April 22, 2026

MEITY

Online gaming rules take effect with the Act on May 1, 2026

G.S.R. 303(E) sets out how the Online Gaming Authority of India decides which games are online money games, registers e-sports and handles grievances.

THE MINISTRY OF Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) issued notification G.S.R. 303(E), dated April 22, 2026, making the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Rules, 2026. It was published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, Section 3, Sub-section (i), No. 279, the same day. The Central Government made the rules under sections 8(4) and 19(1) and (2) of the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025. They come into force on May 1, 2026. MeitY issued three other notifications the same day. S.O. 1994(E) brings the Act into force on May 1, 2026, and S.O. 1992(E) constitutes the Online Gaming Authority of India. S.O. 1993(E) authorizes police officers in charge of a cyber cell, and nodal cyber cell officers, in the States and Union territories to investigate offenses under the Act. Ajit Kumar, Joint Secretary, signed the rules under F. No. AA-11018/1/2025-CL&ES.

KEY FACTS

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Notification G.S.R. 303(E), the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Rules, 2026

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An Additional Secretary of MeitY chairs the Authority, or an officer not below Joint Secretary whom MeitY's Secretary nominates. Joint Secretaries of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Department of Financial Services, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and the Department of Legal Affairs sit as members. The Authority is an attached office of MeitY with its head office in Delhi, and works as a digital office as far as practicable. Half its functional strength makes a quorum, and it decides by majority. It keeps and publishes the list of online money games, inquires into complaints and hears appeals from providers' decisions on grievances. It may issue directions, guidelines and codes of practice for online social games and e-sports, including on registration, grievances, user verification, payments, data retention, fair play, cyber security, user safety and compliance reporting. Information an applicant or provider gives it is confidential, unless law or a court requires disclosure.

A game needs a determination in three cases only. The Authority may direct it after a notice, the provider may intend to offer it as an e-sport, or the Central Government may, by notification, require it for a category of online social games, having regard to the nature, volume or value of their payments. The Authority is to have regard to all or any of five factors. The first two are whether the game involves fees, deposits or other stakes at any stage, and whether users expect to win monetary or other enrichment in return. The third is how the fees or deposits are used: as entry fees, event costs or prize money for a competitive event, as a subscription or one-time access fee, or as "a bet, wager or any other stake". The last two are the revenue model and the way rewards, benefits or in-game assets "may be transferred, redeemed, monetised or used outside the game environment". It examines the game's technical architecture, gameplay mechanics, revenue model and user interface, and is to decide within ninety days, as far as practicable. An online money game gets a determination order, and the Authority then publishes its name in the list of online money games. An online social game found not to be one gets an order saying so. Each order covers one game of one provider. It stays valid as long as no change

to the game affects how payments for it work, and the Authority directs the provider to tell it of any such change before offering it.

Registration is needed only for an e-sport, or where the Central Government, by notification, requires it for a game or a category of games. The Government is to have due regard to six factors, among them "risk of harm to users, including children" and "the country of origin or the head office of the online game service provider offering or making available such online game". The Authority may also require registration on these factors while deciding an application. The provider applies in the Authority's digital form with the details rule 23 lists. Each game of each provider needs its own registration, and an online money game cannot be recognized or registered as an e-sport. The Authority registers an e-sport within ninety days of a complete application, once satisfied that it is recognized under the National Sports Governance Act, 2025. It then issues a digital Certificate of Registration with a unique registration number, valid for up to ten years as the application states. It may suspend or cancel a certificate only after a hearing, and only on one of six grounds. A provider may surrender its certificate, but liabilities that have already accrued remain.

A provider must display a game's determination or registration prominently where the game is offered, and must not present a game as determined or registered unless it is. Providers of online social games and e-sports must follow the Authority's directions on a point of contact and its published contact details, on keeping traffic data and metadata on computer resources located in India, and on routing and settling user payments. They must run a grievance redressal mechanism. A user dissatisfied with the provider's decision may take the grievance to the Authority within thirty days, and the Authority is to try to decide it within thirty days. Before facilitating payments for an e-sport or online social game, banks, financial institutions and others must follow the Authority's directions on verifying the Certificate of Registration. On a direction about an online money game, they must suspend, restrict or stop its payments without delay. Appeals against the Authority's orders on determination, registration, cancellation, grievances and penalties go to the Secretary of MeitY within thirty days. The Authority decides penalty complaints within ninety days, and may impose a penalty, suspend or cancel a certificate, or bar a provider from offering such games for a period. Rule 20 speaks of "the said timeline" but sets no period for a provider to resolve a grievance. Beyond the country of origin factor and the directions on keeping data on computer resources in India, the rules say nothing specific about providers based outside India.

