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Digital rule worry online users

Niranjana Jayan

Social media creators and students in Jammu and Kashmir act as initial responders to regional events by sharing information faster than traditional media, raising concerns about how the new digital media regulations might affect ordinary online users, said Lavanya Sharma, a student at the Model Institute of Engineering and Technology in Jammu. On Feb 12, the Jammu and Kashmir government proposed provisions in the draft of the New Media Policy to provide a framework for new media and social media platforms, along with print media. The proposed policy aims to address the growing influence of digital platforms and to establish a surveillance mechanism to curb the circulation of fake news and misinformation across the Union Territory. "In many cases, small Instagram pages and YouTube work as mini media houses," Sharma said. But she warned that the difference between journalists and regular creators is narrowing, making it too hard to separate regulated media from everyday online content. Sharma noted broadly defined terms like public order and national security could create ambiguity among young users. She added that regulation may help to control misinformation, but intense scrutiny of media content would make creators cautious about how their posts might be interpreted.

Expanded T20 World Cup levels playing field

Aryan Arun

The decision to expand the ICC Men's T20 World Cup from 16 to 20 teams from the 2024 edition has continued to the 2026 cup and has transformed the tournament from the usual international giants winning matches easily, to every team having an opportunity to qualify in exciting and high-stake games.

Match data from 2021-24 showing a rise in competitive balance of run rates, and associate nation upsets, it blurs the lines between full-member and emerging teams, with differences in number of games played, quality and quantity of cricketing infrastructure and sponsor funds. In 2022 and in the ongoing tournament, Zimbabwe got the better of Australia in the first round of the group



Zimbabwe beat Australia ICC T20 World cup

msn.com

stage, despite Australia entering the tournament clearly higher in ICC rankings in 2022 and 2026.

The 2024 edition saw the USA cricket team, ranked outside the full member nations, stunned Pakistan in a double Super Over at their home, one of the largest upsets in a T20 World Cup by ranking, a result that not only put Group A projections in

disorder but eventually pushed Pakistan out of the Super 8 race.

The inclusion of these teams has added an element of higher competitiveness, with the finishing frequency coming closer to the last over. Afghanistan beat Australia in a last-over thriller, reaching the semi-finals in 2024. Namibia and Oman drew with scores of 109 and Namibia edged

out the Super Over. South Africa and Nepal also ended in the last over, with Nepal needing eight off the final over, falling short of one run in 2024. These matches indicate a higher number of matches going down to the final over or by 10 runs or fewer as compared to any previous editions of the World Cup. The NRR (Net Run Rate) has come into play

massively, with it not being regarded much in older editions due to matches being one-sided. In Group A of the 2024 World Cup, USA's NRR of +0.127 proved enough to go past Pakistan into the Super 8's. Group B's winnings came down to the NRR as well, with Scotland's NRR of +1.255 keeping them ahead of Namibia, despite both sides finishing on equal points. Afghanistan, not only beat giants Australia to get into the semi-finals but also edged New Zealand on NRR.

Coverage from platforms such as ESPNcricinfo, Cricbuzz, Wisden and global television has also increased. The 2026 edition, set with 20 teams across 55 matches, is being distributed via ICC. tv and a global network of regional broadcasters like JioHotstar in India.

UV warning reshapes daily life in Kerala

Akhil Raj

With ultraviolet radiation levels rising across Kerala, local health authorities have begun strengthening precautionary measures at the ground level. The action follows an alert issued by the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA), which reported UV index levels ranging from 5 to 8 in several districts. The advisory has urged the public to avoid direct sunlight between 11 am and 3 pm and to take protective measures when stepping out during peak hours. Public health official



Representational Image



AI generated

Vidya Anil, speaking from Marunthamanpally ward in Kollam district, said awareness campaigns have already begun in areas where people are directly exposed to sunlight, including street vendors and construction workers. Health workers are advising residents to cover their heads, wear

light cotton clothing and limit unnecessary travel during the afternoon. The ward is also preparing to distribute hydration support, such as drinking water and ORS packets, in vulnerable pockets if needed. For Class 10 student Abhinandan AV, the warning has meant adjusting his

daily routine during board exam season. "Our special classes have been shifted to early morning so we can return home early. I wake up earlier now, but it feels safer," he said, adding that many of his classmates are following the same schedule. On construction sites, the situation remains challenging. Sajeev Kumar, who works on multi-storey buildings, said working on upper floors without any roof or shade has become exhausting. Some sites try to avoid work between 1 pm and 4 pm, but the work often extends late into the evening.

Growing dependence on OCPs worry doctors

Anaina Kasim

Oral contraceptive pills (OCP) offer short term relief from several reproductive and dermatological conditions, this leads to adverse side effects after continued use. According to a report by Deccan Herald, Bengaluru doctors report a sharp 20 per cent rise in contraceptive pill consumption among women. Besides preventing unwanted pregnancies, combination contraceptive pills are used to treat heavy bleeding, endometriosis and acne. While speaking to *The Beacon*, Dr Akshay Sanjeev, from Rajagiri Hospital, Kochi, said, "The pills regulate hormones and halt ovulation, treat conditions like endometriosis by shrinking abnormal endometrial tissues to have less menstrual pain and bleeding, as well as help clear acne by curbing oil production". However, this relief is temporary, persisting only during active use. Common side effects include heavy bleeding, weight fluctuations and blood clots. These risks are significantly higher for smokers, women over 35, and those who are overweight, he added. Due to the potential health risks, he emphasised that medical consultation is extremely important before taking any oral contraceptive pill to assess individual risk factors.

Bharathanatyam performance at MAP Bengaluru

Allen George Easo

Bharatanatyam is presented as an ancient performing art form of storytelling where the stories are conventionally based on mythology that serves to manufacture consent for a Hindu majoritarian nation-state, says Nrithya Pillai who is a dancer, singer, writer, social activist, speaker, and dance instructor before performing "The Archer in the Celestial Court" at the Museum of Arts and Photography (MAP), Bengaluru on January 15. The Archer in the Celestial Court is a Bharatanatyam performance by Pillai, organised by the Education



A still from the performance

Allen George Easo

and Resource team at MAP to mark the final day of the exhibition "In Celestial Company," featuring sculptures and paintings of celestial beings, angels, and nymphs from Hindu mythology. "The use of mythology in contemporary Bharatanatyam is a result of cultural nationalism, cultural appropriation,

and the criminalising of the dance of the Shudra caste, such as mine, and my performance is a piecing together of these forbidden dances," added Pillai. The dance brought into focus the themes of love and the poetic beauty of how Manmatha, the God of Desire, is portrayed in these love songs.

Veterans criticise pension tax move

Disha Banthia

A provision in the Union Budget 2026-27 that would tax disability pensions for retired military personnel has drawn criticism from veterans, who claim it is a regressive step. Effective from April 1, 2026, defence personnel medically discharged due to service-related disabilities will continue to receive full tax exemption on disability pensions. Whereas those who retire on superannuation, even with service-related disabilities, will have their pension taxed under standard income tax slabs. A retired Navy officer who

wishes to remain anonymous called this change unnecessary, given the small number of people who would benefit. "I am very surprised the government even took this decision," he said. Brig. PK Singh (name changed) argues that this policy may bring a noticeable reduction in monthly income, and families managing medical expenses may feel the strain more than others. Officers state that policies may change, but respect for their service should not, and that the nation standing with its soldiers is essential to guarantee veterans' welfare.

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