

24 INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE IN GAMING SECTOR TO WATCH IN 2024

List of founders, executives, investors, lawyers
and politicians who are the impact creators

The logo for G2G, featuring the letters 'G2G' in a bold, gold, sans-serif font. The '2' is smaller and positioned between the two 'G's. The logo is set against a dark red background that forms a diagonal shape in the bottom right corner of the page.

GATEWAY TO GAMING

INTRODUCTION

India's real-money gaming sector went through a turbulent 2023, with new regulatory changes, tax issues turning into legal battles, and a funding winter at a global scale that resulted in companies focusing on profitability over growth. The sector has seen a wave of layoffs and a few companies shutting down verticals in 2023 as the online gaming sector tried to come to terms with the new GST regime from 1st October, 2023, which imposed 28% tax on every deposit made by the player into his wallet.

In 2022, for the first time, India's only gaming and esports news portal G2G.News came up with the list of '*22 people to watch out for in India's Real Money Gaming Industry in 2022*'. The list proved to be correct with the subsequent developments in the sector being greatly influenced by the people on the list. The second such list for 2023 also clearly predicted the key members that have created a marking impression on the sector.

Against this background, this issue of '*24 people to watch out for in the Real Money Gaming Industry in India in 2024*' is prepared to enable readers to provide a bird's eye view of the sectoral developments and expectations in 2024. *The list is in no particular order.*

1. N. Venkatraman, Senior Advocate, Additional Solicitor General of India

N. Venkataraman is a noted jurist in Taxation and Commercial law who has been India's Additional Solicitor General (ASG) in the Supreme Court since 2020. Venkataraman is one of the youngest advocates to be designated as a 'Senior Advocate' in 2006 at the early age of 39.

He represents the central government in key areas like taxation, online gaming, and digital technology. He unsuccessfully argued for the tax authorities and central government in the landmark GST case against Gameskraft before the Karnataka High Court, where his contention that online rummy played for stakes amounts to gambling and betting under the GST statute was rejected. He now handles the same case before the Supreme Court seeking to set aside the Karnataka High Court decision.

He obtained initial success in the Gameskraft appeal with the Supreme Court granting an ad-interim stay on the order of the Karnataka High Court. After the stay order, the GST Department sent notices to several money gaming companies including Goa-based casino operators seeking 28% GST on full face value.

The total GST dues on retrospective claims are estimated to be more than one trillion rupees. The issue will be a make-or-break moment for the sunrise sector. He also played a key role in formulating GST amendments that introduced a new taxation regime for online gaming, casinos, and horseracing. A final hearing on the batch of GST cases pertaining to the gaming industry is scheduled for April 2024 and Venkatraman is expected to lead arguments on behalf of the central government and tax authorities in all pending matters pertaining to the gaming industry.



2. Dr Justice DY Chandrachud, Chief Justice of India

Justice Chandrachud will hold the post of Chief Justice of India (CJI) for a period of little over 2 years till November 2024. He currently presides over the bench hearing the taxation appeal in the Gameskraft case in which ASG Venkatraman is arguing for the revenue department and the Tamil Nadu government's appeal against the Madras High Court quashing provisions of the second online gaming ban law in November 2023.

As a CJI, his decisions to constitute benches to hear various matters of constitutional importance will have a direct impact on the listing of appeals against Karnataka High Court and Madras High Court judgments striking down state laws banning online games for stakes.

He has authored several landmark judgments on privacy, freedom of speech, affirmative action, and disability rights among others. The outcome of the pending appeals by the Karnataka and Tamil Nadu governments will likely shape the gaming law jurisprudence in the country for the coming decades. Further, the outcome of the revenue's appeal in the GamesKraft case will be a crucial one. He also presides over the bench that is hearing the appeal by the Tamil Nadu government against the Madras High Court decision quashing provisions banning online rummy and poker through the second gaming ban law.

As a judge known not to mince words, he has authored a dissenting verdict in the landmark Aadhaar case. Notably in the 2017 Privacy case, writing for the majority, he overruled the controversial 1976 ADM Jabalpur Vs Shivakant Shukla verdict by a 5 member constitution bench, which included his father YV Chandrachud. He termed the 1976 verdict as seriously flawed. The GST matter is now scheduled for a final hearing before his bench in April 2024.



