

## ONLINE GAMING REGULATION RULES, 2026: KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Under the **Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming (PROG) Act, 2025**, the Central Government has framed new rules that will come into effect on **May 1, 2026**.

### 1. CLASSIFICATION OF ONLINE GAMING

To streamline regulation, the sector is divided into three distinct categories:

- **Esports:** Competitive digital sports requiring strategy, coordination, and skill (e.g., organized multi-sport tournaments).
- **Online Social Games:** Skill-based games designed for entertainment, learning, and social interaction. These are classified as "Safe."
- **Online Money Games:** Games involving financial stakes or wagering. These are **strictly prohibited**.

### 2. ONLINE GAMING AUTHORITY OF INDIA (OGAI)

The OGAI will act as the apex regulatory body for the online gaming sector.

- **Composition:** Chaired by the Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY). It includes representatives (Joint Secretary level) from Home Affairs, Finance, I&B, Sports, and Law ministries.
- **Functions:** Determining game classifications, inquiring into complaints, issuing registrations, and formulating safety codes of practice.

### 3. KEY PROVISIONS & PROHIBITIONS

- **Ban on Money Gaming:** Total prohibition on online money games, including their advertisement and promotion.
- **Banking Restrictions:** Banks and payment gateways are barred from processing any transactions related to prohibited money games.
- **Registration:** Mandatory for Esports and notified Social Games. Digital Certificates of Registration will be valid for **10 years**.

### 4. PENALTIES AND ENFORCEMENT

Strict deterrents are in place for non-compliance:

- **Operation/Facilitation:** Imprisonment up to 3 years or a fine of ₹1 crore. Repeat offenses: Up to 5 years in jail and a ₹2 crore fine.
- **Advertising:** Promoting prohibited games carries a penalty of up to 2 years in jail or a ₹50 lakh fine.
- **Investigation:** Cyber Cell officers at the State and UT levels (Police Station to Commissionerate level) are empowered to investigate offenses.

### 5. USER SAFETY & GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL

Service providers must implement specific safeguards:

- **Technical Measures:** Age verification (Age Gating), time restrictions, and parental controls.
- **Two-Tier Grievance Redressal:**
  1. **Level 1:** Internal redressal by the service provider.
  2. **Level 2:** Appeal to the **Online Gaming Authority** within 30 days if the provider's resolution is unsatisfactory.

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## IMPORTANT STATISTICS FOR EXAMS

- **Market Scale:** The Indian online gaming market was valued at **₹232 billion in 2024**. It is projected to reach **₹316 billion by 2027** (CAGR of 11%).
- **Socio-Economic Impact:** An estimated **45 crore people** have been affected by unregulated money gaming, with financial losses exceeding **₹20,000 crores**.

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## CONCLUSION

These rules aim to transform India into a **Global Gaming Hub** while protecting citizens from financial fraud and psychological risks, thereby fostering a safe '**Digital Creative Economy**.'

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## SACRED RELICS EXPOSITION OF TATHAGATA BUDDHA - 2026

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### 1. BACKGROUND AND CURRENT EVENT

- **Venue:** Ladakh (Leh and Zaskar Valley).
- **Duration:** May 1 to 14, 2026.
- **Occasion:** 2569th Buddha Purnima celebrations.
- **Theme:** "Peace in Times of Conflict."
- **Organizers:** Ministry of Culture (Govt. of India), National Museum, and the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC).

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### 2. HISTORICAL CONTEXT (PIPRAHWA RELICS)

Important historical facts regarding the origin of these relics for competitive exams:

- **Location:** These relics were discovered during excavations at the **Piprahwa Stupa** in the Siddharthanagar district of Uttar Pradesh.
- **Significance:** Archaeologists identify Piprahwa as the ancient city of **Kapilavastu** (the capital of the Shakya clan).
- **Excavations:**
  - **1898:** William Claxton Peppe conducted the first excavation. A soapstone casket was found with inscriptions in **Mauryan Brahmi script**.
  - **1971-77:** Excavations led by **K.M. Srivastava** (ASI) discovered 22 sacred bone fragments.
- **Current Custody:** 20 of these relics are preserved at the **National Museum, New Delhi**, while the remaining 2 are at the Indian Museum, Kolkata.

### 3. CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

India utilizes Buddhist heritage as a key element of its **"Soft Power"**:

- **Recent International Expositions:** Mongolia (2022), Thailand (2024), Vietnam (2025), Bhutan (2025), and Sri Lanka (February 2026).
- **"The Light and The Lotus" Exhibition:** Held in New Delhi, this landmark event reunited the Piprahwa relics with Buddha's relic jewels that returned from the UK after 127 years.

