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Phone ban proposal sparks debate

Sruthi Lakshna

As the Karnataka government considers banning mobile phones and social media for students under 16, mental-health experts have raised serious concern about the impact of early screen exposure harming children, while parents question whether a complete ban can work in daily life.

The focus is now on children's well-being, as psychologists warn that unrestricted social media use can have lasting effects. Parents agree it can be harmful, but they are unsure how a ban would work when phones are essential for their children's studies and social lives.

Speaking to *The Beacon*, Swathy Krishna, a Chennai-based psychologist, said, "social media can mess with a child's brain, of any age, as the brain fully develops only by the age of 25". She explained that children are often exposed to content "beyond their age, anything from explicit to violent," which can lead to social isolation and difficulty in real-life interactions. "Social media has not been a safe space for anyone, especially children, and if they get cyber-bullied once, it messes with their head forever," she added.

Parents, however, remain cautious. Keerthanya, a mother of a 16-year-old from Chennai, said her child spends five to six hours a day on the phone and often loses sleep. While she welcomed the intent behind the proposal, she said enforcement could be difficult. "Children are so reliant on it for everything, from studying to talking to friends," she said.

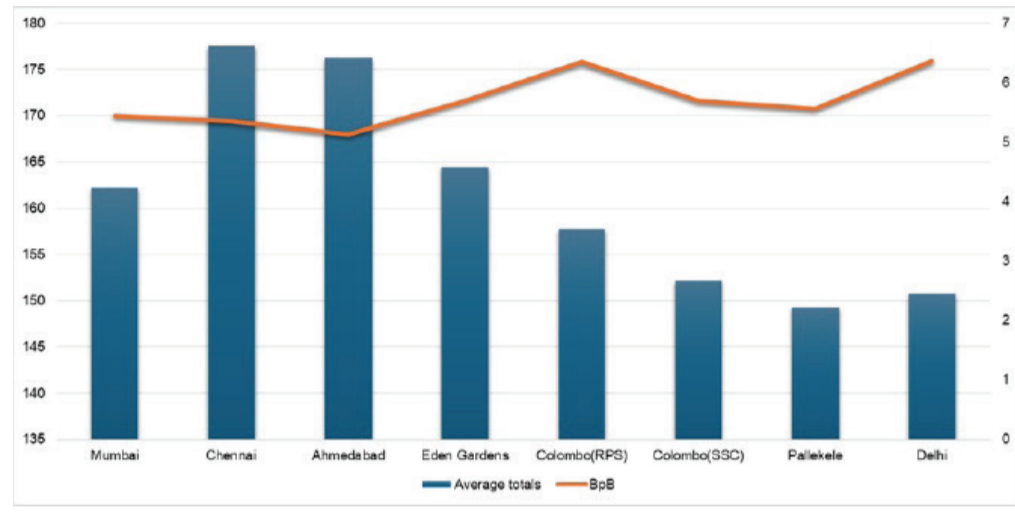
Subcontinent pitch disparity tests team adaptability

Timeus Christian Sunder

Twenty-five runs per innings is the difference between batting in Chennai and Colombo (Sinhalese Sports Club) at the 2026 T20 World Cup, with totals averaging 177.5 compared to 152.2, respectively. This gap has addressed differences between matches played in India and Sri Lanka, while also serving as a test of adaptability.

Zimbabwe mastered the slow pitches of Sri Lanka, only to be overwhelmed by India's flat pitches in their back-to-back heavy losses to West Indies and India, highlighting how important pitch conditions are to a team's success. The data shows this distinction by revealing disparities in scoring and bowling preferences across grounds.

Smaller boundary lines in India, along with nighttime dew that makes the ball wet



Venue-wise average totals and balls per boundary

espnricinfo

and slippery, result in more boundaries. Ahmedabad and Chennai sit on top with 5.1 and 5.3 balls per boundary (BpB) ratio respectively, while Colombo (R. Premadasa Stadium) proves to be the hardest ground to score boundaries, with a ratio of 6.3 balls per boundary. (Chart 1)

The data indicates a clear

preference for spin in Colombo (SSC) and Pallekele, where captains opted for 52.2 and 28.5 more overs of spin than pace, respectively. These two grounds also stand out for offering the best bowling economy to spin, with wickets coming at an average of 21.71 and 21.15, respectively.

Conversely, venues such

as Ahmedabad and Chennai show a significant tilt toward pace, with fast bowlers delivering 71.5 and 43.1 more overs than spinners, respectively. Fast bowling has been a major factor at high-scoring grounds like Ahmedabad and Kolkata, accounting for most of their wickets, with bowling averages of 26.05

and 18.22, respectively.

Despite the dew factor and high-scoring pitches in India, chasing has not been favourable. Ahmedabad, Kolkata and Colombo (RPS) are strongly favoured to the team batting first, with only one win for the chasing side at each ground, while Delhi remains the anomaly, favouring the chase.

When coming into a tournament, every team must be prepared for any condition but sometimes the fixtures may force you to adapt to just one type. Teams like South Africa, West Indies, India and New Zealand have played almost all their matches in the batting friendly pitches of India. Conversely, Australia played all four of their group matches in Sri Lanka and failed to adapt, getting knocked out. This World Cup has shown so far that the team that can adapt the fastest to its conditions can win it all.

