



8 September, 2023

Dark Patterns

Context: A Natraja Statue is placed in front of the Bharat Mandapam where the G20 meeting is to take place.

- The Government of India's Department of Consumer Affairs is seeking public feedback on the Draft Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns.
- A stakeholders' consultation on "Dark Patterns" was held on June 13, 2023, where it was unanimously agreed that Dark Patterns are a concern that needs proactive addressing.
- The government, in a letter to e-commerce companies and industry associations, has urged them to avoid incorporating deceptive design patterns known as dark patterns in their online interfaces.
- A Task Force was established, consisting of representatives from various sectors, including Google, Flipkart, Amazon, Facebook, and more, which held multiple meetings to provide input for the draft policy.
- The current Draft Guidelines for dark pattern prevention and regulation are based on the Task Force's recommendations and will be issued under the Consumer Protection Act 2019.

What are Dark Patterns?

- Dark patterns encompass deceptive design practices in UI/UX interactions on any platform.
- They are designed with the intent to mislead or trick users into taking actions they did not initially intend or desire.
- Dark patterns achieve this by subverting or impairing consumer autonomy, decision-making, or choice.
- These practices may lead to actions that resemble misleading advertisements, unfair trade practices, or violations of consumer rights.
- Under the Guidelines, following Dark Patterns have been specified:
 - **False Urgency:** Misleading users with a false sense of urgency to make immediate purchases or take actions.
 - **Basket Sneaking:** Adding extra items at checkout without user consent, increasing the total payable amount.
 - **Confirm Shaming:** Using fear, shame, ridicule, or guilt to push users into buying products or continuing subscriptions.
 - **Forced Action:** Compelling users to take unrelated actions or buy additional goods or services to access their intended product/service.
 - **Subscription Trap:** Making it difficult or complex to cancel paid subscriptions.
 - **Interface Interference:** Manipulating UI elements to misdirect users by highlighting certain information while obscuring relevant details.
 - **Bait and Switch:** Deceptively advertising one outcome but delivering another based on user actions.
 - **Drip Pricing:** Hiding or revealing price elements discreetly during the user experience.
 - **Disguised Advertisement:** Presenting ads as user-generated content, news articles, or false information.
 - **Nagging:** Overloading users with unrelated requests, information, or interruptions during transactions.

Self-Respect Marriages

Context: The Supreme Court stated that 'self-respect' marriages (suyamariyathai) under Section 7(A) of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, do not need public ceremonies or declarations.

What are 'self-respect' marriages?

- In 1968, the Hindu Marriage (Tamil Nadu Amendment) Act, 1967, was enacted, introducing Section 7-A into the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955.
- Section 7-A legalized self-respect and secular marriages among Hindus who meet the minimum marriage age requirements, mandating their registration.
- These marriages typically occur without priests or traditional wedding rituals like the holy fire or mangalsutra and are often witnessed by family and friends.
- The primary purpose of these marriages is to eliminate caste practices and promote equality.
- Originating in the 1920s, self-respect marriages are linked to the self-respect movement led by Tamil social reformer Periyar. Their aim is to encourage inter-caste marriages based on respect and dignity.
- These marriages challenge patriarchal norms and notions of ownership, emphasizing equality and companionship.
- Despite their significance, self-respect marriages are limited in scope, being applicable only within Hindu ceremonies under the Hindu Marriage Act and are legally recognized solely in the state of Tamil Nadu.

Supreme Court's Verdict

- The Supreme Court ruled that self-respect marriages do not require public solemnization or declaration.

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- It overruled the Madras High Court's ruling in *S. Balakrishnan Pandiyan* and cited its 2001 judgment in *S. Nagalingam v. Sivagami*, which upheld Section 7-A of the Hindu Marriage Act (Tamil Nadu State Amendment).
- The Court highlighted that couples may avoid public declarations due to parental pressure, and imposing such a requirement could jeopardize their safety and bodily integrity.
- The High Court's observations were deemed to violate Article 21 (the right to life) of the Constitution, as they hindered the free will of adult individuals.
- The Bench clarified that advocates should not solemnize such marriages in their official capacity but can do so as witnesses in their personal capacity.
- The Court allowed a habeas corpus in such cases.

Self-Respect Movement

- The Self-Respect Movement, initiated by E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker in Tamil Nadu in 1925, aimed to dismantle the existing Hindu social order.
- It promoted the ideals of breaking Brahminical dominance, advocating equal rights for marginalized communities and women, and revitalizing Dravidian languages.
- **Key Objectives:**
 - Eliminating social hierarchies where one class claims superiority over others.
 - Ensuring equal opportunities for all, regardless of their communities, and equal legal status for women.
 - Eradicating untouchability and fostering unity based on brotherhood and sisterhood.
 - Promoting natural friendships and fellowship among all.
 - Establishing orphanages, homes for widows, and educational institutions.
 - Discouraging the construction of new temples, mutts, and Vedic schools, dropping caste titles, and utilizing common funds for education and employment opportunities for the unemployed.

