TAMIL NADU
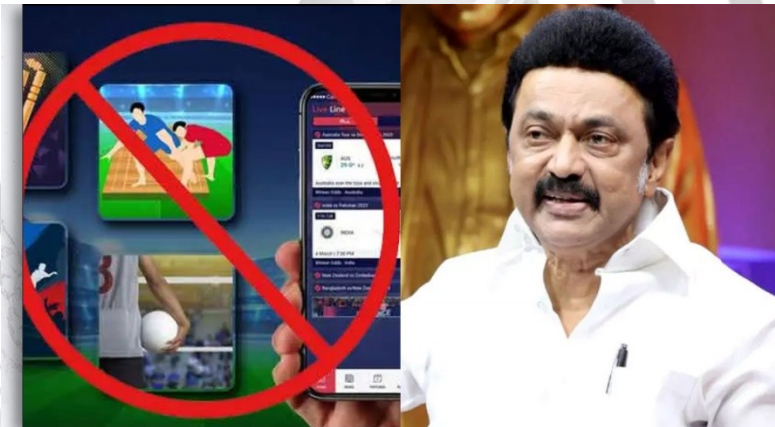
- **Tamil Nadu government – has promulgated an ordinance banning online gambling and playing of online games of chance, rummy and poker with money or other stakes.**

- ✓ Tamil Nadu governor R N Ravi gave assent to the ordinance on October 1, the day when the government forwarded the draft approved by the cabinet last month.
- ✓ Following his nod, the Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Online Gambling and Regulation of Online Games Ordinance, 2022 came into effect.
- ✓ A state government gazette notification released on October 7 said the ordinance aims to "prohibit" online gambling and "regulate online gaming" in the state of Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ The state is likely to pass a bill in this regard to make it a permanent act in the upcoming assembly session starting on October 17.
- ✓ On September 26, the Tamil Nadu cabinet, led by Chief Minister MK Stalin, had passed an ordinance to prohibit these games in the state, terming them as "online games of chance".
- ✓ An explanatory statement of the state government said online gambling considerably affected mental health of the people and left many families in

financial distress and would affect the longterm prospects of the state and its population.

✓ Any person offering these services will face an imprisonment of up to three years or a fine of up to Rs 10 lakh, or both.

✓ Meanwhile, people playing these games with money shall face imprisonment of up to three months or a fine of up to Rs 5,000 or both

✓ Person who advertises in any media in contravention shall be punished with imprisonment for upto one year or with fine of Rs 5 lakh or both

✓ The jail term and the fine increases for repeat offences.

✓ No court shall take cognizance of any offence punishable under the ordinance.

✓ The ordinance also bans banks, financial institutions or payment gateways from engaging in any transaction or authorisation of funds towards payment for any online gambling or any online game of chance.

✓ **The ordinance stipulates appointing the Tamil Nadu Gaming Online Authority of five members**

   ✓ It would comprise a chairperson who has retired not below the rank of chief secretary to the government, a retired high ranking police officer, an expert in the field of information technology, an eminent psychologist, an expert in the field of online gaming

   ✓ The authority will be issuing certificates of registration to local online game providers valid for three years and identifying online games of chance and recommending to the government for ban, among other things.

   ✓ It will oversee the functioning of companies that offer online games in the state, will collect and maintain information and data on such firms and will also advise the government on all matters pertaining to online gaming.

   ✓ The authority will also have the power of a civil court to try suits under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.

✓ The government will also set up an appellate authority led by a retired judge of the high court or qualified to be a judge of a high court to hear appeals filed by any person aggrieved with action initiated as per the ordinance.

✓ The ordinance also distinguishes local and non-local online games providers.

✓ Local online games provider is a company that has its central management and control of the service in the state and whose services that are available for access by the customers is hosted in Tamil Nadu.

✓ The non-local games providers, when compared to the local games providers, have an additional burden of verifying whether the customers are based in Tamil Nadu or in other parts of the country by obtaining their personal details.

