shall be laid, as soon as may be after it

is made, before each House of Parliament, while it is in session, for a total period of thirty days which may comprise of one session or two or more successive sessions. If before the expiry of the session, immediately following the session or the successive sessions aforesaid, both the Houses are in agreement of any applicable modification in the rule(s) or both the Houses agree that the rule should not be made, the rule shall thereafter have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may so be. However, that any such modification or annulment shall be, without prejudice, to the validity of anything previously done under that rule.

Act to be in addition to existing laws.
Power to remove difficulties.

7. The provisions of this Act shall be in addition to, and not in derogation of, any other law for the time being in force.
8. (1) If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the Central Government may, by order published in the Official Gazette, make such provisions, not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act as appear to it to be necessary or expedient for removing the difficulty.
- (2) Every order made under this section shall, as soon as may be after it is made, be laid before each House of Parliament.

Savings.

9. (1) The provisions of this Act shall apply only to matters not expressly provided for under the Information Technology Act, 2000 and the rules made thereunder.
- (2) Nothing in this Act shall be construed to override, replace or duplicate the obligations, due diligence requirements, or enforcement mechanisms as are already applicable to intermediaries under any law for the time being in force.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

The Information Technology Act, 2000 and the rules made thereunder regulate intermediary liability and due diligence. However, certain systemic issues—such as algorithmic amplification of public-interest content, electoral integrity, and democratic discourse—remain insufficiently addressed through existing frameworks.

This Bill therefore seeks to supplement, and not duplicate, existing digital laws by introducing narrowly tailored accountability mechanisms focused on transparency, procedural fairness and parliamentary oversight, while fully preserving constitutional freedoms and innovation in the digital ecosystem.

Hence, this Bill.

V. SIVADASAN.

MEMORANDUM REGARDING DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Clause 6 of the Bill empowers the Central Government to make rules for carrying out the purposes of the Bill. Clause 8 of the Bill provides that the Central Government may make such provisions, by order, as may be necessary for removing any difficulty in giving effect to the provisions of this Bill.

As the rules and orders will relate to matters of details only, the delegation of legislative power is of a normal character.

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(Dr. V. Sivadasan, M.P.)