

NEWS TODAY

Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Greenwashing and Misleading Environmental Claims, 2024 issued by CCPA

Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) issued the Guidelines under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 which seek to foster truthful practices where environmental claims are both truthful and meaningful.

➤ Guidelines are drafted in the wake of the rapid increase of deceptive advertisement of 'green' products which not only misleads well-intentioned consumers but also diverts attention from broader environmental efforts.

Key Highlights of the Guidelines

- Defines **Greenwashing** as any deceptive or misleading practice, which includes concealing, omitting, or hiding relevant information, by exaggerating, making vague, false, or unsubstantiated environmental claims.
 - ⊕ It also includes use of symbols, or imagery, placing emphasis on positive environmental aspects while downplaying or concealing harmful attributes.
- **Applicability:** Guidelines shall apply on all environmental claims.
- **Transparency Requirements:** Prohibits use generic terms such as "eco-friendly," "green," and "sustainable" without adequate, accurate, and accessible substantiation.
 - ⊕ It also includes providing detailed information on the methodology and data used to support such claims.
- **Third-Party Certifications:** Statutory or independent third-party verification to support disclosure about claims such as compostable, degradable, recyclable, climate-positive, etc.
- **Aspirational or futuristic claims:** May be made only when clear and actionable plans have been developed detailing how those objectives will be achieved.



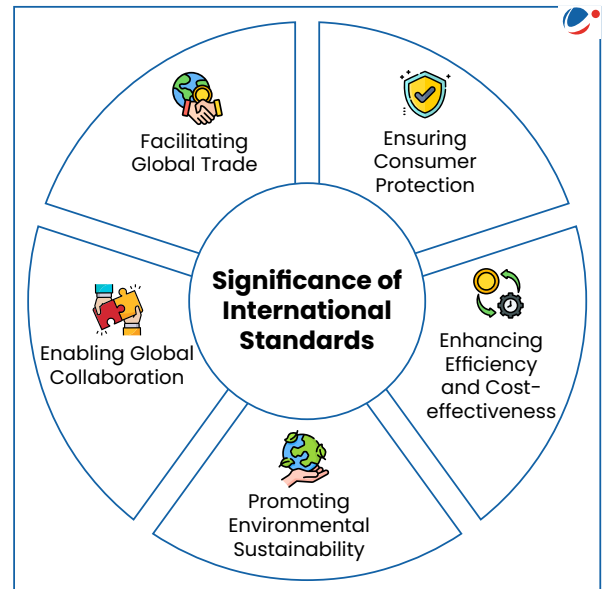
Fifth Global Standards Symposium (GSS-24) convened in New Delhi

It was organized for the first time in the Asia-Pacific region by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and hosted by the Department of Telecommunications, Government of India.

- Theme for GSS-24 was "Charting the Next Digital Wave: Emerging Technologies, Innovation, and International Standards".
- ITU, established in 1865, is the oldest UN specialized agency for Information and Communication Technologies.

Key Outcomes of the GSS-24

- **Consensus based international standards system:** Calls for continued efforts towards bridging standardization gap between developed and developing countries, through initiatives like ITU Bridging the Standardization Gap programme.
- **International standards for sustainable development of emerging digital technologies:** Encourages strengthened collaboration among Standards Development Organizations, to enable developing countries to embrace digital innovation.
- **High-level segment catalysing changes:** Recognizes Global Digital Compact's emphasis on international cooperation, highlighting importance of emerging digital technologies, including AI in driving digital transformation.
- **Standards and SDGs:** Highlighted the significance of international standards in enabling sustainable development of emerging digital technologies. E.g. #Standards4SDGs campaign
- **Celebrating Smart Cities:** Acknowledged sustainable initiatives in cities, reinforcing the commitment to the United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) initiative.
 - ⊕ U4SSC, led by the ITU, UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and UN-Habitat encourages fostering partnerships to empower cities and communities in achieving the UN SDGs.



