Index

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ASCI UPDATES ADS DISCLAIMERS GUIDELINES TO HELP CONSUMERS

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Physiography of India including Geology

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January 24, 2023 01:06 pm | Updated 01:06 pm IST

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ASCI updated guidelines after it observed that 80% of respondents did not notice disclaimers. | Photo Credit: Getty Images

The Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) on Tuesday updated its Guidelines for Disclaimers made in supporting, limiting or explaining claims made in advertisements.

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In the past three years, ASCI has processed over 800 advertisements which were found to be in violation of the disclaimer guidelines.

In a recent survey carried out by ASCI with 130 consumers, it was observed that 80% of respondents did not notice the disclaimer, 33% could not understand the disclaimers clearly even after adequate exposure time had been provided, and 62% of respondents felt that the disclaimer was excessively long.

The Consumer Complaints Council (CCC), have also observed that sometimes, the frame of the advertisement that contains the disclaimer was very crowded, and distracted the viewer's focus.

To address these issues, the Guidelines for Disclaimers made in supporting, limiting or explaining claims made in advertisements have been amended by ASCI after consultation with stakeholders.

As per new guidelines, the use of disclaimer should be kept to a minimum. Long or otherwise complex disclaimers with large blocks of text and difficult words are a deterrent to viewers attempting to read the contents of the disclaimer. In such cases advertisers should modify the headline claim to reduce the need for further qualification through disclaimers.

In TV commercials or any other video advertisement on digital media, all disclaimers should be clearly readable to consumers.

There should not be more than one disclaimer, The disclaimer should be restricted to two full length lines and remain on screen for more than 4 seconds for every line.

“While ASCI has had disclaimer guidelines since 2016, it was observed that over-use of disclaimers made it difficult for consumers to understand all the information presented in the ad. This is evident from our survey where 80% of consumers did not even notice the disclaimers. Hence, it is important that claims are crafted in a way that minimizes the need for qualificatory disclaimers. Where disclaimers are needed, they should be presented in a manner that someone who is interested in reading them has the opportunity to do so,” said Manisha Kapoor, CEO and Secretary-General ASCI.

technology (general) / advertising / India

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INDIA’S GROUNDWATER GOVERNANCE IS IN BETTER SHAPE

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Distribution of key natural resources - Water Resources incl. Rivers & related issues in world & India

January 28, 2023 12:08 am | Updated 01:23 am IST

‘As one of the fastest growing economies, India will need adequate groundwater resources to manage anthropogenic pressures’ | Photo Credit: Getty Images

Data show that India, with nearly 18% of the world’s population, occupies about 2.4% of the total geographical area and consumes 4% of total water resources. A World Bank report says that India is the largest groundwater user. A rapidly growing economy and population are straining the country’s groundwater resources.

As a vast country, India has distinct and varying hydro-geological settings. Groundwater is the backbone of India’s agriculture and drinking water security in rural and urban areas, meeting nearly 80% of the country’s drinking water and two-thirds of its irrigation needs. Groundwater is pivotal to India’s water security. The fact that the theme of UN World Water Day 2022 was ‘Groundwater, Making the Invisible Visible’ is a reflection of the importance given to the resource across the globe.

The central government is working to achieve the goal of sustainable groundwater management in collaboration with States and Union Territories. In this process, certain important deliverables have been identified that include a reduction in groundwater extraction to below 70%, increasing the network of groundwater observation wells, installing digital water level recorders for real-time monitoring, periodic monitoring of groundwater quality, aquifer mapping and data dissemination, having better regulation of groundwater extraction by industries, and promoting participatory groundwater management and even periodic groundwater resource assessment.

Editorial | **Preserving the precious: On ground water use**

In May 2019, a much-needed step of policy reform was done under the leadership of the Prime Minister with the creation of Jal Shakti Ministry (a merger of the erstwhile Ministries of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation along with Drinking Water and Sanitation). This was to give impetus to the management of water resources with special focus on demand and supply management. Realising the importance of community participation, the Jal Shakti Abhiyan was launched subsequently to transform Jan Shakti into Jal Shakti through asset creation, rainwater harvesting (‘Catch the Rain’ campaign) and extensive awareness campaign.

Initiatives have also been taken for the effective management and regulation of groundwater, examples being the Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABY) and the National Project on Aquifer Management (NAQUIM). With the goal of “participatory groundwater management”, ABY looks to inculcate behavioural change made possible by incentivisation. NAQUIM, which is nearing completion, envisages the mapping of sub-surface water bearing geological formations (aquifers) to help gather authentic data and enable informed decision-making. Around 24 lakh square kilometres of the country has been mapped from the available mappable area of nearly 25 lakh sq. km. A heli-borne based survey (state-of-the-art technology), has also been used along with traditional exploratory methods for rapid and accurate aquifer mapping. The remaining area is likely to be mapped by March 2023. Region-wise aquifer management plans are being prepared and shared with States.

There are around 65,025 monitoring stations in India, which include 7,885 automated stations. The numbers are set to go beyond 84,000; in this, the number of automated stations will rise to over 35,000, with a special focus on identified high groundwater extracting industrial and urban clusters and groundwater stressed regions. Besides other quality-related exercises, samples from fixed locations are obtained to check for the presence of heavy and trace metals. Dynamic groundwater assessments will be done annually now and a groundwater estimation committee formed to revise the assessment methodology. A software, ‘India-Groundwater Resource Estimation System (IN-GRES)’, has also been developed.

The completion of groundwater assessment in 2022 in about five months (against the two to three years) shows that a time-bound and scientific approach is being adopted to monitor precious water resources. The findings of the groundwater assessment also indicate a positive inclination in the management of groundwater.

