

Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023, notified by Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

- Guidelines are notified under the **Consumer Protection Act (CPA), 2019**.
- **Dark pattern** refers to **practices adopted by online platforms that mislead people** into paying for items or services they did not intend to do originally.
- **Key provisions:**
 - ⊕ **Prohibitions** against engaging in **dark patterns**.
 - ⊕ **Applicable:** All platforms (offering goods or services in India), Advertisers, and Sellers.
 - ⊕ In case of ambiguity or dispute, the decision of the **CCPA** shall be final.
 - ◆ **CCPA** is a statutory body, established under CPA, 2019.
 - ⊕ It lists **13 dark patterns**.



➤ Key Dark patterns:

Dark patterns	Description/Example
Basket sneaking	Inclusion of additional items such as products, etc., at the time of checkout.
Confirm shaming	Use of a phrase , video, etc. to create a sense of shame etc.
Subscription trap	Making cancellation of a paid subscription impossible, hiding the cancellation option, etc.
Interface interference	Design elements to highlight certain specific information (obscure relevant information)
Bait and switch	Advertise a particular outcome based on the user's action but deceptively serving an alternate outcome.
Nagging	Annoying user by repeated interactions .
Software as a service (SaaS) billing	No notification is given to the user when free trial is converted to paid.
Rogue Malware	Using ransomware or scareware to mislead users.



Union Minister For Jal Shakti Releases Dynamic Ground Water Resource Assessment Report For Country (2023)

- The assessment was carried out jointly by the **Central Ground Water Board (CGWB)** and **States/UTs**.
 - ⊕ **CGWB** is an apex organization of the **Ministry of Jal Shakti** dealing with groundwater and related issues, formed in 1970.
- **Key highlights of the report**
 - ⊕ Annual Groundwater recharge for the entire country is **449.08 billion cubic meters (BCM)**, **11.48 BCM more than in 2022**.
 - ◆ The increase may mainly be attributed to an increase in recharge from **canal seepage**, **return flow of irrigation** water, and water bodies/tanks & water conservation structures.
 - ⊕ **Rainfall contributes to nearly 60%** of the total annual Groundwater recharge.
 - ⊕ Annual groundwater extraction is 241.34 BCM.
- **Steps taken by the government for Groundwater conservation**
 - ⊕ **National Aquifer Mapping and Management** to delineate aquifers, prepare management plans, etc.
 - ⊕ **Atal Bhujal Yojana** focuses on demand-side interventions and convergence of schemes for Groundwater management
 - ⊕ **Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Groundwater 2020** includes artificial recharge in rural and urban areas.
 - ⊕ **Jal Shakti Abhiyan** has a special emphasis on rainwater harvesting/groundwater recharge.

Reasons for extraction

Unregulated extraction: Groundwater is regarded as a "common pool resource".

Excessive Irrigation: Triggered by the Green Revolution since the 1970s.

Climate change: Disturbances in the hydrological cycle causing long spells of floods and droughts.

Poor knowledge of groundwater management systems.

- It has been released by **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO). Initiative is
 - ⊖ aligned with the **first ever Health day** organised by the Conference of Parties (COP) of UNFCCC.
- **Key Features:**
 - ⊖ **Objective:** Place health at the **heart of climate action** and **accelerate** the development of **climate-resilient, sustainable and equitable health systems**.
 - ◆ It also aims to promote ‘**one health approach**’.
 - » This approach recognizes the **interconnection** between **people, animals, plants, and their shared environment**.
 - ⊖ **Endorsed by:** It is signed by over 120 countries including US, UK, Brazil etc.
 - ◆ **India has not signed it yet.**
- **Need of Declaration:**
 - ⊖ **Rise in Pollution related morbidities** – About 9 million people die annually (Lancet report).
 - ⊖ **Exposure to extreme weather events** - 189 million people are exposed to extreme events e.g. Storms, etc.
 - ⊖ **Other:** Low income countries are highly vulnerable as they have poor infrastructure etc.
- In order to implement the declaration, **COP28 Guiding Principles for Financing Climate and Health Solutions** were also unveiled.
 - ⊖ Moreover, **Asian Development Bank** announced the launch of a new Climate and Health Initiative to support the health related commitment.