Pathways out of the Polycrisis: Poverty, Prosperity, and Planet Report 2024 released by World Bank Group

Report aims to provide a framework that can manage the trade-offs and deliver the best possible outcomes on the three corners of the iron triangle of economic development – Poverty, Prosperity, and Planet.

Key findings of the Report

- **Stalled Global poverty reduction:** It has slowed to a near standstill during past 5-years impacted by 'polycrisis'.
 - ⊕ **Polycrisis** refers to a situation where the **multiple crises of slow economic growth, increased fragility, climate risks, and heightened uncertainty have come together at the same time** - making national development strategies and international cooperation difficult.
- **Non-attainment of targets:** Global population living in extreme poverty is projected to be 7.3% in 2030 (8.5% in 2024). This is double the World Bank target of 3% and farther from the elimination target of UN SDGs.
- **Global Prosperity Gap:** Stalled progress since pandemic, highlighting slowdown in inclusive income growth.
 - ⊕ **Prosperity Gap** is the average factor by which incomes need to be multiplied to bring everyone in the world to the **prosperity standard of \$25 per person per day**.
- **India: Significant fall** in Indians living in **extreme poverty** from **431 million (1990) to 129 million (2024)**.
 - ⊕ Currently, **World Bank defines extreme poverty** as living on less than **\$2.15 per person per day**.

Proposed Pathways and Priorities

- **Faster and inclusive growth:** Increasing labour productivity, income, and employment.
- **Climate resilience:** Protecting from climate shocks by **enhancing risk management and mitigation, synergising policies to ameliorate trade-offs** between growing incomes and lowering emissions.
- **Priorities from global perspective**
 - ⊕ **Low-income countries:** Prioritize **poverty reduction** by fostering investment in **human, physical, and financial capital**.
 - ⊕ **Middle-income countries:** Prioritize **income growth** that reduces vulnerability and pursue **synergies** such as **cutting air pollution**.
 - ⊕ **High-income and upper-middle-income countries:** Accelerate **mitigation** while managing **transition costs**.

Just transition, Just Finance report released by environmental think-tank iForest

The primary studies by the think-tank were carried out in **coal dependent districts (Korba, Angul, Bokaro and Ramgarh)** to understand and calculate the costs of transition, cost components and factors.

- In the study, just **energy transition is defined** as a development approach that aims to **shift from fossil fuels to green energy** while ensuring economic growth, protecting affected workers and communities, and enhancing energy security.

Key Findings

- Currently, coal accounts for about **55% of India's commercial energy requirements** and coal-based thermal power plants **produce more than 70 per cent of electricity**.
- India will require more than **a trillion dollars at current rates, to transition away from coal mining and thermal power plants** in the next 30 years.
- The transition costs are split into two main categories i.e. **green energy costs (52%)** for infrastructure development and **non-energy costs (48%)** for supporting affected workers and communities.

Recommendations

- **District Mineral Foundation (DMF) and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds** are important resources to initiate just transition measures **at the district level**.
- **International financing** will be necessary to implement just transition measures comprehensively as recognised by **India's Long-Term Low-Carbon Development Strategy (LT-LCDC)**.
- **Other financial measures** include private investments and grants and subsidies from public sources.

Coal in India

- **Status:** World's second largest coal producer and 5th largest country in terms of coal deposits.
- **Type of coal:** About 80% of coal deposits are bituminous type and are of non-coking grade.
- **States with highest coal reserves :** Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh.
- **Characteristics of coal:** High in ash content but low in sulfur content with high ash fusion temperature.

Heavy Reliance on AI could pose risks in Financial Sector: RBI Governor

Speaking at the **90th High-Level Conference organized by the RBI** in New Delhi, Governor expressed concern that the **growing use of AI could enable a few technology providers to dominate the market, creating systemic vulnerabilities**.

- Currently, **AI in Financial System** is being used in **Algorithmic and high-frequency trading, credit scoring and approvals, customer services** through instruments like chatbots, **predictive analytics for market trends** for risk management, etc.