3. Harish Salve, Senior Advocate (India) and King's Counsel (UK)

Harish Salve, a former Solicitor General of India is one of the most sought-after senior counsel in the Supreme Court. He is a very experienced and senior lawyer with a global reputation on highly contentious matters. He argued for 17 days before the Supreme Court in an income tax case involving Vodafone acquisition of Hutch telecom business in India which was the highest tax demand at that time.

With online money gaming companies and the casino industry receiving huge tax demands, Harish Salve is expected to represent these companies in the High Courts and the Supreme Court. He represented the respondents against the revenue appeal in the Gameskraft case. Also, he appeared for Delta Corp Ltd, India's only listed casino operator before the Sikkim High Court and the Goa Bench of the Bombay High Court. He also represents Delta Corp's online poker subsidiary Adda52 and online rummy companies A23 and RummyCircle in GST litigation.

Appearing before the Goa Bench of Bombay High Court, Harish Salve revealed that the Finance Secretary informally directed gaming companies not to challenge the prospective levy that has been effective since 1 October 2023 for the government to drop retrospective GST notices. The announcement brought open the rift between key government officials on how to handle the issue. He is expected to be one of the lead senior counsel in the final hearing of the GST matter scheduled in April 2024.





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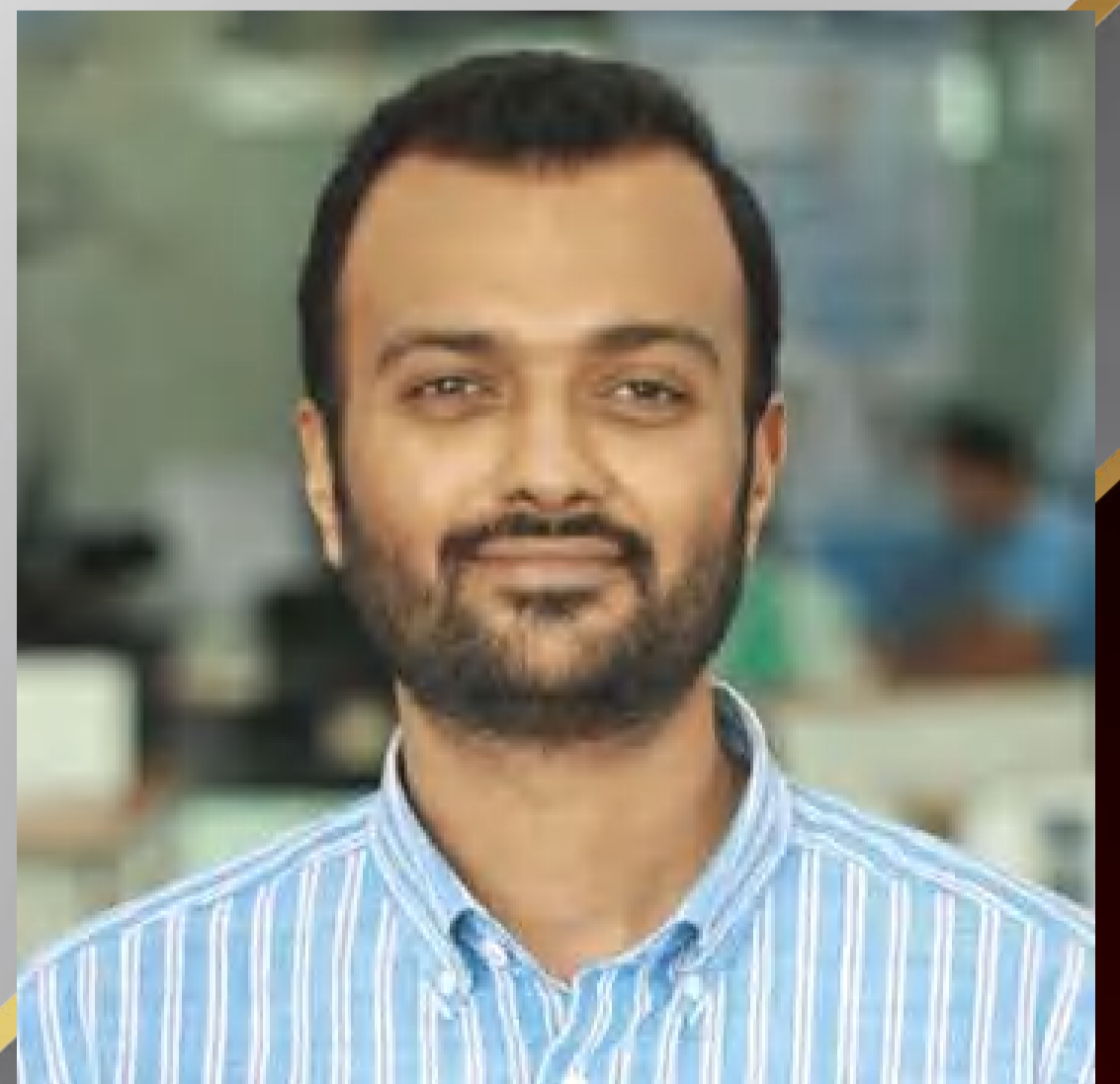