‘An eye on methane’ International Methane Emissions Observatory (IMEO) Report 2023 Released

- Report provides **decision-makers a framework** of action to **track and monitor** methane emissions to plan targeted and ambitious actions for their mitigation.
- **Key highlights:**
 - ⊖ **Global anthropogenic methane** emissions are responsible for about **30% of the Earth’s warming being experienced today**. Major
 - ⊖ **Contributors:** **Energy, agriculture, and waste sectors**.
- **Key Measures required to curb emissions:**
 - ⊖ **Mapping hotspots** to take specific actions.
 - ⊖ Promoting **Gas Mapping LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging)** to detect emission leakage from mines.
 - ⊖ **Using Methane** from **wastewater treatment** plants as a fuel.
- **Initiative taken:**
 - ⊖ **Global Methane Pledge:** Launched at COP26 (2021) to catalyze action to reduce methane emissions (India is not a signatory).
 - ⊖ **Global Methane Initiative:** International public-private partnership to support **methane-to-energy projects**. **Measures in India:** National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture, India GHG Program (**industry-led voluntary framework**), **GOBAR-Dhan** scheme, etc.
- **IMEO works under the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).**
 - ⊖ Launched at the **G20 Leaders’ Summit (2021)**.
 - ⊖ It gathers data from satellites through **Methane Alert and Response System (MARS)**, **Oil and Gas Methane Partnership 2.0 (OGMP 2.0)** etc.
 - ◆ **MARS** was launched at **CoP27 (2022)**.

About Methane (CH₄)

- ⊖ It is a **powerful greenhouse gas (12 years lifespan)**.
- ⊖ It has a **Global Warming Potential more than 80 times** greater than that of **carbon dioxide (CO₂)**.
- ⊖ It is also **primary contributor** to the formation of **ground-level ozone**.

India re-elected to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Council for two years

- India’s re-election falls under the **Category of 10 states** with “**the largest interest in international seaborne trade**”.
- IMO is responsible for the **safety and security of shipping and preventing marine and atmospheric pollution by ships**.
- **Role of IMO for environmental protection:**
 - ⊖ **MARPOL Convention** - covers pollution of the marine environment by ships from operational or accidental causes.
 - ⊖ **Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA):** It is a special area designated by the IMO for extra protection due to its importance for ecological, socioeconomic, or scientific reasons.
 - ⊖ **London Convention:** Overseen by IMO, extends ocean protection beyond ships by regulating sea waste dumping, climate change mitigation like carbon capture and storage, etc.
- **Role of IMO in Maritime safety and security :**
 - ⊖ **SOLAS Convention:** It sets standards for ship construction, equipment, and operation to ensure the safety of life at sea.
 - ⊖ **Stopping piracy and armed robbery:** globally integrated shipping information system and Djibouti code of conduct are some of the steps taken by IMO.
 - ⊖ **Checking drug smuggling:** IMO’s Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) works on matters related to the prevention and suppression of drug smuggling on ships.

of the annual UN climate summit (COP28)

- ▶ It aims to **triple the global installed renewable energy capacity** to at least 11,000GW and to
 - ⊕ double the **global energy efficiency improvement rate** to more than 4% by 2030.
 - ⊕ to **phase down unabated coal power** and an end to the financing of new coal-fired power plants.
- ▶ The goal was **mentioned in the New Delhi G20 Declaration**.
- ▶ It has the potential to avoid greenhouse gas emissions by about **7 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent**.
- ▶ **The pledge will enable**
 - ⊕ Collaborate on **resilient value chains** and technology development. Expand
 - ⊕ **financial support** for scaling renewable energy
 - ⊕ Enhance **technical support and capacity building** for developing economies
 - ⊕ Accelerate **cross-border grid interconnections**.
- ▶ All the G20 countries barring **India, China, and Russia** have signed on to the pledge. India did not sign the pledge as
 - ⊕ India as part of its **nationally determined contributions (NDCs)** has committed to install **500 GW** of electricity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030.
 - ⊕ India has mentioned that **coal is and will remain an important part of India's energy mix because:**
 - ◆ India will witness the **largest energy demand growth** over the next 30 years, which may not be met by renewables alone.

Also in News



Biotechnology Research and Innovation Council (BRIC)

Recently, the Union Minister of State for Science & Technology addressed the **first-ever meeting of the BRIC Society**.

- ▶ BRIC is an **apex autonomous Society** formed after the **rationalization of 14 autonomous institutions** of the Department of Biotechnology.
- ▶ It aims to **achieve centralized and unified governance** to maximize the impact of biotech research across the country.



WHO's Annual Malaria Report 2022

In 2022, there were an estimated 249 million malaria cases globally.

- ▶ India accounted for **66% of malaria cases** in the WHO South- East Asia Region.
- ▶ India saw a **30% decline in malaria cases and 34% decline in deaths** in 2022 as compared to 2021.
- ▶ The report cites achievements such as the rolling out of WHO-recommended malaria vaccines **RTS,S/AS01 and R21/ Matrix-M**.
- ▶ **About Malaria**
 - ⊕ It is caused by **plasmodium parasites**.
 - ⊕ It is transmitted through the **bites of female Anopheles mosquitoes**.