Risks Posed by AI to banking and financial services

- **Concentration risks:** If many financial institutions use similar AI models for trading or risk assessment, a failure or error in these algorithms can have cascading effects across global financial markets.
 - ⊕ e.g., AI trading systems can amplify market volatility by triggering mass sell-offs during downturns.
- **Algorithmic biases:** AI systems are trained on historical data can lead to unfair practices like discriminatory lending or credit decisions.
 - ⊕ e.g., An AI-driven loan approval system may inadvertently deny loans to specific demographic groups.
- **Data security and privacy:** Breach or misuse of data can lead to identity theft, fraud, and significant losses for both institutions and customers.
- **Others:** Lack of transparency due to **'Black Box' problem**, misleading information due to **'AI hallucinations'**, etc.

Measures to be taken to address these risks

- **Comprehensive AI Regulation:** By engaging in **industry-wide collaboration with researchers, security experts and policymakers**.
 - ⊕ **Learning from global best practices** such as **Algorithmic Accountability Act of 2023 of the US**.
- **Maximize Defense Capabilities:** Adopt **'Security by design' approach** to incorporate robust security features at every stage of AI development lifecycle ensuring the foundational integrity of AI systems.
- **Learning and adaptation:** Advanced threat detection through analysis of vast data sets in real time to uncover patterns and anomalies indicative of cyber threats.

World survey on the role of women in development report released by UN Women

The theme of the report is **Harnessing social protection for gender equality, resilience and transformation.**

It takes stock of progress, gaps, and challenges in building **comprehensive, gender-responsive social protection systems.**

Need for Gender responsive social protection (GRSP)

- **Gender-responsive approaches** for social protection actively seek to respond to gender-specific risks, vulnerabilities and constraints such as
 - ⊕ Women's lesser access to resources, disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work, gender based violence and lack of voice in decision making.
- GRSP approaches acknowledge the **nature and intensity of risks and constraints** based on gender.

Key findings of the report

- **Two billion women and girls lack access to any form of social protection**, such as cash benefits, unemployment insurance, pensions or healthcare.
- Over **63 per cent of women globally still give birth without access to maternity benefits.**
- Gender-specific risks and vulnerabilities are **exacerbated by factors like conflict, climate change and economic shocks.**

Key recommendations

- **Address gender gaps and biases** in existing social protection systems, policies and programmes.
- Improve **coordination with gender-responsive employment policies and public services.**
- Adapt **social protection policies and programmes** to meet the needs of women and girls **during sudden and protracted crises.**
- Take a **rights-based approach** to social protection delivery.

Initiatives taken by India for women social protection

- **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MGNREGA)** aims to provide at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment per year.
- **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)** provides financial subsidies to pregnant and lactating women.
- **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojna (PMUY)** for free LPG connections to BPL households to protect women from health hazards.

Also in News

AI Centres of Excellence (AI-CoE)

The **Union Minister for Education** announced the establishment of three AI CoE focused on Healthcare, Agriculture, and Sustainable Cities.

- As part of the vision to **"Make AI in India and Make AI work for India,"** the establishment of these centres was announced under the Budget (2023-24).
- **Significance:** will give further **impetus to the start-up ecosystem**, help create a **new generation of job and wealth creators**, and establish new paradigms of **global public good.**



INS Samarthak

India's **first-of-class Indigenous multi-purpose vessel**, INS Samarthak launched.

About INS Samarthak

- It is a **highly specialised, multi-role platform** envisaged to be a **trial platform for the development of next generation weapons and sensors** for the Indian Navy.
- It is one of the **two Multi-Purpose Vessels** being indigenously built by **Larsen & Toubro (L&T)** for the Indian Navy
- It can achieve a **maximum speed of 15 knots.**
- **Other roles:** Launch and recovery of surface and aerial targets, maritime surveillance and patrolling, humanitarian assistance, combating sea pollution, etc.

Blue Line

UN said that the Israeli military has fired on its peacekeepers near the **Blue Line.**

About Blue Line

- Established by the **United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)** in 2000.
- It is an area spanning **120 km along southern Lebanon** to ensure the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces.
- It acts as a **de-facto border between Israel and Lebanon, mapped by UN.**
- It is made of **blue barrels** and runs from the **Mediterranean to the Golan Heights.**



THAAD Missile Defense System

USA announced that it will send its **Terminal High-Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) Battery System** to aid Israel.

