

“BHARAT: THE MOTHER OF DEMOCRACY” PORTAL

On the eve of the G20 leadership summit, the Ministry of Culture launched a portal of the mega exhibition—‘Bharat: The Mother of Democracy’.



About “Bharat: The Mother of Democracy” Portal:

- The portal showcases the content on the history of democracy in India, showcasing 7,000 years of democratic ethos starting from the Sindhu-Saraswati civilisation to 2019.
- It is available in 16 languages, including German, French, Spanish, Arabic, Portuguese, Italian, Turkish, and Russian besides English and Hindi.
- The portal is divided into five sections and 22 sub-sections starting from Sindhu-Saraswati Civilisation (6000-2000BCE), Mahajanapada and Gantantra (7-8 BCE), Vijaynagar Empire (14-16 century), and Mughal emperor Akbar reign (1556-1605) to Constitution of India (1947) and Elections in Modern India (1952 onwards).
- The website-- www.motherofdemocracyg20.com-- is curated by the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA).

BHARAT DRONE SHAKTI 2023

The Indian Air Force (IAF) is teaming up with the Drone Federation of India to co-host ‘Bharat Drone Shakti 2023’.



About Bharat Drone Shakti 2023:

- The event will take place at the IAF’s airbase in Hindan (Ghaziabad) and feature live aerial demonstrations by the Indian drone industry.
- These demonstrations will encompass a diverse range of drone applications, including survey drones, agriculture drones, fire-fighting drones, tactical surveillance drones, heavy-duty logistics drones, loitering munition systems, drone swarms, and anti-drone solutions.

- The event will also witness the active participation of more than 75 drone start-ups and corporate entities.
 - The event promises to showcase the capabilities of Indian drones and provide a platform for networking, knowledge exchange, and collaboration among industry leaders, innovators, and enthusiasts.
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NAVAL EXERCISE VARUNA

Recently, Phase II of the Varuna naval exercise between Indian and French Navy was conducted in the Arabian Sea.



About NAVAL EXERCISE VARUNA:

- It is the bilateral Naval Exercise between India and France initiated in 1993.
 - The exercise witnessed participation of guided missile frigates, tanker, Maritime Patrol Aircraft and integral helicopters from the two sides.
 - Units of both navies endeavoured to enhance and hone their war fighting skills, improve interoperability and demonstrate their ability to promote, peace, security and stability in the region.
 - The exercise also facilitates operational level interaction between the two Navies to foster mutual cooperation for good order at sea, underscoring the shared commitment to ensuring security, safety and freedom of the global maritime commons.
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BOTANICAL SURVEY OF INDIA FOR BAMBOO (SCHIZOSTACHYUM ANDAMANICUM)



Recently, the patent office of Government of India has granted a patent to Botanical Survey of India for bamboo (Schizostachyum andamanicum) based reusable straw.

About Schizostachyum andamanicum:

- It is only found in some **forested areas of Andamans**.
- It grows primarily in the **wet tropical biome**.
- This species of bamboo is characterized by a **thin large hollow erect culm** (stem) with long internodes and has the potential to develop into a straw.
- It has small, white flowers that are arranged in clusters. The seeds are small and black, and the seedlings have thin, light green leaves.

Key Facts about Botanical Survey of India

- It is the apex taxonomic research organization of India.
- It works under the **Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change**, Government of India.
- It was established in 1890 **under the direction of Sir George King**.
- The mandate of the organization has been broadened to biosystematics research, floristic studies, documentation, databasing of the National Botanical collection, digitization of herbarium specimens etc.
- **Headquarters:** Kolkata

G20 SUMMIT & THE LIKELY NEW DELHI DECLARATION

Why in News?

- India, as part of its G20 presidency, is working to evolve a consensus on a range of contentious issues even if that means stepping back on many of its stated position.



About G20:

- The G20 is an intergovernmental forum comprising 19 countries and the European Union, established in 1999.
- **Objective:** To address major issues related to the global economy, such as international financial stability, climate change mitigation, and sustainable development.
- Its members account for **more than 80% of world's GDP, 75% of global trade and 60% of the population of the planet**.

Historical Background of G20:

- The Group owes its origin to the **Financial Crisis in 1997-98** of the **Asian Tigers**(Countries of East and Southeast Asia), which caused its establishment in
- It worked first as a forum for the Central Bank Governors and Finance Ministers of the major industrialised and developing economies to discuss global economic and financial stability.
- **Elevation to Leader’s Level:**
 - After the **2008 global financial crisis**, it was upgraded to the level of **Heads of State** or **Government** when it became clear that crisis coordination would be possible only at the highest political level.
- In 2009, it was declared as the “premier forum for international economic cooperation”.
- The G20 Leaders have met on a regular basis since then, and the G20 has emerged as the leading platform for global economic cooperation.

