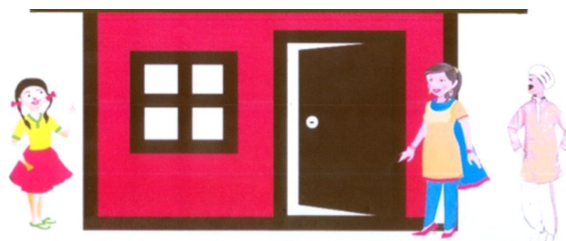


Consumer Dialogue

Volume VII, Issue 1, January-April 2016

E-newsletter



The Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India sponsored *Grahak Suvidha Kendra* (GSK), which was formally launched on September 15, 2015. GSK Jaipur provides services, such as advice on consumer protection related issues and complaints, publication of books, pamphlets, magazines and other materials on consumer related issues and handling consumer complaints through counselling and conciliation for quick and easy redressal.

GSK details can be accessed at:

http://www.cuts-international.org/CART/Grahak_Suvidha_Kendra.htm

For being a part of GSK family visit:

<https://www.facebook.com/Grahak-Suvidha-Kendra-GSK-Jaipur-1459230614407574/?fref=ts>

Online Submission of Complaints:

Online consumer complaints for GSK can be registered at:

<https://docs.google.com/a/cuts.org/forms/d/14B78zgXN1cQa61MTuZSPtcrF6rEoUBTkbTYeL4ajXx0/viewform?c=0&w=1>

For online registration of consumer complaints against misleading advertisements, Ministry of Consumer Affairs of Government of India has developed the web portal:

<http://gama.gov.in/Default.aspx> / <http://gama.gov.in/Secure/Login.aspx>

INSIDE

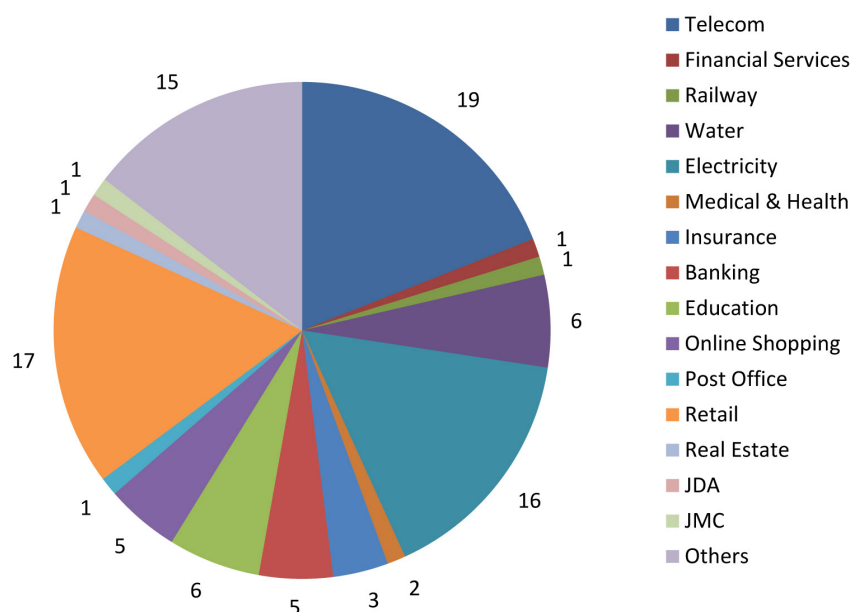
- ACTIVITIES
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CUTS
International



CUTS CART

Complaint Analysis of GSK, Jaipur (January-April 2016)





Need to Address Global Health Crisis of Antibiotics Resistance

Urgent action is the need of the hour to address the global health crisis of antibiotics resistance. This resolution emerged out of the public event organised by CUTS International to commemorate the “World Consumer Rights Day” or WCRD at Jaipur on March 15, 2016. Taking into consideration dangerously rising levels of antibiotics in the food chain, the theme for the current year is WCRD is “Antibiotics off the Menu”. George Cheriyan, Director CUTS International elucidated that Antibiotics resistance constitutes a global health crisis to which the overuse of antibiotics in farming is a major contributing factor and it is predicted to grow. Cheriyan mentioned that a review on Antimicrobial Resistance predicts that deaths from antimicrobial resistance will reach 10 million per year by 2050.



In addition, data collected through recent surveys on it has revealed that in the recent past, there has been a six-fold increase in the amount of antibiotics being prescribed and consumed by Indians. Nirmal Kumar Gurbani, Professor, Indian Institute of Health Management Research (IIHMR), Jaipur provided an effective presentation on antimicrobial resistance.