Heat Index

Context: Iran saw a blistering heat index of 70°C in its coastal area, a level where survival is nearly impossible.

- Iran has experienced extreme heat multiple times this year.
- In July, Colin McCarthy, a U.S.-based weather observer, reported a heat index of 66.7°C at the Persian Gulf Airport.

What is Heat Index?

- The heat index, or apparent temperature, gauges how the temperature is perceived by humans. It takes into account air temperature and is significantly influenced by relative humidity.
- **Calculation of Heat Index:**
 - Dr. Robert Steadman, a professor at Colorado State University, developed a complex formula to calculate the heat index in 1979. He considered factors like air temperature, relative humidity, and dew point in his calculations.
 - Dr. Steadman's research involved a "typical adult human" with specific height and weight measurements.
 - **Dew point**, the temperature at which air turns into liquid, is a crucial factor in heat index calculations, signifying when air can no longer hold moisture, leading to water droplet formation.
 - Dr. Steadman used a dew point of 14°C in his calculations.
 - Some countries, like Canada, have their own heat index measurements. Canada uses the **Humidex system**.
 - The U.S. National Weather Service (NWS) employs a specific chart to determine the heat index.
 - In 2024, India plans to launch its own heat index to assess heat's impact on its population and issue impact-based heat wave alerts for specific areas.

Importance of Heat Index Measurement

- Hot air can hold more moisture than cold air, increasing the apparent temperature or heat index as temperatures rise.
- High humidity during heat waves results in a higher heat index because humid air feels hotter to humans.
- High humidity can lead to heat stress, with symptoms including increased heart rate and heat-related issues, potentially fatal if not addressed.
- When humidity is high, it's harder for the body to lose heat through sweating and evaporation, making the heat indexes a more useful measure than just the air temperature.
- For example, a temperature of 31°C (88°F) with 40% humidity requires caution, while at 95% humidity; it can lead to heat cramps, exhaustion, or even heatstroke.
- A heat index of 67°C or higher is extremely dangerous for people and animals with prolonged exposure.
- India plans to launch its own heat index in 2024 to assess heat's impact and issue heat wave alerts.

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- Climate change is expected to bring more extreme heat conditions, necessitating early warnings, work schedule adjustments, and sustainable cooling solutions.

NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

Idukki Dam



Location:

- Idukki Dam is a double curvature arch dam in Idukki, Kerala, across the Periyar River.
- It's one of Asia's tallest arch dams at 168.91 meters.

Ownership and Purpose:

- Owned by Kerala State Electricity Board, it powers a 780 MW hydroelectric station in Moolamattom since 1975.

Dam Type: It's a concrete, double curvature parabolic, thin arc dam.

Associated Dams: Cheruthoni and Kulamavu dams

Historical Background:

- Proposed in 1919, initiated after tribal leader's suggestion in 1922.
- Formal project planning began in the 1960s.

Construction: Began in 1969 with Canadian support, completed in 1976.

About the Periyar River:

- The Periyar River is the longest and perennial river in the state of Kerala, located in the southern part of India.
- It originates from the Sivagiri Hills of the Western Ghats, a mountain range in South India and drains into the Arabian Sea.

Major Tributaries: Muthirapuzha, Mullayar, Cheruthoni, Perinjankutti and Edamala rivers.

Bhitarkanika National Park



Location: Bhitarkanika National Park is located in northeast Kendrapara district, Odisha, covering 145 km² and surrounded by Bhitarkanika National Park (672 km²).

Ramsar Site:

- Declared a national park in 1998.
- Ramsar site status attained in 2002, the second in Odisha after Chilika Lake.

River Influence: Inundated by Brahmani, Baitarani, Dhamra, and Pathsala rivers.

Mangrove Ecosystem:

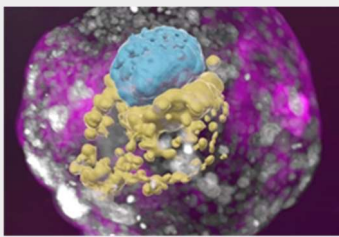
- Houses India's second-largest mangrove ecosystem.
- Mangroves adapt to tidal fluctuations, supporting rich biodiversity.

Diverse Fauna: Home to saltwater crocodiles, Indian pythons, black ibises, wild boars, rhesus monkeys, etc.

Avifauna Abundance:

- It hosts 320 bird species, including eight kingfisher varieties.
- It attracts winter visitors and nesting birds during the monsoon season.

Human-Like Embryo Model



Embryo Model Development:

- Scientists at Weizmann Institute have created an embryo model resembling a 14-day-old human embryo.
- This model uses stem cells without sperm, eggs or a womb.

Purpose of Embryo Models: Embryo models offer an ethical way to study early human life.

