



43 More Mobile Apps Banned

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Why in News

Recently, the government of India has blocked **43 new mobile apps, mostly Chinese**, in the country, including shopping website AliExpress.

This is in addition to a total of 177 **Chinese apps banned** till now.

Key Points

- The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology** banned these mobile apps under **Section 69A** of the **Information Technology Act (IT Act), 2000**.
Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000, was introduced by an amendment to the Act in 2008.
 - It gives the Central government the **power to block public access** to any information online whether on **websites or mobile apps**.
 - Under **Section 69A**, if a website **threatens India's defence, its sovereignty and integrity, friendly relations with foreign countries and public order**, the government can ban it, after following due procedure.
 - Detailed procedures to do so are listed under the **Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking Access of Information by Public) Rules, 2009**.
- **Reasons behind banning apps:**
 - The action was taken **based on the inputs** regarding these apps for engaging in **activities which are prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of state and public order**.
 - Government has received many complaints from various sources about **misuse of some mobile apps** available on Android and iOS platforms **for stealing and transmitting users' data** in an **unauthorized manner** to servers which have locations outside India.
 - **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Center, Ministry of Home Affairs** also gave a comprehensive report against the misuse of the apps.

- **Implications of the Ban:**

- The decision to ban these apps, which comes **amid continuing tensions between India and China**, is the clear message from India that it will no longer be a victim of China's **Nibble and Negotiate policy** and will review the norms of engagement.
- The ban may affect one of China's most ambitious goals, namely to become the **digital superpower** of the 21st century.
- It will provide a **good opportunity for Indian entrepreneurs** to quickly rise to fill market gaps. This is also great for the **Atmanirbhar Bharat mission**.

After the initial ban of apps, the government launched '**Digital India Atmanirbhar Bharat Innovate Challenge**' to encourage Indian application developers and innovators and facilitate their ideas and products.

Way Forward

- World today recognises that the next **source of economic growth** lies in the **digital economy** and given its raw material being data, thereby whoever builds the electronic backbone will have enormous advantages over everyone else.
- India must speed up **indigenisation, research and development** and **frame-up a regulatory architecture to claim data sovereignty**.

Source:TH