Supreme Court rules out blanket ban

Why in news?

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The Supreme Court said that it could not direct online search engines to block all texts pertaining to pre-natal sex determination tests as it would deprive researchers, academicians and students valuable information on the issue.

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What the SC has said?

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- The Supreme Court said that, citizens have the right to access the Internet to gain information, wisdom and knowledge and their right cannot be curtailed unless it encroaches into the boundary of illegality.
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- It observed that the fundamental right of expression includes “the right to be informed and the right to know and the feeling of protection of expansive connectivity”, the Internet offers this on the click of a button.
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- The court clarified that a general prohibition on all online content about pre-natal sex determination will curtail the fundamental right to know of a genuine information-seeker.
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- A three-judge Bench held that, if somebody intends to search for ‘medical tourism in India’, he is entitled to search as long as the content does not frustrate or defeat the restriction postulated under **Section 22 of the PCPNDT Act.**
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- The three Internet search engines — Microsoft, Google India and Yahoo! India — gave their assurances to the Supreme Court that they would neither advertise nor sponsor advertisements violative of the PNPCDT Act.
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- The trio said they had already appointed ‘in-house’ experts to spot illegal content and pull them down.
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- The centre has said nodal officers had been appointed at State levels to keep tabs on the Net for offensive material contravening Section 22 of the Act.
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- In case the nodal officers detect illegal online content, they would communicate with the search engine’s experts, which would take it off within the next 36 hours of receiving the information.
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Source: The Hindu

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