Mimicking Natural Development:

- Stem cells replace sperm and eggs, reprogrammed into essential embryo cell types.
- Four cell types are developed: epiblast, trophoblast, hypoblast and extraembryonic mesoderm.

Spontaneous Assembly:

- About 1% of cell mixture assembles into a human embryo-like structure without external intervention.

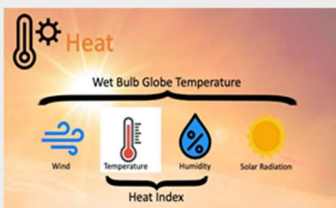
Ethical Considerations:

- Research involving embryos is legally complex.
- The model cannot achieve pregnancy and raises questions about regulation.

Applications:

Helps understand cell emergence, organ development and may improve IVF success.

Heat Index



Iran recently faced a scorching heatwave with a 70°C heat index on the coast, prompting public holidays on August 2 and 3.


About Heat Index:

- The heat index also known as the apparent temperature that reflects how the weather feels to humans, considering air temperature and relative humidity.
- Dr. Robert Steadman devised a formula in 1979, factoring in air temperature, humidity and dew point to compute the heat index.
- High humidity during heatwaves can cause heat stress, elevating heart rate and leading to heat exhaustion or even fatality if not addressed.
- Sweating helps cool the body, but high humidity hinders sweat evaporation, making it harder to dissipate heat.
- The heat index is vital as it combines temperature and humidity, offering a more accurate measure of heat's effect on humans.
- Extremely high heat index values, like 67°C, pose severe risks. Climate change may lead to more extreme heat.

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	<p>Colour Codes for Experimental Heat Index:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Green: Experimental Heat Index below 35°C ➤ Yellow: Experimental Heat Index in the range of 36-45°C ➤ Orange: Experimental Heat Index in the range of 46-55°C ➤ Red: Experimental Heat Index exceeding 55°C
<p>Poila Baisakh</p> 	<p>What is Poila Baisakh?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Poila Baisakh, also known as Pohela Boishakh, is the first day of the Bengali calendar. ➤ It marks the beginning of the new year for Bengali Hindus and is celebrated as a festive occasion in the Indian state of West Bengal and the Bengali-speaking regions of Bangladesh. <p>State Anthem: The resolution also designates Rabindranath Tagore's song "Banglar Mati Banglar Jol" as the official state anthem.</p> <p>Chief Minister's Assertion: Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee asserted that Poila Baisakh would be observed as the statehood day, irrespective of the Governor's approval.</p> <p>Historical Context: The Assembly had previously passed a resolution in 2018 to rename the state as "Bangla" instead of West Bengal, emphasizing the desire for a distinct identity.</p>
<p>Dementia</p> 	<p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Dementia is a syndrome characterized by cognitive decline and impairment in daily life, including memory loss, problem-solving abilities, language skills and cognitive functions. ➤ Dementia is becoming increasingly common in India, with an estimated 9 lakh (900,000) individuals aged 60 or older currently living with this condition. ➤ The prevalence of dementia is projected to rise significantly, reaching 1.7 crore (17 million) cases by 2036. ➤ Surprisingly, states like Jammu and Kashmir, Odisha and West Bengal have reported higher rates of dementia, contradicting earlier expectations that regions with a higher aging population would have a higher prevalence rate. ➤ The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes dementia as a global public health priority. ➤ It has launched a Global Action Plan to address this issue from 2017 to 2025.
<p>Place in News</p> <p>Nairobi</p>	<p>Recently, the Africa Climate Summit 2023, held in Nairobi, has concluded with the issuance of the 'Nairobi Declaration.</p> <p>Location: Nairobi is the capital and largest city of Kenya, situated in the south-central part of the country.</p> <p>Name Origin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Nairobi is Kenya's capital, named from Maasai "Enkare Nairobi," meaning 'place of cool waters' due to the Nairobi River. Founded in 1899 as a rail depot. <p>Nickname: Nairobi is commonly referred to as "The Green City in the Sun."</p> <p>Foundation and Growth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Founded in 1899 as a rail depot on the Uganda - Kenya Railway during British East Africa's colonial period. ➤ Became the capital of Kenya in 1907, replacing Mombasa. ➤ Officially became the capital of the Republic of Kenya after gaining independence in 1963. <p>Historical Significance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Replaced Mombasa as Kenya's capital in 1907, later became the capital of independent Kenya in 1963. 

POINTS TO PONDER

- ❖ Which queen was the monarch of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland during an era marked by industrial, political, scientific, and military change? - Queen Victoria
- ❖ Which is the highest peak in Sudan? - Deriba Caldera (Jabel Marra Mountain)
- ❖ Which organization has recently launched the Marine Sand Watch data platform? - GRID-Geneva
- ❖ What technology is used for communication between worker bees in the context of Honeybee? - Waggle dance
- ❖ Which two countries are leading the OSOWOG initiative? - India and UK

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