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Current Affairs - 26 August 2025

KEY FEATURES OF ONLINE GAMING ACT 2025

- The Indian Parliament has passed the **Online Gaming Act 2025**, marking a decisive step in regulating the rapidly growing digital gaming industry.
- The Act aims to strike a balance between promoting innovation in e-sports and social gaming while addressing the social and economic harms caused by Real Money Games (RMGs).
- With government data estimating annual losses of Rs. 15,000 crore by Indians on such games, the legislation comes amid rising **concerns of addiction, suicides, fraud, and tax evasion linked to online money gaming.**

Key Provisions of the Online Gaming Act 2025

- The Act classifies online games into three categories: **e-sports, social gaming, and RMGs.**
 - **E-sports:** Games officially recognised under the National Sports Governance Act, 2025. These include competitive video games with performance-based prize pools, such as Call of Duty and Grand Theft Auto.
 - **Social Gaming:** Games played primarily for recreation or educational purposes, often without monetary stakes. The Act encourages their development through budgetary support.
 - **Real Money Games (RMGs):** Defined as online games played with stakes involving money, credits, or convertible tokens, including Poker, Rummy, Fantasy Cricket, and Ludo variants. These have been banned outright.
- The ban extends to advertisements, celebrity endorsements, and platforms offering RMGs. Notably, several high-profile celebrities had previously endorsed such platforms, raising concerns about their influence on youth.

Penalties and Enforcement Mechanisms

- The Act prescribes stringent penalties to curb illegal activities:

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- Offering or facilitating RMGs: **Up to three years of imprisonment or a fine of Rs. 1 crore, or both.**
- Unlawful advertisements: **Two years of imprisonment or a fine of Rs. 50 lakh, or both.**
- The offences are classified as **cognisable and non-bailable** under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023.
- For enforcement, the government has empowered **CERT-IN** (Indian Computer Emergency Response Team) to block or disable non-compliant apps.
- It may also collaborate with **Interpol** to target offshore operators bypassing Indian laws. Importantly, the Act does not criminalise players but targets operators and promoters.

Rationale Behind the Legislation

- The government clarified that the move is not a knee-jerk reaction but a response to alarming trends:
 - **Addiction and suicides:** WHO has linked RMGs to compulsive behaviour, and Karnataka alone reported 32 gaming-related suicides in 31 months.
 - **Financial fraud:** A Defence Ministry report revealed Chinese app FIEWIN defrauded Indians of Rs. 400 crore.
 - **Tax evasion:** Reports show gaming firms evaded over Rs. 30,000 crore in GST liabilities and Rs. 2,000 crore in income tax.
 - **Money laundering and terrorism funding:** A 2023 Parliamentary Panel flagged gaming portals as potential conduits for terror financing.
- By targeting opaque algorithms and offshore operators, the Act seeks to safeguard users and restore transparency in the sector.

Legal and Constitutional Challenges

- **Skill vs. chance debate** - The law does not differentiate between games of skill (like Fantasy Sports or Rummy) and games of chance, which **critics argue violates Article 19(1)(g), guaranteeing the right to trade and occupation.**
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TOURISM SECTOR IN INDIA - A STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DRIVER AND TARIFF-PROOF SECTOR

Tourism's Economic Potential:

- **Labour-intensive sector:**
 - Generates jobs across transport, hospitality, handicrafts, wellness, food services, and entertainment.
 - Employs both **skilled** professionals (**urban**) and **semi-skilled** youth (**rural**).
- **Current contribution:**
 - Tourism contributes around **5% of India's GDP** (compared to the global average of 10%).
 - Countries like **Spain and UAE**, where tourism accounts for about 12% of GDP, illustrate the potential when the sector is treated as a national growth priority.
- **Foreign exchange earnings:**
 - In 2024, tourism generated **\$28 billion** or Rs 2,45,000 crore in foreign exchange earnings for India.
 - This is only a fraction of the **potential of \$130-140 billion**, which can be achieved **if the sector reaches 10% of GDP**.
- **Outbound tourism challenge:**
 - In 2024, over **28 million Indians travelled abroad**, spending an estimated \$28-31 billion.
 - Indian travellers are **among the highest spenders** globally, presenting both a challenge and an opportunity.
 - Unless India offers world-class domestic experiences, spending will flow outward.

Growth Projections:

- **If India can raise tourism's GDP contribution** from 5 to 10% over the next decade, the results would be transformative.



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- For example, it will lead to an **additional \$516 billion** to the economy each year, **40 million new jobs**, and **foreign exchange earnings** rising to \$130-140 billion.