Furthermore, Superintendent, J K Loan Hospital, Dr. Ashok Gupta said that over-the-counter sale of antibiotics should not be promoted and the antibiotics should only be prescribed when there is dire need for the same. Sanjay Jhala, Deputy Director, Department of Consumer Affairs stated that though State Government organises such events every year, but this time it has encouraged two major Non-government Organisations (NGOs) working for consumer rights in the state to come forward and observe WCRD. Kanika Varma, Professor, Department of Home Science, University of Rajasthan gave a presentation highlighting the role of antibiotics in food chain; chain of antibiotics and drugged chicken story. More than 70 participants attended the event and got benefited by acquiring useful information.

Celebration of World Consumer Rights Day



World Consumer Rights Day was organised by the Department of Consumer Affairs at New Delhi on March 22, 2016. The event was presided over by Ram Vilas Paswan, Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution. The highlight of the event was signing of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with the Industry bodies to promote consumer interests. The MoUs broadly covered collaborative programmes on developing and implementing a self-regulatory code of fair business practices.

Commemoration of Road Safety Week

As part of the Road Safety Week 2016 observed by Government of Rajasthan, CUTS organised a workshop on Section 134 of Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 at Jaipur on January 22, 2016. Deepak Saxena rendered a presentation on the theme and Maya Tandon, Chief Executive of Sahayta Trust, Jaipur spoke on the subject. Dharmendra Chaturvedi and Deepika Ranawat participated in 27th Road-Safety Week Launch Event at Jaipur on January 19, 2016. Dharmendra Chaturvedi attended the concluding function of the road safety week on January 31, 2016 and also received a certificate on behalf of CUTS from Transport Minister Yunus Khan.



Understanding Monitoring and Evaluation from Human Rights-based Approach

External Evaluators Sudarsana Kundu and Pallavi Gupta from ‘Gender At Work’ organised a post evaluation workshop for CART team and its partners under ‘ProOrganic’ project on January 18, 2016. The workshop was attended by few members of CART. In addition, few CHD staff members and partners participated in the workshop.

Role of Five Pillars of Democracy in the Success of Section 134 of Motor Vehicle Act, 1988

A judgement by the Supreme Court in the case of Advocate Parmanand Katara by way of Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the year 1985 said that Article 21 of the Constitution of India guarantees the Right to Life to every citizen, but in road accident victims nearly 60 percent die while awaiting treatment, even after having been brought to the hospital. These deaths take place, as the doctors not attending the victims until a police case is registered, as these are medico-legal cases. Following a Supreme Court order in 1989, the Motor Vehicles Act was amended in 1994, (New Section 134) making mandatory for both the driver and owner of the vehicle to take the accident victim to the nearest doctor, but also casts a duty on the doctor to treat the victim without waiting for any formalities.



In this context, marking the commemoration of Road Safety Week 2016, CUTS in partnership with the Department of Transport, Government of Rajasthan organised a workshop on the subject theme on January 22, 2016 at Hotel Om Tower, Jaipur.

Among the key speakers, Dr. Maya Tandon, President, SAHAYATA said that the importance of this section must reach to common masses and if it is not then this section would become part of several obsolete laws existing in the country. Dr. Tandon referred Section 134 with Article 51(A) of the Constitution of India, which speaks on fundamental duties and Article 141. She also urged for joint efforts by all the five pillars of our democracy to make this section worth-while, which includes not only the judiciary but legislative, executive, media and citizens as well.

Tara Chand Saharan, Former Member, Board of Revenue for Rajasthan stressed on the importance of four Es i.e. Engineering, Emergency, Education and Enforcement. Saharan also showed two films 'Red Light Yoga' and 'Akhir Kab Tak' to portrayed the importance of Section 134. The same was showcased through mannequin by his team.

Prior to this, Deepak Saxena, Sr. Programme Coordinator, CUTS presented CUTS role in road safety area in last two decades and presented the brief history and importance of Section 134 by Power Point.

Transport Department, Government of Rajasthan supported to conduct the workshop, which provided platform for 88 representatives of CSOs, Media, Medical Practitioner, Advocates, Traffic Police, Health Department and Academician and actively took part in the workshop.

Financial Standing and Ways to Enhance Power Sector in Rajasthan

Jaipur Vidyut Vitaran Nigam with the support of CUTS-CART facilitated meeting held at Vidyut Bhawan, Jaipur to discuss present financial position and ways to improve the overall status of electricity sector in Rajasthan on January 22, 2016. Deepak Saxena along with Dharmendra Chaturvedi and Deepika Ranawat represented CUTS-CART at the meeting held at Vidyut Bhawan, Janpath, Jaipur on January 22, 2016. Besides, two networkers Hari Prasad Yogi from Sawai Madhopur and Atma Ram Sharma from Jobner, Jaipur accompanied CUTS team in the meeting. The meeting was organised with the objective to discuss present financial position and ways to improve the overall status of electricity sector in Rajasthan through a presentation by Jaipur Vidyut Vitaran Nigam.