### 4. KEY HIGHLIGHTS IN LADAKH

- **Jivestal Site:** The primary location in Leh where the relics are enshrined for public veneration.
- **Photo Exhibition:** Titled **"Beyond the Pass: The Shared Spirit and Ethnic Tapestry of Ladakh,"** held at Leh Palace to showcase trans-Himalayan cultural exchange.
- **Kushok Bakula Rinpoche:** Known as the **"Architect of Modern Ladakh,"** special film screenings are being held to honor his legacy.

#### KEY TERMS FOR EXAMS:

1. **Tathagata:** A title of Gautama Buddha meaning "One who has thus gone" or "One who has arrived at the Truth."
2. **Sarira-Dhatu:** The Sanskrit term for sacred body relics (often bone fragments or ashes).
3. **Kapilavastu:** The childhood home of Gautama Buddha; its historical identity was strengthened by the Piprahwa excavations.

### INCENTIVE SCHEME FOR PROMOTION OF CRITICAL MINERAL RECYCLING

**Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Mines, Government of India.

#### 1. CORE OBJECTIVES & FRAMEWORK

- **Mission:** Part of the **National Critical Mineral Mission**.
- **Goal:** To strengthen India's **Critical Mineral Security** and promote a **Circular Economy**.
- **Strategic Intent:** To reduce import dependence on essential minerals required for clean energy and advanced manufacturing sectors.
- **Total Outlay:** ₹1,500 crore.

#### 2. CURRENT STATUS (AS OF APRIL 2026)

- **Eligible Entities:** **58 companies** have been approved for the scheme.
- **Pledged Capacity:** Approximately **850 KTPA** (Kilo Tonnes Per Annum).
- **Pledged Investment:** Approximately **₹5,000 crore**.

#### 3. KEY FOCUS AREAS (SOURCES OF RECOVERY)

The scheme provides incentives for recycling minerals from:

- **Lithium-ion batteries** (Crucial for Electric Vehicles).
- **E-waste** (Electronic waste).
- **Industrial Scrap.**

#### 4. INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM

- **Project Management Agency (PMA):** Jawaharlal Nehru Aluminium Research Development and Design Centre (JNARDDC).
- **Approval Authority:** The Executive Committee (EC) under the Ministry of Mines.

#### EXAM-ORIENTED INSIGHTS (VALUE ADDITION)

Feature	Details for Aspirants
<b>Circular Economy</b>	The scheme converts "waste to wealth" by reintroducing recovered minerals into the supply chain.
<b>Energy Transition</b>	Vital for India's goal of <b>Net Zero 2070</b> , as it secures raw materials for EV batteries and renewable energy storage.
<b>Self-Reliance</b>	Aligns with <b>Atmanirbhar Bharat</b> by minimizing vulnerability to global supply chain disruptions of minerals like Lithium, Cobalt, and Copper.
<b>Incentive Type</b>	Financial support is linked to the commencement of production and actual capacity development.

#### QUICK FACTS FOR MCQS:

- **Scheme Notification Date:** October 2, 2025.
- **Total Outlay:** ₹1,500 Cr.
- **Number of Companies Selected:** 58.
- **PMA:** JNARDDC (Nagpur-based autonomous body).

#### INDIA-NEW ZEALAND FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (FTA): FOCUS ON AYUSH SECTOR

**Context:** A landmark agreement was signed between Piyush Goyal (Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, India) and Todd McClay (Minister for Trade and Investment, New Zealand).

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Health & Traditional Medicine Annexe:** For the **first time** in its history, New Zealand has included a dedicated section for 'Health and Traditional Medicine' in an FTA with any country.
- **Global Recognition:** Indian Ayush systems (Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy) are formally recognized alongside New Zealand's indigenous **Māori** health practices.
- **Visa Quota:** A dedicated visa quota has been established for Indian Ayush practitioners and Yoga instructors to work in New Zealand for extended durations.

## EXAM PERSPECTIVES

Aspect	Description
<b>International Relations (IR)</b>	Strengthening bilateral ties and expanding trade footprints between India and New Zealand.
<b>Ayush Advancement</b>	Transitioning Ayush into the "Global Healthcare Mainstream" and boosting <b>Medical Value Travel</b> .
<b>Skill &amp; Employment</b>	Creating structured mobility pathways and new employment avenues for Indian wellness professionals.
<b>Cultural Diplomacy</b>	Integrating India's <b>Traditional Knowledge</b> into a modern international trade framework.

## KEYWORDS FOR MAINS/DESCRIPTIVE PAPERS

1. **Professional Mobility:** Facilitating easier movement for skilled professionals across borders.
2. **Holistic Health:** The role of traditional systems in providing comprehensive healthcare solutions.
3. **Institutional Collaboration:** Strengthening ties in research, education, and standards development.

## QUICK FACTS FOR MCQS

- **Agreement Name:** India–New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA).
- **Key Synergy:** Cooperation between Ayush and **Māori** traditional health practices.
- **Beneficiary Systems:** Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa, and Homoeopathy.
- **Strategic Outcome:** First dedicated Health Annexe in a New Zealand FTA.