Unsafe water raises food safety fears in Bengaluru

Tanvi Harbola

Environmentalists warn that vegetables grown on the outskirts of Bengaluru may be irrigated with sewage-contaminated lake water and sold to consumers at market prices, leaving buyers with no reliable way to know what is in their food and raising concerns about consumer safety.

The recent testing by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) found pesticide residues and lead above permissible limits in a significant share of vegetable samples from Bengaluru and surrounding districts.

Expressing his opinion on this issue, environmen-

talist Aniruddh says, "The city is poisoning itself," adding that untreated sewage and industrial chemicals flow into Bengaluru's lakes, and that contaminated water, often partially treated, is pumped to districts like Kolar and Anekal, where farmers use it for irrigation. "The secondary treatment doesn't get rid of heavy metals and other toxic chemicals," he said and continued to explain how some farmers who understand the risk associated with contaminated water cultivate crops in two separate plots, one with chemicals for the market and a cleaner patch

for their own families.

Madanna, a visually impaired street vendor who buys vegetables daily at the Dasanapura Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC), says most buyers still prioritise affordability over chemical-free organic food. "Organic farming has not reached people's minds here. Those who say they must eat only organic food are rich people in the city center, while, for us, it is mostly about affording a meal." He also explained how prices fluctuate throughout the day without any change in the quality and people end up paying different

prices for the same vegetables in different areas.

"If it is 10 rupees from 4 AM to 8 AM, it becomes 7 rupees from 8 AM to 10 AM... There is no change in quality... The same carrot that costs Rs 20 at the APMC sells for Rs 40 in the neighbourhood and Rs 60 near Richmond Circle."

On the other hand, premium chains like Namdhari's charge 10 to 15 percent above market price and claim to use fewer pesticides; however, regional manager Mohan admits pricing is decided by the procurement department, and his team only takes care of sales.

Natural colors just a seasonal branding

Zia Dewan

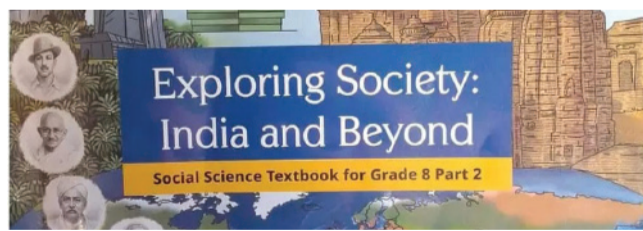
With only 3.5% of Bengalureans considered eco-literate, environmentalists question whether the shift to eco-friendly colours reflects genuine awareness of the environment or if it's merely just another seasonal branding. As Holi approaches, this season welcomes a new trend of celebrating "Eco-friendly Holi 2026", focusing on minimising environmental impact and using natural colours and dyes. However, environmental activist Sandeep Anirudhan argues that the debate and its impacts are much more closely tied to our everyday routines. He says that focusing solely on Holi takes away from the broader pattern of our environmental consciousness. "When millions of people play Holi, based on chemical dyes, it's harmful both for humans as well as for the environment," he warns that synthetic dyes can contaminate water bodies, trigger health problems and add to urban pollution. Although Bengaluru does not have a widespread culture of celebrating Holi, and even with "Eco-friendly Holi," daily lifestyle choices contribute far more consistently to pollution than a single festival, he said.

Political erasure of judicial flaws in textbooks

Timeus Christian Sunder

Teachers find themselves having to bridge the gap between a carefully filtered curriculum and the harsh realities of the world following the removal of a chapter titled "The Role of the Judiciary in our Society" from the latest National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) textbook.

One of the sections that drew attention was a subheading titled "Corruption in the Judiciary," which was one of the points of criticism. Speaking to *The Beacon*, a social science teacher who wished to remain anonymous said



The textbook in question

Deccan Chronicle

that while she understands that "optics are everything," avoiding terms like "corruption" does not resolve larger issues.

The section also included critiques of the judiciary, noting the "massive backlog" of cases attributed to the realities of complex legal procedure and the shortage of judges. "Stu-

dents are so exposed to the media at such a young age... when we teach them only ideals, they know that this is not what the reality is in our country," she said, elaborating on how teachers must connect reality and the limited syllabus to students so that they are not misled.

Music museum boosts youth careers

Kishan SG

Music experts say that being part of the youth advisory board adds value to their careers, helps music aspirants become familiar with the workings of the music industry, and provides them with exposure.

Indian Music Experience Museum, JP Nagar, has launched its annual application for its youth advisory board, which would train students in the inner workings of the music museum and its programs.

Overjoy Shimra, principal of Audio Life, a music school, says this type of program can be a stepping stone for curious students to pursue their

ambitions to become future professionals. "It can help students learn the sound of different Indian instruments, which they can get inspired from, so even if you don't have any music knowledge but are willing to do or get involved in the music industry, yeah, it definitely helps", says Shimra.

He expressed that being in the presence of various instruments can tune their ears to different sounds, making them future producers or sound engineers. "It's like knowing all the orchestral instruments", he said.