

1. Online Real Money Games

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has recently released an amendment to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, to regulate online real money games.

Highlights

- Real money in the hopes of winning more money. These games can include casino-style games such as poker, blackjack, and slot machines, as well as sports betting, fantasy sports, and other types of online gaming that involve the exchange of money.
- In India, these types of games have become increasingly popular, leading to concerns about their regulation and potential negative effects on users, such as addiction and financial losses.
- The rules have advised media entities, media platforms and online advertisement intermediaries to refrain from carrying advertisements/promotional content of betting platforms.
- Betting and gambling are illegal activities and hence advertisements/ promotion of such activities directly or indirectly on any of the media platforms fall foul of the regulations.
- Promotion by a specific betting platform that encouraged the audience to watch a sports league on its website in prima facie violation of the Copyright Act 1957
- As per the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2023, real money gaming platforms will have to register with a Self-Regulatory Body (SRB) that will determine whether or not the game is “permissible.”
- Three SRBs will be recognized soon.
- If these games are not deemed “permissible,” they will not get the protection of the amendment, and states may be able to take action against them for being betting or gambling platforms.
- As such, games that are deemed permissible will be allowed to operate legally, even if they involve deposits against an expectation of winnings.
- Video games where money is not involved need not approach an SRB.