



UPSC & STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · UJIYARI.COM

EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

Levelling Up — OGAI and the Challenge of Governing India's Online Gaming Ecosystem

 **INDIAN EXPRESS**

25 April 2026

POLITY**ECONOMY****SCIENCE & TECH****GS2****GS3**

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

 [linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)**ALSO FROM THE CREATOR****BharatNotes**Free UPSC notes, MCQs, PYQ analysis. **100% Free.**bharatnotes.com →**ADVERTISE****Advertise with Ujiyari**

Reach thousands of UPSC aspirants daily.

 epicbharat@gmail.com

Levelling Up — OGAI and the Challenge of Governing India's Online Gaming Ecosystem

 The Indian Express

25 April 2026

GS2

GS3



The Indian Express

5 tags ▼

INTERVIEW ANGLE



"OGAI (Online Gaming Authority of India) under the PROGA Act 2025 replaces the failed SRO framework with a statutory authority. Can a government-led body balance innovation in a ₹28,000 crore sector with protection of 500 million users, many of whom are vulnerable to addiction and financial harm from real-money gaming?"

THE CORE ARGUMENT

The Online Gaming Authority of India (OGAI), operational from May 1, 2026 under the PROGA Act 2025, represents a regulatory maturation — replacing the conflict-of-interest-ridden SRO (Self-Regulatory Organisation) framework with a statutory national authority. The editorial argues, however, that effective gaming regulation requires resolving three tensions: (1) between innovation support and user protection; (2) between the Centre's claimed regulatory jurisdiction and states' constitutional authority over gambling; and (3) between the formal regulatory framework and the technically sophisticated evasion strategies of offshore and grey-market gaming platforms. A statutory authority is necessary but not sufficient — the regulatory architecture must be adaptive, technically literate, and constitutionally settled.

BACKGROUND — THE REGULATORY FAILURE BEFORE PROGA

The SRO Experiment (IT Rules 2023 Amendment)

In 2023, MeitY amended the IT Rules to create a framework for online gaming regulation through Self-Regulatory Organisations (SROs). SROs were industry-funded bodies that would certify 'permissible' online games. The framework was criticised because:

- SROs were funded by the industry they regulated — structural conflict of interest
- No national enforcement mechanism; SRO decisions had no legal backing
- Offshore platforms (not registered in India) were largely unaffected

- The distinction between skill and chance remained contested and inconsistently applied

PROGA Act 2025 replaces this with a statutory authority — OGAI.

THE REGULATORY CHALLENGE — THREE TENSIONS

1. Innovation vs. Protection

India's online gaming ecosystem (₹28,000 crore market, 500 million users) includes:

- **Casual gaming** (low/no money; predominantly urban youth; minimal risk)
- **E-sports** (competitive; low harm; high growth; Olympic inclusion)
- **Skill-based real-money gaming** (fantasy sports, rummy, poker — legally permitted; financial exposure real)
- **Predatory real-money gaming** (exploits cognitive biases, addiction loops; highest harm)

OGAI must protect users in the third and fourth categories without over-regulating the first two. Over-regulation risks driving the industry offshore (Curacao, Malta — popular licensing destinations for Indian-market platforms).

2. Centre vs. State Jurisdiction

Public gambling is a **State List subject** (Entry 34). The Centre has claimed online gaming is an IT/communications subject under the Union List (Entry 31 — communications; Entry 97 — residuary powers).

This is constitutionally contestable:

- Several states (Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh) have enacted their own online gaming/gambling laws
- The Madras High Court struck down Tamil Nadu's 2021 online gaming ban
- The constitutional question — whether online gaming is primarily a state or central subject — has not been authoritatively settled

PROGA Act's national framework may face state challenges. OGAI's authority over platforms operating under state licenses (or claiming state jurisdiction) is legally uncertain.

3. Offshore Platforms and Grey Markets

A significant share of real-money gaming in India flows to offshore platforms (bet365, 1xBet, Betway, etc.) which are accessible via VPN, accept payments through informal channels (cryptocurrency, hawala-adjacent), and are not subject to Indian regulation or taxation. PROGA Act and OGAI have authority over India-registered entities — but the grey market, which may be larger, remains effectively ungoverned.

USER PROTECTION — THE CENTRAL PRIORITY

OGAI's rules include:

- **Age verification:** No real-money gaming below 18
- **Spending limits:** User-configurable; mandatory for minors
- **Addiction warning:** Mandatory breaks, session time limits
- **Grievance redressal:** 30-day resolution timeline
- **Data localisation:** User data stored in India; DPDP Act compliance

However:

- Age verification in India is weakly enforced (Aadhaar linking is not universal in practice)
- Spending limits can be circumvented (multiple accounts, family accounts)
- The addictive design of many platforms (dark patterns, FOMO mechanics, reward loops) is not addressed by registration requirements alone

THE GST COMPLICATION

In October 2023, the GST Council imposed **28% GST on the full face value** of real-money bets (not just the platform fee). This was a revenue move — but it effectively doubled the tax burden, making compliant Indian platforms less competitive against offshore alternatives. The GST structure has accelerated grey-market growth — a perverse outcome for regulation.

UPSC ANGLE

PAPER	ANGLE
GS2 — Polity	State vs Centre jurisdiction on gambling; PROGA Act
GS2 — Governance	SRO failure; regulatory design; user protection
GS3 — Economy	Digital economy; online gaming industry; GST implications

Mains Keywords: PROGA Act 2025, OGAI, SRO, skill vs chance, Article 19(1)(g), State List Entry 34, GST 28%, addiction governance, offshore gaming

Probable Question: “India’s online gaming regulation through the PROGA Act raises important questions about Centre-State jurisdiction and user protection. Critically examine.” (GS2/GS3 Mains)

PRACTICE TODAY'S QUIZ[Take the 25 April 2026 Quiz →](#)**RELATED DAILY ARTICLES**

25 Apr [Current Affairs Today — April 25, 2026](#)

25 Apr [Jan Vishwas \(Amendment of Provisions\) Act, 2026 —...](#)

25 Apr [World Bank South Asia Economic Update April 2026 —...](#)

25 Apr [India's Landfills Among World's Top Methane Emitters —...](#)

← **NEWER EDITORIAL**

[Decriminalising the State — Jan Vishwas Act 2026 and the...](#)

OLDER EDITORIAL →

[Nuclear at a Crossroads — SHANTI Act, Private Entry, and...](#)



CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)[Read Full Article on Ujiyari →](#)<https://ujiyari.com/editorials/2026/04/online-gaming-ogai-proga-regulation-challenge/>

ALSO FROM THE CREATOR

BharatNotes

Free UPSC study platform — subject-wise notes across all 4 GS papers, Prelims MCQs, Mains answer frameworks, PYQ analysis & progress tracking. **100% Free • No Login Required.**

[Start Preparing → bharatnotes.com](http://bharatnotes.com)

📌 OPPORTUNITY

Advertise with Ujiyari

Reach **thousands of serious UPSC & State PCS aspirants** daily through our PDFs, website, and social channels.

Ideal for: Coaching institutes • EdTech platforms • Book publishers • Exam prep apps

[✉ epicbharat@gmail.com](mailto:epicbharat@gmail.com)

Write to us for rates & media kit

Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs · ujiyari.com · bharatnotes.com