Working of G20:

- A yearly Summit is held with the participation of the respective Heads of State and Government.
- The **Finance Track** comprises all meetings with G20 finance ministers and central bank governors and their deputies.
- The **Sherpa Track** focuses on broader issues such as political engagement, anti-corruption, development, energy, etc.
 - Each G20 country is represented by its Sherpa who plans, guides, implements, etc. on behalf of the leader of their respective country.
 - Currently, India’s Sherpa for G20 is Shri Amitabh Kant.
- The **presidency of the G20 rotates every year among members**, and the country holding the presidency, together with the previous and next presidency-holder, forms the ‘**Troika**’ to ensure continuity of the G20 agenda.

DARK PATTERNS - GOVT RELEASES GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- The Department of Consumer Affairs has sought public comments on Draft Guidelines for **Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns**.

What are Dark Patterns?

- Dark patterns refer to **deceptive design techniques** used in user interfaces to manipulate or deceive users into taking certain actions or making specific choices online.
- Such patterns are unethical user interface designs that deliberately make Internet experience harder or even exploit the users.
- These patterns exploit cognitive biases and behavioural tendencies to trick or mislead users, often for the benefit of the platform or business implementing them.
- These tricks can include creating a false sense of urgency, making people feel bad for not doing something, forcing them to take certain actions, trapping them into subscriptions, or constantly bothering them.

How do companies use dark patterns?

- Social media companies and Big Tech firms such as Apple, Amazon, Skype, Facebook, LinkedIn, Microsoft, and Google use dark or deceptive patterns to downgrade the user experience to their advantage.
- **Amazon**
 - It came under fire in the EU for its confusing, multi-step cancellation process for the Amazon Prime subscription.
- **Google-owned YouTube**
 - It nudges users to sign up for YouTube Premium with pop-ups, obscuring the final seconds of a video with thumbnails of other videos.
 - This is being viewed as a way of disrupting what should have been an otherwise smooth user experience.
- **LinkedIn**
 - LinkedIn users often receive unsolicited, sponsored messages from influencers.
 - Disabling this option is a difficult process with multiple steps that requires users to be familiar with the platform controls.

What do users stand to lose because of dark patterns?

- **Lack of Transparency:**
 - Dark patterns can obscure important information, making it difficult for users to fully understand the implications of their actions.
 - This can lead to uninformed decision-making and potential financial or privacy risks.
- **Reduced Autonomy:**
 - It manipulates user behaviour, limiting their freedom of choice.
 - Users may feel coerced or pressured into making decisions they wouldn't have otherwise made, leading to buyer's remorse or dissatisfaction.
- **Privacy Concerns:**
 - Some dark patterns may manipulate users into sharing more personal data than they intended or agreeing to privacy settings that compromise their confidentiality.
 - This can have implications for data security and expose users to potential privacy breaches.
- **Negative User Experience:**
 - Dark patterns often create frustrating and confusing experiences for users.
 - They may feel deceived or manipulated, leading to a loss of trust in the platform or brand and a diminished overall user experience.

News Summary: Dark patterns - Govt releases guidelines for public consultation

- The Union government has released draft guidelines to curb “dark patterns” used by online platforms.

Key highlights of the draft guidelines

- **Objective**
 - The objective is to clearly identify and define tactics as dark patterns so that the Ministry of Consumer Affairs can act against platforms indulging in this under **Section 18 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019**.
- **Defines dark patterns**
 - The document defines dark patterns as:

- any practices or deceptive design patterns using UI/UX (user interface/user experience) interactions on any platform;
- designed to mislead or trick users to do something they originally did not intend or want to do;
- by subverting or impairing the consumer autonomy, decision making or choice;

