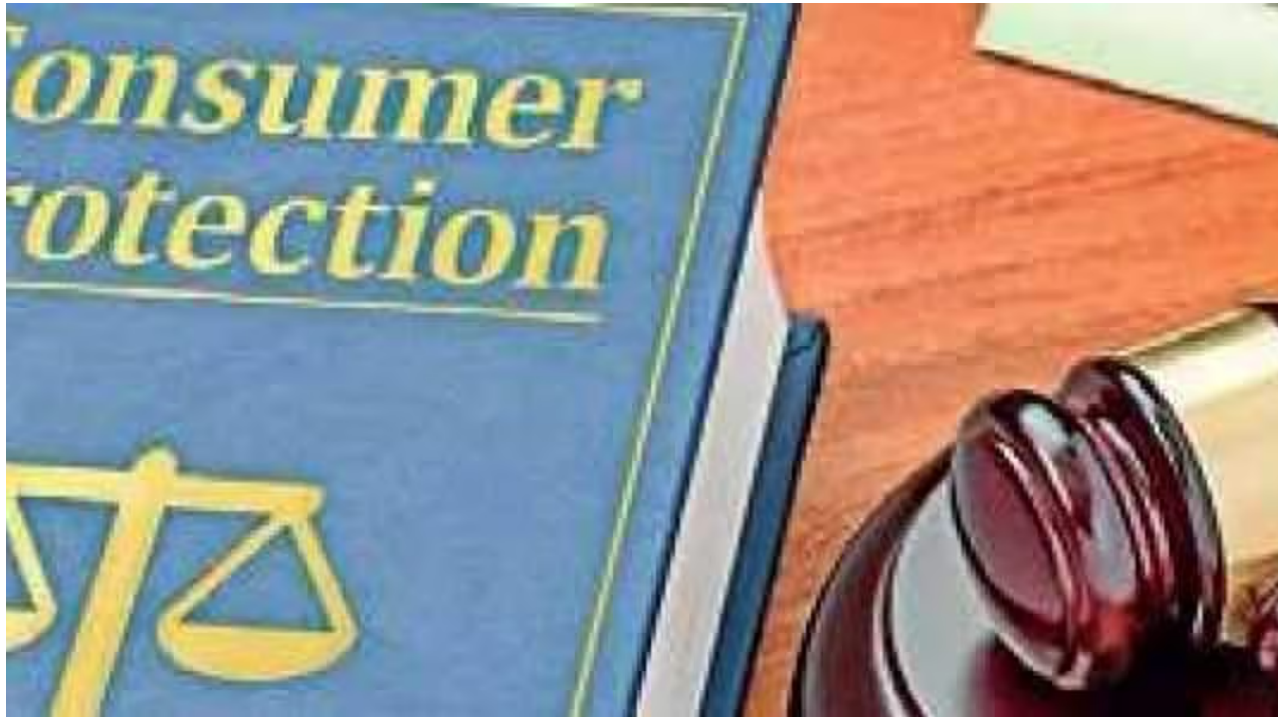


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Centre's advisories on illegal online betting warn against ads on TV channels, digital news, OTT platforms

The advisories were supplemented with evidence containing direct and surrogate advertisements of offshore betting platforms such as Fairplay, PariMatch, Betway, Wolf 777, and 1xBet.



(Image used for representational purpose)

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NEW DELHI: Taking note of surrogate advertisements of online betting on private satellite channels, digital news, and OTT platforms, the ministry of information and broadcasting (I&B) on Monday issued two separate advisories asking them to refrain from airing those commercials.

“Betting and gambling is prohibited in most parts of the country, and pose a significant financial and socio-economic risk for the consumers, especially youth and children. Accordingly, the promotion of offline or online betting/gambling through advertisements is not advised in the larger public interest,” read the advisories.

Earlier in June, the ministry advised newspapers, private TV channels, and digital news outlets not to carry advertisements on online betting platforms. Monday’s advisories have been issued after the ministry noticed surrogate advertisements promoting offshore online betting platforms in the garb of news portals.

The department of consumer affairs has also informed the ministry that online betting platforms have been advertising themselves as professional sports blogs or sports news websites and provided an indicative list of online betting outlets using news for surrogate advertising.

“It is informed that advertisements of concerned news websites, which are in fact surrogate advertisements for online offshore betting platforms, do not appear to be in strict conformity with these laws...The online advertisement intermediaries are also advised not to target such advertisements towards the Indian audience,” stated the advisory note sent to digital news channels and OTT platforms.

The advisories were supplemented with evidence containing direct and surrogate advertisements of offshore betting platforms such as Fairplay, PariMatch, Betway, Wolf 777, and 1xBet.

The ministry has found that the logos of surrogate news websites bear striking resemblance to betting platforms. The advisories relied upon the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act 2019, Cable TV Network Regulation Act 1995 and the IT Rules, 2021. “Such advertisements are not in conformity with various related laws and have strongly advised TV channels as well as digital news publishers from broadcasting such betting platforms or their surrogate news websites, reminding TV channels that violation may invite penal action,” said a statement issued by the ministry.

Neither the betting platforms nor the news websites are registered under any legal authority in India, the ministry further clarified.

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