✓ As part of the regulations for non-local online games providers, they are prohibited from providing any online gambling service

✓ Geo-blocking – restricting users from accessing online content, online applications or online services, based on the user's geographical location - will have to be done by non-local online games provider.

- ✓ As per the ordinance, the games provider should take all other "reasonably practicable" measures to ensure that no person physically present in the state could have access to online gambling service or to online games of chance that are prohibited.
- ✓ Violation of it will lead to blocking access to persons in the state by recommending to the Central government to exercise the power under Section 69-A of the IT Act, 2000.
- ✓ **This is the second attempt by the Tamil Nadu government to bring in legislation against online gambling in the state.**
- ✓ On August 3, 2021, the Madras high court struck down the Tamil Nadu Gaming and Police Laws (Amendment) Act 2021, enacted by the AIADMK government banning online games in February 2021, declaring it as 'unconstitutional'.
- ✓ Similar attempts by neighbouring states Karnataka and Kerala have also been struck down by their respective high courts
- ✓ The Tamil Nadu Gaming and Police Laws (Amendment) Act 2021, which amended the Tamil Nadu Gaming Act, 1930, sought to ban the playing of games such as rummy and poker on cyberspace with stakes
- ✓ The DMK government in last December challenged this in the Supreme Court and the appeal is still pending before the apex court
- ✓ MK Stalin, who took office as Tamil Nadu chief minister in May 2021, set up a five-member committee led by retired Justice K Chandru on June 10, 2022 to analyse the negative effects of these games and make recommendations for a new law prohibiting "online gambling games"
- ✓ The Justice Chandru-led five-member team submitted its report on June 27 to chief minister MK Stalin recommending a ban on online games.
- ✓ In May 2022, the union government set up a seven-member inter-ministerial task force chaired by Rajeev Chandrasekhar, minister of state for information technology, to work on regulations for the online gaming industry and to identify a nodal ministry for the sector
- ✓ Online gambling refers to online wagering or betting and includes playing any online game of chance for money or other stakes in any manner
- ✓ Stakes indicate anything recognised as equivalent to money and includes virtual credits, virtual coins, virtual tokens, virtual objects or any similar thing that is purchased within or as part of or in relation to an online game
- ✓ Online gambling often involves players competing with non-human or virtual participants that are controlled by a variety of computer algorithms
- ✓ Skill-based real money gaming has been banned or attempted to be banned by several state governments, including Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala, and Karnataka as gambling is a state subject.
- ✓ South India is an important market for skill-based games such as Rummy, which has a significant penetration in these states
- ✓ The online gaming industry is worth $2.2 billion and is expected to reach $7 billion by 2026.

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- ✓ The number of gamers in India is close to 400 million and is expected to reach 700 million by 2025.

- ➢ **The Director-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) - has approved the country's first petrol-operated drones designed and manufactured by the students' start-up unit 'Daksha Unmanned Systems Private Limited'.**

- ✓ Daksha is developed by the MIT aerospace department initiated by the aerospace research students.
- ✓ Soon after the DGCA issued the 'type certificate' to Daksha's prototype DH-Agrigator, an agriculture sprayer drone, the Daksha got about 50 preorders.
- ✓ The type certificate means the prototype can be manufactured and sold in the market.
- ✓ Daksha's Agrigator is an alternative to the battery-operated drones imported from China and other countries
- ✓ While each device costs Rs.13 lakh to Rs.15 lakh, the central government is offering a subsidy of Rs.10 lakh to the Kisan Vikas Kendra and Rs.7.5 lakh to Farmers Producer Organisation.
- ✓ Daksha is setting up an exclusive manufacturing unit of these drones at Ambattur.