4. Harsh Jain, CEO & Co-Founder, Dream Sports

Harsh Jain is the co-founder and CEO of the fantasy online gaming leader Dream11. Founded in 2008, the fantasy sports platform was the first Indian gaming startup to become a unicorn in 2019. The Company was last valued at a whopping \$8 billion valuation. As the head of India's first gaming unicorn and a profitable startup, Harsh Jain is an influential personality in the real money gaming scene in the country.

Even the day-to-day business decisions of Dream11 are often scrutinised by journalists and public policy professionals. In 2023, Jain as part of industry body FIFS led delegations to discuss key policy issues with the government. Dream11 is also facing the retrospective tax issue which is among the highest demands in the country. Jain is at the forefront of public policy discussions impacting the real money gaming sector. In 2023, Dream11 is said to have navigated the new tax regime hiccup by offering discount points to the users. Several smaller operators have adopted a similar route later.

He was often a part of delegations to meet government officials and ministers to discuss the regulatory and taxation environment of the sector. As the sector is impacted by regulatory and tax challenges, his leadership through the digital lobby body Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and fantasy sports association, FIFS will be tested.



5. Dr Abhishek Manu Singhvi, Rajya Sabha member & Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India

Dr. Abhishek Manu Singhvi is a senior advocate and a member of the Rajya Sabha. He is a go-to counsel for several gaming companies. He was the lead counsel in the batch of cases challenging the ban on online games of skill played for stakes in the landmark Madras and Karnataka High Court judgments, where the courts struck down the online money gaming banning laws as unconstitutional. He along with other senior counsels is expected to represent similar matters arising in other High Courts and the pending appeals on taxation and constitutionality of online gaming bans in the Supreme Court.

Appearing for Gameskraft before the Karnataka High Court, Singhvi argued that there is a distinction between a game of chance and a game of skill. He contended that the game of chance can be regulated by authorities but they have no jurisdiction on prohibiting games of skill.

Singhvi has also appeared for PlayGames24x7 and other rummy and poker companies before various High Courts in the past. He is appearing for Gameskraft before the Supreme Court in the appeal by the revenue department besides pending appeals in the Supreme Court against the laws passed by the Tamil Nadu and Karnataka governments banning all online games played for stakes. As the apex court is scheduled to hear the tax matters in April 2024, his arguments are expected to play a crucial role in shaping the decision of the apex court.



6. Mukul Rohatgi, Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India

Mukul Rohatgi is a senior advocate and was the 14th Attorney General for India. After he resigned from the top government post, Rohtagi reverted to his private practice. He now represents clients in several high-profile matters. Rohtagi has represented gaming companies like Dream11, the Federation of Indian Fantasy Sports as well as online rummy companies in various High Courts and Supreme Court.

He was one of the lead counsels in the case before the Karnataka High Court that challenged the constitutional validity of the State's online gaming ban law. With the case now in the Supreme Court, he is expected to represent leading gaming companies against the government appeals.

Rohatgi earlier ensured that the Special Leave Petitions (SLPs) filed in the Supreme Court by social activists against High Court orders that ruled Dream11 to be a game of skill were speedily dismissed. Rohatgi is expected to appear on behalf of some online rummy companies in Supreme Court appeals by the Tamil Nadu and Karnataka governments against High Court orders striking down online gaming ban laws.