SPOTTING DARK PATTERNS	
<p>■ FALSE URGENCY Falsely implying a sense of urgency to mislead a user into making an immediate purchase or taking an immediate action</p> <p>■ BASKET SNEAKING Inclusion of additional items at the time of checkout without consent</p> <p>■ CONFIRM SHAMING Creating fear, shame or guilt to nudge the user to purchase a product</p> <p>■ FORCED ACTION Forcing a user into taking an action that would require them to buy additional good(s) or subscribe or sign up for an unrelated service, in order to get the product originally intended</p> <p>■ SUBSCRIPTION TRAP Making cancellation of a paid subscription impossible or complex and hiding the cancellation option, among others</p>	<p>■ INTERFACE INTERFERENCE Manipulating user interface in ways that highlights certain specific information and obscures others. A common example is designing a light-coloured option for selecting 'no' in response to a pop-up</p> <p>■ BAIT AND SWITCH Advertising a particular outcome based on user action but serving an alternate outcome</p> <p>■ DRIP PRICING Elements of prices are not revealed upfront or are revealed surreptitiously</p> <p>■ DISGUISED ADS Masking advertisements as other types of content such as user generated content or news articles.</p> <p>■ NAGGING Buyers facing overload of unrelated requests, information, options or interruptions</p>

- amounting to misleading advertisement or unfair trade practice or violation of consumer rights.
- For instance, false urgency is a dark pattern under which the online seller makes false claims of limited stock (“hurry, only two items left!”).
- The draft guidelines propose prohibitions against engaging in dark patterns.
- **Applicability**
- The draft guidelines, once notified, shall apply to all platforms systematically offering goods or services in India, advertisers and sellers.

- **Specifies 10 types of dark patterns**
- The document specifies 10 types of dark patterns:

MODI-BIDEN MEET

Why in news?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the US President Joe Biden held a bilateral meeting on the eve of the G20 meeting.
- The two leaders conversed on a range of issues, including:
 - India’s G20 Presidency and their commitment to G20 as a forum,
 - Chandrayaan-3’s historic landing at the south polar region of the Moon,
 - importance of the Quad group of nations to ensure a free, open, inclusive, and resilient Indo-Pacific.
- The US president also reaffirmed his support for a reformed UN Security Council with India as a permanent member during the talks.

Key outcome of Modi-Biden meet

- **Joint statement released**

- The joint statement hailed ties spanning seas to stars. Their 29-paragraph joint statement focused exclusively on the bilateral agenda.
- It made no mention of regional and global issues, counter-terrorism or situation in the neighbourhood including Afghanistan, Pakistan and Myanmar.

- **Critical defence pacts and the procurement**

- Both sides discussed:
 - the recent pact between GE Aerospace and Hindustan Aeronautical Limited (HAL) to manufacture GE F-414 jet engines in India and
 - the procurement of **31 General Atomics MQ-9B remotely piloted aircraft**.
- The F414 engines will power the IAF's Light Combat Aircraft Mk2 jets.
- Only a handful of countries such as the US, Russia, the UK, and France have been able to master these specialised technologies needed to manufacture an engine that can power a combat aircraft.

- **Commitment to deepen and diversify the India-U.S. Major Defence Partnership**

- Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to deepen and diversify the India-U.S. Major Defence Partnership through expanded cooperation in new and emerging domains such as space and AI, and accelerated defence industrial collaboration.

- **India-U.S. Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X)**

- Both the leaders commended the INDUS-X team for establishing a robust collaboration agenda to harness the innovative work of the U.S. and Indian defence sectors to address shared security challenges.
 - The initiative aims to explore possibilities for co-producing jet engines, long-range artillery, and infantry vehicles.
- INDUS-X had convened the inaugural Academia Start-up Partnership at IIT Kanpur.
- It initiated the **Joint Accelerator Program** for Indian Startups in August 2023 at Hyderabad.

- **Space cooperation**



CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK



- Space cooperation had formed a very important part of the joint statement during PM Modi's state visit to the US in June this year.
 - At that time, the two countries had announced that:
 - India would join the **US-led Artemis Accords** for planetary exploration, and
 - that the space agencies of the two countries, ISRO and NASA, would mount a **joint mission to the International Space Station in 2024.**
 - **India-US Cancer Dialogue**
 - India-US Cancer Dialogue will be launched in November 2023 and the US-India health dialogue in October 2023 in Washington DC.
 - **On the nuclear side**
 - Both sides welcomed intensified consultations to expand opportunities for facilitating India-US collaboration in nuclear energy, including in development of next generation small modular reactor technologies.
 - The US also reaffirmed its support for India's membership in Nuclear Suppliers Group, and said it would continue to talk to others to achieve this goal.
 - **Multi-billion-dollar investment platform**
 - In June, both sides had envisaged a multi-billion-dollar investment platform to provide catalytic capital for greenfield renewable energy projects.
 - This time, they put their money on it as each side agreed to provide up to \$500 million towards an investment fund.
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