NATIONAL

- ➢ **On October 7, the Centre – has set up a 3-member panel to examine the issue of granting 'Scheduled Caste' status to Dalits who converted to other religions, mainly Christianity and Islam**
- ✓ The panel will be headed by former CJI KG Balakrishnan and comprise retired IAS Ravindra Jain and UGC member Sushma Yadav as members
- ✓ The panel, headquartered in Delhi, will have two years' time to submit the report.
- ✓ The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950, states that 'Scheduled Caste' status can only be accorded to persons professing Hinduism, Sikhism or Buddhism.
- ✓ The original order under which only Hindus were classified was later amended to include Sikhs and Buddhists.

- ✓ The new panel will examine the merits of giving SC status to Dalit converts, the implications of such a move on other SC communities and the socio-economic changes brought about by conversion.

Hanging questions

A look at the present status of the law, the past amendments and the Centre's argument in the case:

What does the law say now?
The 1950 law provides for only those belonging to Hindu, Sikh or Buddhist communities to be categorised as SCs

How were Sikhs and Buddhists included?
The Kalelkar panel report (1955) and the high-powered panel report (1983) were the basis for amending the Order to include Dalit Sikhs and Dalit Buddhists as SCs in 1956 and 1990 respectively

Centre's argument
The religions included as SCs under the law are branches of Hinduism. Dalits who converted to Islam or Christianity "cannot claim to be backward" since untouchability is a feature of Hindu religion and its branches alone

The three-member Commission is headed by ex-CJI K.G. Balakrishnan

- ✓ The issue has been pending in the apex court for a long time.
- ✓ On August 30, the court asked the Centre to spell out its stand within three weeks, with the next hearing scheduled on October 11.
- ✓ K G Balakrishnan is the Supreme Court's first Dalit Chief Justice.
- ✓ He was also the chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission of India.

AWARDS

- ➢ **On October 7, the Nobel Peace Prize – was awarded to jailed Belarusian activist Ales Byalyatski, Russian rights group 'Memorial' and Ukraine's 'Center for Civil Liberties'**

Nobel Peace Prize awarded to human rights activists from Ukraine, Russia and Belarus

"Obviously, we are sending a signal that war must end."

Ukraine's Center for Civil Liberties

Ales Bialiatski from Belarus

Memorial of Russia

- ✓ The winners of the peace awards were announced by the Norwegian Nobel Institute in Oslo
- ✓ Human rights advocate, Ales Bialiatski was one of the initiators of the democracy movement that emerged in Belarus in the mid-1980s.
- ✓ Having been imprisoned earlier for three years, he was arrested most recently after the large-scale demonstrations against the regime in 2020 and is still detained without trial
- ✓ In 2020, he was one of the three recipients of the Right Livelihood Award by the Swedish Right Livelihood Foundation, sometimes referred to as the "Alternative Nobel".
- ✓ Russian human rights organisation, Memorial was established in 1987, "by human rights activists in the former Soviet Union who wanted to ensure that the victims of the communist regime's oppression would never be forgotten."

IN JAIL, SHUT DOWN & FACING FIRE

➤ Belarusian human rights campaigner **Ales Byalyatski** was jailed in 2011 for alleged tax evasion, **freed in 2014 and re-arrested in 2021**. He **took part in mass anti-govt protests in Minsk** in 2020. His wife said she had sent a **telegram to the jail** to tell him about the Nobel

shut down in December on the grounds that it failed to identify itself as a "foreign agent"

➤ Founded in 1989 to help victims of political repression during the Soviet Union, **Memorial is Russia's best known rights group.** It was **ordered to**

➤ Center for Civil Liberties in Ukraine has been **documenting Russia's 'war crimes'** since the invasion began in February

- ✓ Nobel Peace Prize laureate Andrei Sakharov, who won the prize in 1954, and human rights advocate Svetlana Gannushkina were among the organisation's founders
- ✓ It has been described as the largest human rights organisation in Russia, and in the present day, it is "the most authoritative source of information on political prisoners in Russian detention facilities".
- ✓ In the last two years, it has been shut down and liquidated by the Russian Supreme Court
- ✓ Ukrainian human rights organisation, Center for Civil Liberties was founded in Kyiv in 2007 "for the purpose of advancing human rights and democracy in Ukraine"
- ✓ The Center supports the development of civic activism, and actively participates in international networks and solidarity actions to promote human rights
- ✓ After Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the Center for Civil Liberties has engaged in efforts to identify and document Russian "war crimes" against the Ukrainian civilian population.

