

## **2. MHA Recommends Ban on 54 Chinese Apps Citing Security Concerns**

**Prelims Syllabus:** Governance - Policies

**Mains Syllabus:** GS-II Government Policies and Interventions for development in various sectors and Issues Arising out of their Design and Implementation.

### **Why in News?**

- The Centre recently banned over 50 new Chinese mobile applications, including Rise of Kingdoms: Lost Crusade, Tencent Xriver, Nice Video baidu and Viva Video Editor, due to concerns related to privacy and National Security.

### **About the News:**

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has issued interim directions for blocking 54 apps, adding that these applications were allegedly collecting sensitive user data, which were being misused and transmitted to servers located outside India.
- The list of banned mobile apps include Beauty Camera: Sweet Selfie HD, Beauty Camera - Selfie Camera, Garena Free Fire – Illuminate, Astracraft, FancyU pro, MoonChat, Barcode Scanner - QR Code Scan, and Lica Cam.
- The government had last year banned over 200 Chinese mobile applications, including popular ones such as TikTok, Shareit, Mi Video Call, Club Factory and Cam Scanner, citing threat to national security and sovereignty
- The announcement had come amid border tensions between India and China in Ladakh.
- The move came in the backdrop of India's ongoing stand-off along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh with China. The stand-off has been going on since April 2020.
- India shares a 3,400 km-long LAC with China from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh.

### **Why ban Imposed?**

- The Ministry said it was invoking its power under **Section 69A of the Information Technology Act** read with the relevant provisions of the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking of Access of Information by Public) Rules, 2009.
- In view of the emergent nature of threats, the government has decided to block these apps as they are engaged in activities which are prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of state and Public Order.

### **What does the Section 69A says?**

- **Section 69A of the Information Technology Act Empowers Central Government to:**

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- ✓ Issue directions to block the content on online platforms in the interest of sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States or public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of any Cognizable Offence.
  - ✓ Intermediaries Failing to comply with the direction issued could be punished with Imprisonment for a Term which may extend to seven years and shall also be liable to Fine.