Besides, Rohatgi is also expected to appear on behalf of the All India Gaming Federation (AIGF) in the Gameskraft GST matter in the apex court and on behalf of Dream11 in the appeal by the Maharashtra government in a GST-related matter. Rohtagi along with Singhvi and other senior counsels are expected to play a crucial role in the evolution of real money gaming jurisprudence in the country



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7. Kapil Sibal, Rajya Sabha MP & Senior Advocate

Kapil Sibal, one of the high-profile lawyers in the country and an independent Rajya Sabha MP from Uttar Pradesh is appearing for the Tamil Nadu government against online rummy companies. Sibal vociferously but unsuccessfully contended in the Madras High Court that online rummy is different from the version of the game played physically, and that online rummy played for stakes is akin to gambling and betting, resulting in massive addiction and social problems.

Sibal is going to represent the Tamil Nadu government in the Supreme Court against two Madras High Court decisions that struck down two successive laws passed by the state government banning online rummy and poker when played for stakes. Sibal has also appeared for the Andhra Pradesh government in their Special Leave Petition (SLP) against the High Court decision classifying rummy as a game of skill, even if played for stakes and directing the formation of a committee to examine the skill involved in online rummy.

While a battery of senior lawyers are expected to represent the gaming companies in cases about gaming ban law cases and taxation matters before the Supreme Court, Sibal is one of the few legal heavyweights on the other side and is expected to represent the Tamil Nadu and other government in the Supreme Court contending that states are perfectly competent to impose a complete ban on online games like rummy and poker.



8. Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Union Minister of State for Information Technology & Electronics

The Minister and former entrepreneur is currently acting as a government point of contact for the real money gaming sector in the country. He has held multiple stakeholder meetings to discuss the proposed policy framework for the sector. He often represents the ministry in the Parliament on questions pertaining to real money gaming and eSports.

He has been the government's face for launching new rules under the Information Technology Act, 2000 to govern the online gaming sector. He has held multiple stakeholder meetings to discuss the policy framework for the sector which ultimately culminated in the form of rules for online gaming. The rules however came under severe criticism from many stakeholders for forming private bodies controlled by gaming companies to oversee the sector and for being potentially unconstitutional, and consequently, the process of forming Self-Regulatory Bodies and implementing the new rules for the online real money gaming sector has however been kept on hold by the central government.

The ministry is also mulling revamping the two-decade-old Information Technology Act, 2000 (IT Act) to expand the scope which is expected to hit internet-based sectors like real money gaming. He is also a key person for the preparation of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 which was passed this year creating a data regulatory framework for a country of more than one billion. The data protection law is awaiting implementation guidance. When the GST Council approved 28% GST earlier this year, he sought to represent the industry concerns with the Finance Ministry. If he becomes a part of the cabinet again in 2024, Chandrasekhar is expected to play an important role in shaping the central government's long-term policy for the online gaming industry.



9. Sudipta Bhattacharjee, Partner, Khaitan & Co.

Sudipta Bhattacharjee is a Partner in the Indirect Tax practice group at Khaitan & Co., one of the leading corporate law firms in India. With over 15 years of experience, Bhattacharjee specialises in Indirect Tax advisory including GST, customs, international trade laws, pre-GST indirect taxes, and State Excise laws. Bhattacharjee represents several gaming companies in their matters involving the GST showcause notices.

He has successfully advised and represented Gameskraft in its challenge of show cause notice before the Karnataka High Court. He regularly appears for the gaming companies in their tax matters and also briefs senior counsels in high-stakes matters. With GST litigation reaching the Supreme Court, he is expected to play a crucial role in litigation strategy for the gaming companies. As the matter is now before the Supreme Court, he is expected to play a key role in strategising the arguments in the scheduled final hearing in April 2024.



10. Sajjan Poovayya, Senior Advocate

Sajjan Poovayya is a designated Senior Advocate with extensive constitutional, corporate and commercial law practice in the Supreme Court of India; and in various High Courts of the country. He has officiated as the Additional Advocate General for the State of Karnataka and was one of the youngest to occupy that position. Sajjan Poovayya graduated as a gold medallist with a Bachelor's degree in Arts and an Honour's degree in Law from the National Law School of India University (NLSIU).

He was a Chevening Scholar at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), from where he obtained a Master's Degree in Law. He has been a Fellow of the Society of Advanced Legal Studies, London and admitted as a Solicitor of the Supreme Court of England & Wales.

As a senior counsel, he represents leading technology companies in relation to freedom of speech and online communication, data privacy and cyber security safeguards. His clients include leading Silicon Valley companies including Twitter and Google. As a foremost legal mind in technology law, he also represents gaming companies in their litigation. In 2024, he is expected to represent the gaming companies alongside other senior legal minds.



