

## India's Top Gaming Apps Suspend Real-Money Games After Ban

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India's leading online gaming platforms halt real money contests following parliament's new legislation banning money-based online games. The law targets financial and psychological risks for players while reshaping an industry that has drawn billions in investment and millions of users.

On August 21, 2025, India's parliament passed the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, prohibiting online games that involve monetary deposits. The legislation also restricts related advertisements and payment services, creating a framework to distinguish skill-based games from those relying on chance. Authorities justify the ban by citing potential financial losses and addiction risks for users.

Following the legislation, Dream11, valued at around eight billion dollars and central to India's fantasy sports growth, suspended all paid contests. Other major platforms, including PokerBaazi and Mobile Premier League (MPL), also stopped real money offerings. PokerBaazi's operator, Moonshine Technologies, which is partly owned by Nazara Tech, takes its paid games offline, while MPL, one of India's fastest-growing mobile gaming firms, follows suit.

The ban affects a sector projected to reach three point six billion dollars by 2029. Nazara Tech experienced a sharp market reaction, with its shares dropping about seventeen percent within three trading sessions after the law's passage. Global investors, including Tiger Global and Peak XV Partners, face sudden uncertainty as platforms adjust to the legal changes.

Industry executives began consultations with legal experts to explore potential Supreme Court challenges. They argue that the legislation was implemented without adequate consultation and that skill-based games such as poker should not be included under the ban. The government establishes a National Online Gaming Commission under the act to oversee licensing, monitor compliance, and distinguish permitted games from prohibited money-based contests. It also promotes non-monetized gaming, e-sports, and digital competitions without financial stakes.

Other platforms adapted similarly. Zupee, which serves over one hundred fifty million users, discontinued money-based games but retained free-to-play offerings, including digital versions of Ludo and Snakes & Ladders. Platforms now explore alternative revenue streams, such as advertising, subscription models, and e-sports tournaments, to offset the suspended money-based features.

The law took immediate effect, requiring operators to remove real money functionality from apps nationwide. Executives express concerns about potential job losses, disruption of foreign investment, and reduced revenues for popular, celebrity-endorsed applications. Despite these challenges, the gaming sector must comply with new regulations while seeking innovative ways to maintain engagement in the absence of monetary contests.

The ban represents one of the most significant regulatory shifts in India's digital gaming industry. By restricting money-based online competitions and providing a regulatory framework for skill-based games, authorities aim to protect consumers while redefining the market. Platforms paused or restructured operations as they aligned with the government's new approach, signaling a transformative period for India's mobile and online gaming landscape.