Strategic Pathways for Tourism Growth:

- **Infrastructure and destination development:**
 - **The Union Budget 2025-26 announcement** on developing 50 destinations in partnership with states is an important step.
 - A world-class destination in each state, blending **infrastructure, sustainability, and brand**, can shift India's positioning from a **"place to see"** to a **"place to experience."**
- **Seamless travel and connectivity:**
 - **Simplifying e-visas**, reducing immigration queues and delivering a seamless arrival experience.
 - With India's airlines set to expand their fleet by 1,000 aircraft, improved connectivity can give a decisive boost to tourism.
- **Digital and content-led promotion:** Millions of creators already showcase India to the world; the task now is to amplify visibility of India's culture and experiences through **AI-enabled curation and partnerships with global platforms**.
- **Private investment:** Expanding the tourism sector's inclusion in the **Harmonised Master List of Infrastructure** can catalyse investments, including **PPP** projects like hotels, ropeways, wayside amenities, and convention centres.

Conclusion:

- Tourism can provide **economic resilience** against trade shocks.
- It creates jobs that cannot be offshored, generates untaxable domestic demand, and **fosters national pride**.
- With **bold strategy**, infrastructure push, and sustainable promotion, India can turn adversity (tariffs) into opportunity by making **tourism** a pillar of economic growth and **soft power projection**.



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NATIONAL YOUTH AWARD



युवा कार्यक्रम
एवं खेल मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
YOUTH AFFAIRS
AND SPORTS

**National
Youth
Award**

- It is sponsored by the **Ministry of Youth Affairs**.
- It is for the **Indian youth** for their tremendous and outstanding **work in social service**.
- This award is to motivate young persons to achieve excellence in the field of national development or social service
- It aims to motivate **young persons (aged between 15 – 29 years)** to achieve excellence in the field of national development or social service;
- To encourage young people to **develop a sense of responsibility** to the community and thus to improve their own personal potential as good citizens; and
- To give **recognition to the outstanding** work done by **voluntary organizations** working with the youth for national development and/or social service.
- The National Youth Awards are conferred usually during the National Youth Festival.
- The award is **given in two categories**: Individual Category and Organisation Category
- The number of awards given each year would **ordinarily not exceed 20 for individual category and five for organization category**. It may, however, vary at the discretion of the sanctioning authority in deserving cases.
- **Prize money**: Award to individuals will comprise a medal, a certificate and award money of **₹1,00,000/-**. Award to voluntary **youth organizations** will comprise a medal, a certificate and award money of **₹3,00,000/-**.
- **Eligibility for Award**:
 - Individuals/organisations who have shown identifiable excellent work for youth in different fields of development activities and social service such as health, research and innovation, culture, promotion of human rights, art and literature, tourism, traditional medicine, active citizenship, community service, sports and academic excellence, and smart learning are encouraged.



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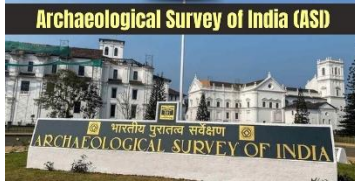
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA (ASI)



- ASI, under the **Ministry of Culture**, Government of India, is a **premier organisation** for **archaeological research and protection of the tangible heritage of the nation.**
 - It was **established in 1861** by Sir Alexander Cunningham, with its **headquarters in New Delhi.**
 - **After independence**, it was established as a **statutory body under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 (AMASR Act).**
 - The prime concern of ASI is the **maintenance of ancient monuments, archaeological sites**, and remains of national importance.
 - Besides, it **regulates all archaeological activities** in the country as per the **provisions of the AMASR Act.**
 - It also **regulates the Antiquities and Art Treasure Act, 1972.**
 - The Central Government has declared **3679 monuments and sites as of national importance**, and ASI shoulders the responsibility of protecting and maintaining them.
 - The organization has a **large workforce of trained archaeologists, conservators, epigraphists, architects, and scientists** for conducting archaeological research projects through its Circles, Museums, Excavation Branches, Prehistory Branch, Epigraphy Branches, Science Branch, Horticulture Branch, Building Survey Project, Temple Survey Projects, and Underwater Archaeology Wing.
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SHIPKI-LA PASS



- It is a **motorable mountain pass** situated at an altitude of 3,930 meters, **bordering India and China** in tribal district of Kinnaur in Himachal Pradesh.