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11. Nirmala Sitharaman, Union Finance Minister

A senior minister in the Modi 2.0 regime, Nirmala Sitharaman is the Chairman of the GST Council. Nirmala Sitharaman is an Indian economist, politician and senior leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party and has been serving as the Minister of Finance and Minister of Corporate Affairs of the Government of India since 2019.

She is the government's face in bringing out key changes in tax and fiscal laws. The government is expected to review the new tax regime for money gaming after the completion of six months and as a chairperson of the GST Council, she is expected to be an influential personality in the real money gaming industry.

Additionally, as a senior ministry, her views will also be crucial when the central government decides on a long-term policy or legislation for regulating the sector and bringing in new laws like the Digital India Act.



12. Saumya Singh Rathore, Co-Founder, Winzo Games

Saumya Singh Rathore is the Co-founder of WinZO, a vernacular real-money entertainment platform backed by marquee investors like Kalaari Capital. This is the second venture of Saumya. In her first venture, Saumya built Zostel & ZO Rooms, a Tiger Global-backed chain of backpackers hostels.

WinZO counts Kalaari Capital and Griffin Gaming Partners among its investors. In November 2021, WinZO partnered with Kalaari Capital to launch an investment initiative Gaming Lab to encourage and support the gaming ecosystem in the country. The Gaming Lab will invest up to \$1 million in each of the investee companies across all forms of interactive apps in India.

WinZO is often embroiled in legal disputes with competitors and is a frequent litigator before the Delhi High Court, especially on intellectual property related issues. WinZo has even sued Google for only onboarding real money rummy and daily fantasy sports on Playstore, while not extending the same policy to other skill-based online games, and for showing a warning app when users try to download the WinZo app on Android devices. Controversies aside, the startup may be the next unicorn in the sector.



13. Roland Landers, CEO, All India Gaming Federation

Roland Landers is the CEO of AIGF the apex industry body for online skill gaming in India. AIGF has a robust advisory panel and a skill games charter that the members are required to adhere to self-regulate the industry.

AIGF is one of the petitioners before the Karnataka High Court and Madras High Court challenging the constitutional validity of the respective state ban laws. AIGF often impleads in litigation impacting the gaming industry and with the litigation involving tax claims and related matters now reaching the Supreme Court, AIGF is expected to play a crucial role to further the interests of the industry.

AIGF also prepared a draft charter to establish a Self-Regulatory Body (SRB) under the new gaming rules which is pending consideration from the central government. With reports that the government has shelved the SRB plans, the role of AIGF in presenting industry concerns to the government will be scrutinised by the industry.

At the helm of AIGF, Landers will be a key figure in 2024 in policy making impacting the Indian real gaming sector. He works extensively with senior leaders across governments, member companies, and multiple other stakeholders.



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14. Joyjyoti Misra, Group General Counsel, Gameskraft Technologies

As the General Counsel, Joyjyoti plays a key role in deciding the strategy for Gameskraft, the largest online real money gaming company in various litigations, public policy initiatives and compliance functions at Gameskraft. Previously led the entire legal function for Uber in the South Asia region.' He has prior experience as a Partner in leading law firm Khaitan & Co with a practice focused on private equity, funds (both onshore as well as offshore) and M&A, and represented diverse sectors including in several marquee M&A transactions.

The real money gaming company is fighting cases related to the valuation of supplies for GST payment which is expected to impact the entire sector. The former partner at Khaitan & Co is expected to play a crucial role in the company and at the same time create a lasting impact on the sector.



15. Shailendra Singh, Managing Partner, Peak XV Partners

Shailendra Singh is one of the Managing Directors in Peak XV Partners, formerly Sequoia India. Peak XV is India's leading venture capital and growth investment firm. He led Sequoia's initial investment in the now gaming unicorn Mobile Premier League (MPL). Sequoia India has recently launched two new funds, including an early-stage venture and growth fund for India worth an impressive \$2 billion at a time when funding appears to be dried across the venture capital sector.

Singh led investments in the opinion trading app Probo, eSports platform FanClash and the sub-decentralized autonomous organization (subDAO) of Yield Guild Games. He is expected to lead more investments into this sector in the coming year.

Peak XV is one of the 30 domestic and international start-up investors that wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in July 2023 to express their concern about the 28 per cent tax on the online real-money gaming sector and asking to halt the proposal. As a prominent investor, he is expected to play a key role in identifying promising startups in the sector and also in shaping the policy narrative and government outreach on behalf of investors who are active in the tech and gaming space.