- ✓ The prizes carry a cash award of 10 million Swedish kronor (nearly $900,000) and will be handed out to the winners on December 10.
- ✓ The money comes from a bequest left by the prize's creator, Swedish inventor Alfred Nobel, in 1895
- ✓ Last year journalists Dmitry Muratov of Russia and Maria Ressa of the Philippines had won the award for "their efforts to safeguard freedom of expression"

NATIONAL DAY

> **Indian Air Force Day – October 8**

- ✓ The day is observed annually to pay tribute to the Indian Air Force (IAF) personnel who defend the nation by securing the Indian airspace and conduct rescue operations during natural calamities
- ✓ The President of India is the Commander-in-chief of the IAF.
- ✓ This year, the 90th-anniversary celebrations of the Indian Air Force (IAF) began at Sukhna Lake in Punjab's Chandigarh with a band march and parade.
- ✓ This is the first time that the annual parade and fly-past is being held outside Delhi-NCR
- ✓ Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced to take major events and festivities out of the National capital region to different parts of the country
- ✓ Air Chief Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhari inspected the parade which was followed by a march-past.
- ✓ While addressing the IAF ceremony, the Chief of the Air Staff of India, VR Chaudhari announced that the government has approved the creation of a 'weapon system branch' for the officers in the Indian Air Force
- ✓ The new branch will essentially oversee the specialised streams of surface- to-surface missiles, surface-to-air missiles, remotely piloted aircraft, and weapon system operators in twin and multi-crew aircraft

- ✓ This is the first time since independence that a new operational branch is being created.
- ✓ The creation of this branch would result in savings of over Rs 3,400 crore due to the reduced expenditure on flying training
- ✓ The newly-inducted Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) Prachand is also made public at the celebration venue.
- ✓ Aircrafts including - Rafale, Tejas, Su-30, Mi-17, Mirage, and others will participate in the air show along with the aerobatic display teams like the Suryakirans and the Sarang
- ✓ President Droupadi Murmu and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will attend the aerial show at Sukhna Lake.
- ✓ During the 90th anniversary celebrations ceremony, the Indian Air Force (IAF) unveiled new combat uniforms for its personnel

- ✓ Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari revealed the first look of the digitally camouflaged uniform for the air forces ground personnel.
- ✓ The combat fatigues now bear pixelated designs that are all-terrain friendly.
- ✓ The IAF was established on October 8, 1932 by the erstwhile British Empire.
- ✓ It was formed to provide support to the United Kingdom's Royal Air Force, especially during World War II against Japan.
- ✓ The first operational squadron was created in 1933 with six RAF-trained officers and 19 Havai Sepoys (air soldiers).
- ✓ King George VI honoured the contributions of the IAF in 1945 with the prefix "Royal."
- ✓ After India's independence from Great Britain in 1947, the name Royal Indian Air Force was kept and the force served in the name of Dominion of India.
- ✓ This honorary title was dropped in 1950 after India became a republic.
- ✓ The IAF also played important roles during the Congo Crisis (1960-1966) and the Annexation of Goa (1961), the Second Kashmir War (1965), the Bangladesh Liberation War (1971), the Kargil War (1999), and the Balakot airstrike and the India-Pakistan standoff of 2019.
- ✓ The major operations undertaken by the IAF are commonly known as Operation Vijay, Operation Cactus, Operation Meghdoot and Operation Poomalai.

- ✓ IAF actively participates in The United Nations' peacekeeping missions as well.