According to the latest assessment, there has been a 3% reduction in the number of ‘overexploited’ groundwater units and a 4% increase in the number of ‘safe’ category units as compared to 2017. There was an improvement in groundwater conditions in 909 units. The assessment also showed a reduction in annual extraction (of about 9.53 billion cubic meters); the data for irrigation, industrial and domestic use, respectively, is 208.49 BCM, 3.64 BCM and 27.05 BCM. Overall extraction saw a declining trend, of about 3.25% since 2017.

Some of this success may be attributed to implementation of comprehensive groundwater guidelines in 2020 for regulation in various sectors and making the processes of issuing a no-objection certificate transparent and time-bound using a web-based application. The government’s interventions in enabling a positive impact on the overall groundwater scenario in India, reflect the spirit of cooperative federalism in managing this precious resource. That around 9.37 BCM of additional groundwater potential was created through artificial water conservation structures is an example of this impact.

As one of the fastest growing economies, India will need adequate groundwater resources to manage anthropogenic pressures. It is important to ensure source sustainability to provide safe drinking water to all rural households by 2024, under the Jal Jeevan Mission.

Communities will have to manage their groundwater resources better with the help of various government agencies and non-governmental organisations. In the context of climate change, as uncertainties will increase with connection with groundwater resources, efforts must be made to find solutions that are essential for sustainable development. The groundwater resource assessment report 2022 shows a brighter future for groundwater situations in the country as the initiatives taken by various governments have begun yielding results. This is a new beginning and steps must be taken to make India a water surplus nation, thus fulfilling the objective of a key United Nations Sustainable Development Goal, of water for all.

Subodh Yadav is Joint Secretary, Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India

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water / water supply / drinking water / community water management / water (natural resource) / government / United Nations

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SCIENCE THIS WEEK

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: The Earth, its Evolution and Origin of Life on Earth

January 28, 2023 09:06 pm | Updated 09:06 pm IST

Earth's inner core, a hot iron ball the size of Pluto, has stopped spinning faster than the planet's surface and might now be rotating slower than it, research suggested. | Photo Credit: Getty Images

This week has been an exciting one in the field of science with an asteroid zooming past our planet, studies on the Earth's core and dinosaur eggs being discovered in the Narmada Valley. Find the latest studies and discoveries here.

Earth's inner core has stopped spinning faster than the planet's surface, a study in the *Nature Geoscience* has said. Measuring about the size of Pluto, Earth's iron core is suspended in the molten liquid outer core and spins independently. Due to a dearth of direct evidence the study of Earth's inner core has always been disputed. The latest research suggests that the inner core, relative to the Earth's surface, swings back and forth like a swing. From 2009 onwards, a negative trend has been noticed with the inner core rotating slower than the surface. The cycle of the swing lasts about seven decades, the study suggested.

A truck-sized asteroid zoomed past Earth without incident and back into open space. Called Asteroid 2023 BU, the celestial body was first spotted on January 21 by an amateur stargazer from Crimea. It came closest to the southern tip pf South America at 0029 GMT on Friday. Measuring just 3.5 to 8.5 meters across, the asteroid was too small to cause much damage even though it was one of closest asteroid to approach the planet.

Tiny specks of dust collected from a rubble-pile asteroid named Itokawa has shown that the asteroid is actually much older than previously thought. Smaller than the diameter of a hair, the particles from the asteroid were estimated to be at least 4.2 billion-year-old, ten times older than solid asteroids of similar size are predicted to be.

In a new study, scientists have found that artificial glow of the night sky has increased 9.2% to 10% every year since 2011 and 2022. Specifically, the glow brightened around 6.5% over Europe, 10.4% over North America and 7.7% over the rest of the world. The artificial caused by light pollution is said to have detrimental effects on both humans and wildlife. It disrupts the circadian rhythm as artificial light hamper the production of melanin which has been seen to increase risk of breast cancer among night shift workers.

A study by a group of scientists has suggested that the Tonga eruption in 2022 could potentially push average global temperatures temporarily above 1.5 degree Celsius from pre-industrial era

level. Last year, the Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai erupted sending huge amounts of ash, gas and water into the atmosphere. It sent close 146 million metric tonnes of water into the atmosphere which could have a warming effect.

The biggest increases in induntation will occur after the first two metres of sea level rise, covering more than twice as much land as older elevation models predicted, according to a study. The current models of sea level rise suggest the most widespread impacts will occur after sea level has risen by several metres. The study, published in the journal *Earth's Future*, used high-resolution measurements of land elevation from NASA's ICESat-2 lidar satellite, launched in 2018, to improve upon models of sea level rise and inundation.

Paleontologists have reported a rare discovery of closely located dinosaur nests and 256 eggs of the herbivorous titanosaurs in the Narmada valley in Madhya Pradesh. Researchers from the Delhi University and Indian Institute of Science Education and Research in Mohanpur-Kolkata and Bhopal have also reported discovery of ovum-in-ovo or multi-shell eggs in Bagh and Kukshi areas in Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh. The eggs, which ranged between 15 cm and 17 cm in diameter, likely belonged to a number of titanosaur species.

A rare swallowtail butterfly disappearing from its previously known ranges from Myanmar and southern China to Vietnam has been recorded for the first time in India. Dubbed Noble's Helen, the butterfly is characterised by a large dorsal white spot with a wingspan of 100-120 mm. Once commonly found in Thailand, Myanmar, Yunnan, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, the butterfly has become extremely rare and was spotted for the in India in three locations between 2019 and 2021.

science (general) / science (general) / climate change / space programme / environmental issues / environmental pollution / volcanic eruption / sea level rise / animal / animal science

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