16. Santiago Martin, Lottery King

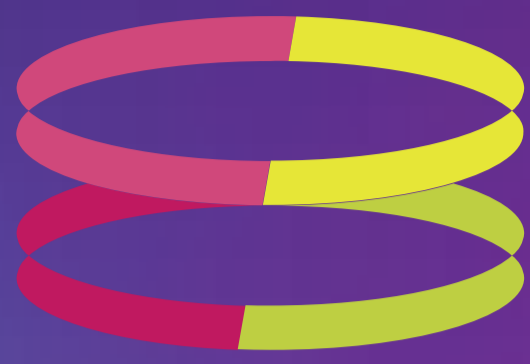
Santiago Martin, also known as 'Lottery King' Martin, is the promoter of Future Gaming and Hotel Services (P) Ltd) is a business tycoon hailing from Coimbatore who built his business empire by printing and distributing lottery tickets. Future Gaming now handles government paper lottery schemes for the northeast governments with a near-monopoly and has various cases been investigated by the Enforcement Directorate on charges of money laundering among others.,

Not directly linked to real money gaming, Martin still exerts influence in the policymaking of real money games through his All India Federation of Lottery Trade and Allied Industries (AIFLTAI). The lottery federation often writes to the GST Group of Ministers, Amit Shah and other key personalities in the government, taking an adverse position against the online gaming industry and seeking stricter regulation and higher taxation of online gaming.

He is also rumoured to fund national political parties and key regional political parties in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal and therefore will be a prominent personality to influence the real money gaming sector ahead of general elections in 2024.



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17. Tarun Kapoor, Advisor, Prime Minister of India

Tarun Kapoor is a 1987-batch retired Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer from the Himachal Pradesh cadre and currently serves as Advisor to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the Prime Minister's Office.

Kapoor, who was the ex-Petroleum Secretary in the Union Government was known as 'Modi's Man' during the Covid19 pandemic as he worked relentlessly to design and implement the free LPG cylinders-to-households scheme, a senior IAS officer who worked in the petroleum and natural gas ministry.

He also worked on another of the PM's pet projects — development of city gas distribution networks under the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) Act, 2006. He is known to be a low-profile and old-school officer whose notes and ideas never go wrong.

Kapoor has also played a pivotal role in shaping the government's policy for the real money gaming industry by advising the Inter-Ministerial Taskforce formed by the cabinet secretariat to not create any distinction between online games of skill and chance while framing rules for online real money games.

Kapoor's advice and opinions cannot be ignored in the Modi 2.0 government and if he is retained in the Prime Minister's Office once the new government is formed later this year, his views on any future legislation or policy for the online gaming industry will likely be the final word.



18. Puneet Singh, Co-Founder, Baazi Games

Puneet Singh is the co-founder and COO of Baazi Games, a mobile gaming company based in India. Puneet was previously the CEO of Baazi Networks Private Limited, a social media and online gaming company. He alongside his co-founder Navkiran Singh runs the biggest online poker website, PokerBaazi.

His company is actively looking to diversify under the brand Baazi Games, which will be a major player in the industry. Set up as a poker-focused portal in 2014, the portal diversified as a multi-gaming platform.

The company currently operates real-money gaming (RMG) platforms like the multi-card gaming app, CardBaazi and the fantasy sports app BalleBaazi. Baazi Games now has three constituent verticals — PokerBaazi, BalleBaazi and CardsBaazi. The resoluteness of Puneet Singh has played a pivotal role in the growth of the Real Money Games (RMG) sector in India having worked closely alongside industry bodies like the IMAI, AIGF, TORF & FIFS.



19. Siddharth Sharma, Senior Vice President, Head Digital Works (A23)

As strategy head for one of India's oldest and leading online rummy website A23, Sharma focuses on growth and strategic initiatives across A23 businesses, besides driving its legal and policy strategy. Sharma has been responsible for diversifying A23 beyond rummy, into fantasy sports, poker, carrom and other games, besides also starting an online sports content portal Cricket.com

A23 constantly pushes for responsible gaming with Shah Rukh Khan as their brand ambassador. Sharma, as one of the senior management personnel in the company, advocates responsible and mature behaviour by the sector, while urging all companies to take steps to curb reckless user behaviour to mitigate instances of addiction.