National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA)

- ▶ **National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)** has upheld the penalty imposed by NFRA on auditors of Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd (DHFL).
- ▶ **About NFRA:**
 - ⊕ **Genesis:** It is constituted under the **Companies Act, 2013**.
 - ⊕ **Objective:** To improve quality of all corporate financial reporting in India.
 - ◆ It oversees compliance with **Accounting and Auditing Standards** by companies that can be described as **Public Interest Entities (PIEs)**.
 - ◆ This group includes all listed companies, and large unlisted companies.
 - ⊕ **Ministry:** Ministry of Corporate Affairs



AUKUS

- ▶ **AUKUS (Australia, United Kingdom, and United States)** group has signed agreement to jointly operate **Deep Space Advanced Radar Capability (DARC)**.
- ▶ DARC will enhance collective space domain awareness.
- ▶ **About AUKUS:**
 - ⊕ It is a **trilateral security partnership**, launched in 2021.
 - ⊕ It is intended to strengthen the ability of each government to support **security and defense interests** (such as providing nuclear submarine to Australia).
 - ⊕ It will promote deeper **information sharing and technology sharing**; and foster deeper integration etc.



Crime in India 2022 Report

- Report is released by **National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)**.
 - ⊕ NCRB (constituted in 1986), functions under Ministry of Home Affairs.
- **Key highlights:**
 - ⊕ Crime rate **registered per lakh population** has declined from 445.9 in 2021 to 422.2 in 2022.
 - ⊕ Majority of cases under **crime against women** were registered under 'cruelty by Husband or relatives' (31.4%).
 - ⊕ The rate of major crimes (**in comparison to 2021**) has increased **such as**
 - ◆ **Economic offences** by 11.1%.
 - ◆ **Cybercrimes** by 24.4%
 - ◆ **Human Trafficking** cases by 2.8%.
 - ◆ Crimes against **Scheduled Caste (SC's)** by 13.1%.



WHO Global Clinical Trials Forum

- First **WHO Global Clinical Trials Forum** was held.
 - ⊕ It endorsed a global vision for **sustainable clinical research infrastructure**.
- **Objectives of the forum:**
 - ⊕ **Develop** a joint vision on strengthening **clinical research capabilities**.
 - ⊕ **Provide** an update on **clinical research capabilities**.
- **Priority actions for strengthening the clinical trials ecosystem:**
 - ⊕ Improving **coordination and streamlining of regulatory and ethics review and approval processes**.
 - ⊕ Addressing barriers to **clinical trials in underrepresented populations** such as children and pregnant women.
 - ⊕ Enabling clinical trials with **digital and information technologies**, etc.



Climate Club

- It is launched at **COP28** of UNFCCC.
- It is an open, inclusive **high-level forum for cooperation on climate action**, particularly **decarbonisation** of industry.
 - ⊕ It will support the implementation of **Paris Agreement (2015) goals**.
- It was **first proposed by Germany** during a G7 summit meeting (2022).
 - ⊕ G7 is an informal grouping of advanced economies.
 - ⊕ It includes **United States, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and United Kingdom**.
- **Membership: 36 countries.** (India is not a member)
- **Interim Secretariat: Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and International Energy Agency (IEA).**



Solar Wind Ion Spectrometer (SWIS)

- SWIS the second instrument in the **Aditya Solar Wind Particle Experiment (ASPEX)** payload is operational.
 - ⊕ SWIS measures the **Ions in the energy range** of 100 eV to 20keV
- ASPEX's primary objective is **to understand the solar and interplanetary processes** in the acceleration and energization of solar wind particles.
- ASPEX measures **low as well as high energy particles** of solar wind.
- **About Aditya L1:** it is the first Indian space-based observatory to study the Sun.



Places in news



Nepal (Capital: Kathmandu)

- Recently, Nepal has become the **first South Asian nation to formally register same-sex marriage**.
- **Political Features**
 - ⊕ Located along the **southern slopes of the Himalayan mountain ranges**.
 - ⊕ It is a **landlocked country** located between **India to the east, south, and west** and the **Tibet Autonomous Region of China to the north**.
- **Geographical Features**
 - ⊕ The country can be divided **into five major physiographic regions:** the **Terai, Churia hills or Siwaliks, middle hills or mid-mountains, high mountains, and high Himalayas**, stretching in parallel belts in succession from south to north'.
 - ⊕ **Major rivers - Kosi, Nārāyani (Gandak), Karnāli, etc.**
 - ⊕ **Highest Point: Mount Everest.**

