

Maharashtra Seeks Central Intervention for Online Gaming Ban



Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced on Friday, July 18, 2025, that the central government is "seriously looking into the issue" of banning online gaming, particularly real-money games, due to their adverse impact on the state's youth. The Chief Minister's remarks, made in the Legislative Assembly, came in response to widespread concerns from Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) across party lines regarding growing addiction, financial ruin, and even suicides linked to online gaming.

Fadnavis clarified that while the state government acknowledges the urgent need for action, the authority to enact a comprehensive ban on online gaming platforms, many of which are hosted globally, primarily rests with the Union government. "I have written to the Centre and also spoken to the IT Minister. We told them that the current regulations are insufficient, and the Centre is seriously considering the matter. The state will continue to follow up," he stated.

The Chief Minister's statements were prompted by chilling accounts from MLAs, highlighting the severe consequences of online gaming addiction. Shiv Sena MLA Kailash Patil recounted a tragic incident from his constituency where a man, driven to heavy debt by his gaming addiction, sold his land and house before ultimately killing his pregnant wife, two-year-old son, and himself. Patil urged the state to ban online games, drawing a parallel to the state's past ban on dance bars as a measure to protect youth. "Suicides due to online games are being reported in every district," he emphasized.

The issue of regulating online gaming has gained urgency in India, with various state governments grappling with its social implications. While the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has issued guidelines under the IT Act and imposed a 28% Goods and Services Tax (GST) on online gaming, states argue that these measures are insufficient to curb the widespread issues.

NCP (SP) MLA Abhijeet Patil suggested that the state should also take action against celebrities who endorse online gaming platforms, arguing that their support boosts the popularity of these apps and exacerbates the problem. In response, Chief Minister Fadnavis appealed to celebrities to refrain from such advertisements and stated that the government would explore the possibility of banning these ads at the state level.

The growing consensus among state legislators and the Maharashtra government's appeal to the Centre underscores the increasing pressure on the Union government to formulate a unified and stringent legal framework for online gaming. The situation highlights a complex challenge balancing industry growth with public welfare, as policymakers seek effective ways to mitigate the societal risks associated with unchecked online gaming.