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- It also serves as the boundary post on the frontier between China and India.
- It is one of the **highest motorable passes**.
- Through this **pass the Sutlej River** (known as Langqen Zangbo in Tibet) enters India, and has long served as a vital trade corridor between India and Tibet.
- The old name of Shipki La was Pema La, or **Shared Gate**, also known as **Shared Pass**.
- It was declared the **Line of Actual Control post-1962**, and later, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police named it Shipki La.
- **Shipki La Pass Significance:** The opening of Shipki La to tourists is part of a broader strategy to stimulate economic growth in Kinnaur and Lahaul-Spiti, which share a 240-km border with China.

EXERCISE AAROGYA SETU



- It was organised by the **Indian Army** at Rupai, Doomdooma, in the **Tinsukia district of Assam**.
- A **first of its kind**, it marked a **civil-military medical fusion exercise in the region**.
- The event aimed at **strengthening cooperation between the Army Medical Corps, reputed senior civil doctors from leading hospitals, and PHCs of Tinsukia and the Northern Frontier Railway Hospital**,
- The focus of the exercise was on **how Army and Civil medical fraternities can work together** during disasters and war-like situations.
- A special highlight was the **participation of a doctor** from the Northern Frontier Railway Hospital, **who introduced the concept of train ambulances** —a life-saving facility.
- The presentation drew great interest and sparked discussions on innovative methods of large-scale casualty evacuation.
- Doctors from both sides discussed how civil institutions can extend crucial support to Army medical authorities.



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WHAT IS PSEPHOLOGY?



- Psephology is a **branch of political science** that deals with the **scientific analysis of elections or polls**.
 - This field is dedicated to offering a meticulous **quantitative analysis of elections**.
 - The toolbox of psephology encompasses a **variety of instruments** employed for the **statistical examination of election data**.
 - These invaluable **tools include voting data, opinion polls, campaign insights, and related datasets**.
 - Those who wield the expertise of psephology are known as **Psephologists**.
 - Psephologists **study the patterns of elections**, using past voting figures and their percentage, public opinion polls and other related information.
 - They **estimate the results of the public opinion for the future elections** using statistical applications.
 - **India does not have an actual post called 'Psephologist'**.
 - However, **some major parties have in-house analysts** who can be called **Psephologists**.
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INS UDAYGIRI AND INS HIMGIRI



- Udaygiri and Himgiri are built under the **Project 17 (Shivalik) class frigates**.
- Udaygiri, **built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd. (MDL)**, Mumbai, and Himgiri, constructed by **Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE)**, Kolkata, showcase the nation's growing shipbuilding prowess, as well as, the synergy between India's premier defence shipyards.
- Both frigates were **designed in-house by the Indian Navy's Warship Design Bureau (WDB)**.



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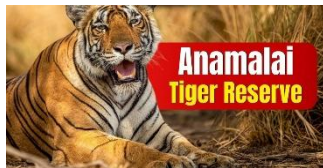


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- **Features of INS Udaygiri and INS Himgiri:**
 - The ships feature modern **Combined Diesel or Gas (CODOG)** propulsion plants and a suite of advanced weapons and sensors developed by Indian manufacturers.
 - **Udaygiri also** holds the distinction of being the **fastest ship of her class** to be delivered post-launch, a result of the **modular construction methodology** adopted by Indian shipyards.
- **Significance:** The commissioning of these two will augment the Navy's combat readiness and reaffirm India's resolve to achieve self-reliance in warship design and construction.

ANAMALAI TIGER RESERVE



- **Location:** It is a protected area located at an altitude of 1400 m in the **Anamalai Hills** of Pollachi and Coimbatore District of **Tamil Nadu**.
- It lies south of the Palakkad gap in the **Southern Western Ghats**.
- It is surrounded by the **Parambikulam Tiger Reserve** on the east, **Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary**, and **Eravikulam National Park** on the southwestern side.
- The reserve is also surrounded by the **Nenmara, Vazhachal, Malayattur, and Marayur** reserved forests of Kerala. It was declared a **tiger reserve in the year 2007**.
- It is inhabited by six indigenous communities viz., **Kadar, Muduvar, Malasar, Malai malasar, Eravalar and Pulayar**.
- **Vegetation:** It supports diverse habitat types, viz. **Wet evergreen forests, semi-evergreen forests, moist deciduous, dry deciduous, dry thorn & shola forests**. Unique habitats like montane grasslands, savannah & marshy grasslands are also present.
- **Flora:** The reserve is rich in wild relatives of cultivated species like mango, jackfruit, wild plantain, ginger (*Zingiber officinale*), turmeric, pepper (*Piper longum*), cardamom.
- **Fauna:** The important wild animals of the reserve include: Tiger, Asiatic elephant, Sambar, Spotted deer, Barking deer, Jackal, Leopard, Jungle cat, etc.