About THAAD System

- It is an **advanced defence system** against **short, medium, and intermediate-range ballistic missile threats** developed by **Lockheed Martin Corporation.**
- It is the **only US system** designed to **intercept targets outside and inside the atmosphere** employing **"hit-to-kill" technology.**
- A **THAAD battery** consists of 95 soldiers, truck-mounted launchers, interceptors, radar surveillance and radar, etc.

Note: India bought **S-400 Triumf** air defence missile system from **Russia.**



Nile Basin

Recently, **agreement on the equitable use of water resources from the Nile River basin** has come into force despite the notable opposition of Egypt.

About Nile Basin

- The Nile is the **world's longest river** and has a **drainage area of nearly 10% of the landmass of the African continent**.
- Runs through **11 countries** from south to north.
- **2 main tributaries: White Nile** (Originate from Burundi and Rwanda) and **Blue Nile** (originating in Ethiopia).
- **Other tributaries:** Sobat River, Atbara River, Bahr el Ghazal, etc.



Persons with Benchmark Disability

Recently, Supreme Court held that the **existence of physical disability should not be a ground to disbar a candidate from medical education**.

- Currently, Graduate Medical Education Regulation, 1997 bars **persons with benchmark disability** from MBBS course.

About Persons with Benchmark Disability (PwBD)

- **Section 2(r) of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016** defines PwBD as a person with **not less than 40%** of a specified disability as **certified** by the certifying authority.
- **Special provisions: Free education** for children (6-18 years), **5% reservation in government and aided higher educational institutions**, **4% reservation in government jobs**, etc.

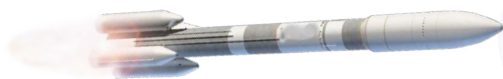


Mechazilla

SpaceX has achieved a **significant milestone in space exploration** by landing its Starship rocket using an innovative structure called "Mechazilla."

About Mechazilla

- It is the nickname for the **large 400-ft rocket-catching structure**.
- It is a **tall structure, equipped with massive mechanical arms, to catch Super Heavy booster** (booster rockets are designed to launch the Starship spacecraft) in mid-air as it returns to Earth.
- This is a new **method of rocket recovery** which is more **efficient and reusable** compared to traditional landing techniques.



Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)

Google signed its **first ever corporate agreement** with California-based Kairos Power to **purchase nuclear energy from multiple small modular reactors (SMRs)**.

About Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)

- SMRs are **advanced nuclear reactors** that have a power capacity of **up to 300 MW(e) per unit**.
- Only **two SMR projects** have reached the **operational stage globally**.
 - ⊖ In India, Budget 2024-25 announced to develop **Bharat Small Reactors (BSRs)**.
- **Significance of the SMRs:** Reduced fuel requirements, Saves construction time, Eliminate or significantly lower the potential for unsafe releases of radioactivity to the environment, etc.

Personality in News



Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam (1931-2015)

World Students' Day was observed on **October 15** to honour the efforts of distinguished administrator and scientist **Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam** in the field of education.

About Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam

- Born on October 15, 1931 at Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu.
- He was **11th President of India** who focussed on **transforming India into a developed nation by 2020**.

Key Contributions

- He was the **Project Director to develop India's first indigenous Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV-III)** which **successfully injected Rohini satellite in near earth orbit in July 1980**.
- Also known as **'Missile Man of India'**, he was Chief Executive of **Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme** at DRDO.
- **Gave strategy for rural prosperity: PURA** (Providing Urban Amenities to Rural Areas)
- **Major Literary Works:** Wings of Fire, India 2020 - A Vision for the New Millennium, and Ignited Minds.

Rewards and Recognition: Awarded Bharat Ratna (1997), Padma Vibhushan (1990), etc.

Values: Integrity, Humility, Visionary leadership, etc.