Issued by	Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
Document	Notification G.S.R. 303(E), the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Rules, 2026
Dated	April 22, 2026

Published	Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, Section 3, Sub-section (i), No. 279, April 22, 2026
Takes effect	May 1, 2026
Applies to	Online game service providers, "any person who alone or jointly, offers, operates, organises, manages or makes available one or more online games"; banks, financial institutions and others facilitating payments for online games
Legal basis	Section 8(4) and section 19(1) and (2), Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025 (32 of 2025)
Act in force	May 1, 2026, by S.O. 1994(E), April 22, 2026 (Gazette ID CG-DL-E-22042026-271977)
Authority constituted	Online Gaming Authority of India, by S.O. 1992(E), April 22, 2026: the Additional Secretary, MeitY, as Chairperson and five Joint Secretaries as members, all ex officio (Gazette ID CG-DL-E-22042026-271975)
Investigation	S.O. 1993(E), April 22, 2026: a police officer in charge of a cyber cell, or a nodal cyber cell officer, in a State or Union territory may investigate offenses under the Act (Gazette ID CG-DL-E-22042026-271976)
Determination factors	Fees, deposits or other stakes; an expectation of winning monetary or other enrichment; how the fees or deposits are used; the revenue model; how rewards, benefits or in-game assets may be used outside the game (rule 9)
Application contents	Identity, name and contact details; any registration, licence or authorization held under any law; description and category of the game; its proposed category under section 4 of the Act; the targeted user age group; the revenue model; user safety features; the internal grievance redressal mechanism; an undertaking that the information is correct; any other details the Authority requires (rule 23)
Registration factors	"(i) risk of harm to users, including children; (ii) the nature of the outcome or potential risks of injury or detrimental impact on the public due to such online game; (iii) scale of user participation in such online game; (iv) nature, volume or value of financial transactions or authorisation of funds permitted in such online game; (v) the country of origin or the head office of the online game service provider offering or making available such online game; or (vi) such other factors as the Authority deems necessary in public interest or to protect the interests of users" (rule 12(1)(a))

Certificate of Registration	Digital, with a unique registration number; valid for up to ten years as stated in the application
Grounds for suspension or cancellation	After a hearing: the game has changed so that it is likely to be determined an online money game; more than one failure to comply with a direction, order, code of practice or guideline; an e-sport's recognition has expired or been withdrawn; a false or incorrect statement in the application; failure to pay a penalty; a violation of the Act, its rules or any other law that applies to the game (rule 14(3))
Payment checks	Before facilitating payments for an e-sport or online social game, banks, financial institutions and others follow the Authority's directions on verifying the Certificate of Registration (rule 19(1)); on a direction about an online money game, they suspend, restrict or discontinue its payments without delay (rule 19(2))
List of online money games	The Authority publishes the name and other details of each game it determines to be an online money game on its website or mobile based application or both (rule 26)
Appeals	To the Appellate Authority, the Secretary to the Government of India in MeitY, within thirty days of the Authority's decision being made available in writing; it is to decide preferably within thirty days (rule 7)
Later advisory	Advisory of the Online Gaming Authority of India, MeitY, dated July 29, 2026 ("29.7.2026"), on compliance with sections 5, 6 and 7 of the Act: it lists application stores, cloud service providers, telecom and internet service providers, banks and others facilitating payments, social media intermediaries, OTT platforms and advertising agencies among entities involved in prohibited activities, and says all persons must review their policies, suspend non-compliant activities and build internal compliance systems
Signed by	Ajit Kumar, Joint Secretary
File number	F. No. AA-11018/1/2025-CL&ES

Time limits in the rules

Step	Time limit	Rule
Determination of a game	Within ninety days, as far as practicable, of a complete application or of the notice in a suo motu case; time taken to supply information is excluded	10(3)
Registration of an e-sport	Within ninety days of receipt of a complete application	13(3)
Certificate of Registration	Valid for up to ten years, as stated in the application	14(2)

User takes a grievance to the Authority	Within thirty days of the date the provider conveys its decision, or in case of non-redressal "within the said timeline", which the rules do not set	20(2)
Authority decides the grievance appeal	Is to try to decide it within thirty days of receipt	20(3)
Appeal to the Appellate Authority	Within thirty days of the Authority's decision being made available in writing, including in electronic form	7(2)
Appellate Authority decides the appeal	As expeditiously as possible, preferably within thirty days of receipt	7(6)
Authority decides a penalty complaint	Within ninety days of receipt	21(6)

The notification (PDF, 2.1 MB)

Source: Gazette of India, CG-DL-E-22042026-271974.

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