In a first-of-its-kind responsible gaming campaign, Khan advocates responsible gaming while playing on A23's all-new multi-gaming platform that includes rummy, fantasy sports, carrom, and pool, with more skill games to come. A23 as a key member of industry bodies E-Gaming Federation (EGF) and All India Gaming Federation (AIGF) has individually also been a petitioner in all key cases challenging state-level ban on online gaming and is a writ petitioner in the matter challenging retrospective showcause notices to online gaming companies as well.



20. Sudhir Kamath, Chief Operation Officer, Nazara Technologies

Sudhir Kamath is a veteran in the gaming industry, currently serving as the Chief Operating Officer of Nazara Technologies Limited, one of the only listed gaming companies in India, having interests not just in the real money gaming space, but also in esports, freemium and casual gaming, edtech and educational games etc.

Prior to joining Nazara in October 2022, Kamath served as the CEO and Co-Founder of online poker and real money gaming startup 9Stacks for over 5 years and hence is well-versed and connected in the online real money gaming space.

As a key managerial personnel of India's leading listed gaming company, which is part of various lobby groups and industry bodies, Kamath's views on policy, regulatory and other issues faced by gaming startups is taken seriously by all stakeholders.





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21. Sai Srinivas Kiran G, CEO & Co-Founder, of Mobile Premier League (MPL)

Sai Srinivas is the co-founder and CEO of the real money competitive mobile gaming platform MPL. MPL became the second gaming unicorn this year. With over 50+ games on its app on iOS and Android and over 70 million user base, MPL is the leader in the real money gaming space.

While Dream11 as of date is limited to fantasy sports, MPL has interests across several real money games. In recent times, MPL has taken cost-cutting measures in light of the new GST regime and funded winter at a global level.

The Bengaluru-based entity is now focused on turning cash positive. There is no doubt that Sai Srinivas's decisions will have an impact on the overall direction of the sector in 2024 and in the long term.



22. Trivikraman Thampy, CEO, Play Games24x7

Dr. Trivakraman Thampy or Vikram is an engineering alumnus of IIT Bombay and PhD in Economics from New York University, He started Games24x7 with co-founder Bhavin Pandya in 2006 with a singular focus on using the science of user behaviour, and building technology to create immersive user experiences.

His focus on tech developed the founding ethos of the company - the 'science of gaming' and by employing disruptive techs like Data Science and AI, Games24x7 is able to develop innovative techniques to understand players and turn into a few gaming start-ups that have attained unicorn status in India.

Games24x7 has been a petitioner in all cases pertaining to state-level bans by online gaming companies as well as respondent in the cases pending before the Supreme Court



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23. Pariekshit Maddishetty, Founder, Gridlogic

Pariekshit Maddishetty is the founder of Gridlogic Games Private Limited, which is one of the few companies that is into both the B2B and B2C space in the gaming industry.

One of the industry veterans who has operated both in India and internationally, Maddishetty has been operating the B2C brand 'Taj Rummy' since 2013 and the B2B turnkey solution provider 'Taj Network' which provides white label solutions for poker, rummy and other games.

Taj Network has over a dozen Indian online real money gaming websites as its partners, to whom it supplies various games. Maddishetty, who has in the past also helmed the Gaming Committee at the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) is thus a key individual in the online gaming industry who wields significant influence in the gaming community, with his thoughts and vision taken seriously by stakeholders.



24. Sanjay Malhotra, Revenue Secretary, Government of India

Sanjay Malhotra serves as the Revenue Secretary in the Department of Financial Services in the Finance Ministry, Government of India. Prior to his joining as Secretary, the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, he was Chairman and Managing Director of REC Limited, a leading infrastructure finance company of the country.

Malhotra is an Engineering Graduate in Computer Science from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur and has a Master's in Public Policy from Princeton University. With demonstrated leadership and excellence in his career of over 31 years, Shri Sanjay Malhotra has worked in multifarious sectors including finance and taxation, power, industries, information technology, etc. He is also a government nominee director in the State Bank of India.

As a top bureaucrat in the finance department, he played a crucial role in bringing in a new tax regime that became effective on 1 October 2023. He acts as a focal point from the finance ministry with the industry, often deliberating with senior industry representatives and other stakeholders.

In a post-budget interview recently, he said one cannot be expected to pay taxes more than what they earn, signaling the fact that even if the government wins the pending tax cases against money gaming companies, it would be a difficult task for the government to recover.





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