The welcome and introduction of meeting was given by T S Sharma, Supt. Engineer (MIS), Jaipur Discom and he also rendered a presentation, which was prepared by Jaipur Vidyut Vitaran Nigam. Pushpendra Singh, State Energy Minister graced the occasion and his the presentation the representatives and members from various organisations were asked to share their problems at different levels.

Recommendations

- Electric meters that are not functioning properly should be replaced and returned to manufacturing company.
- There should be no power cut without giving prior information to the citizens. They should be informed at least 2-3 days before.
- Transformers that are burnt should be replaced immediately in rural areas.
- Meter reading, billing and cash collection should be done by the members of electricity department.
- Strict action to be initiated against power theft.



ACTIVITIES



Partner's Orientation Meeting-ProOrganic

Marking the commencement of activities of ProOrganic phase 2016-17, a Partners' Orientation Meeting was organized on 8th April, 2016 at Jaipur. The purpose of the meeting was to present, discuss the objectives of the next phase of project and to discuss on how to start up the activities with work plan. The MoU was also signed with the district project partners on the same day. All the district partners from Udaipur, Kota, Dausa, Chittorgarh and two from Jaipur district took part in the orientation. Dr K Ramakrishan, Retd. Professor of SKN Agriculture University, Jobner was the key resource person, who provided the inputs of organic farming to all the participants prior to other discussions as per the agenda. Another objective of this meeting was to discuss with partners about the work plan of the project entitled "Developing a Culture of Sustainable Consumption in the State of Rajasthan with Special Focus on Organic Consumption" for FY 2017-2020.



Jaipur District Level Partners' Meeting-Phase 2016-17

A district level partner's meeting exclusively for Jaipur district was held on April 30, 2016. Out of the nine block partners, eight attended the meeting except Shahpura, who could not come owing to some personal reasons. The purpose of the meeting was to present the structure of activities of phase 2016



of ProOrganic and ways to organise village level and block level awareness meetings in 26 *gram panchayats* and 13 blocks. The role of these partners in other activities like district level awareness campaigns, district level farmer's orientation and exposure visits and organic fair was also discussed. Other discussions were woven around time line, schedule structure and budget etc. Some existing partners, who were involved in 2013-15 activities, also shared their experience of doing such programmes with new partners.

Consumer Protection in India: Challenges and Way Forward

Grahak Suvidha Kendra team members facilitated a Consultation held at CUTS Conference Hall; Jaipur on 22nd April 2016. The theme of the consultation was Consumer Protection in India: Challenges and Way Forward. The main speaker for the event was Justice V B Gupta (Member, NCDRC), Kailash Chandra Atwasia (Registrar, SCDRC) also attended the event as one of discussant accompanied with Susan Mathew (High Court, Advocate) and Vagish Kumar Singh.



Backlog of Cases in Courts Might Hit One Crore Mark Soon

Despite the best efforts to speed up disposal of cases, pendency in the high courts might spiral to a monstrous one crore cases by the end of the current year from the existing 45 lakh cases as 24 High Courts (HCs) are presently functioning with 43 percent vacancies with only 599 judges as against a sanctioned strength of 1044.

The disposal of cases suffered as the process for appointment of judges came to a standstill for almost a year because of the Constitutional tug-of-war between the Legislature and Judiciary over the validity of National Judicial Appointments Commission, which was scrapped by the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court (SC) has a pendency of around 60,000 cases, HCs have 45 lakh cases and trial courts around 2.75 crore cases making it a total of around 3.25 crore cases. Judges fear that it might touch 4 crore cases by the end of this year because of large number of vacancies. The SC had revived the collegium system, in which a CJI-headed group of judges appoint judges on the recommendation of a similar collegium in the HCs. But it is expected to resume functioning only by the beginning of February after the Centre finalises the memorandum of procedure in consultation with the Chief Justice T S Thakur.

(The Times of India, January 07, 2016)



IMPORTANT JUDGEMENTS/ DECISIONS



Senior Citizen Loses 1.2 Crore in Bank: Beware Consumers!

Beware if you get a call from unknown persons claiming to be bank officials, who can make you a fortune, if you invest in their schemes. Chances are that you may fall off the financial cliff. Recently, a senior citizen fell victim to an elaborate con and lost 1.2 crore. The police got a complaint from a 69-year-old man that a gang sucked money out of him. This started with an impersonation of bank officials followed by provident fund and insurance officials, and finally of income tax officials.

The man, who retired from service about a decade ago, said in his complaint that few days back, a person who claimed to be calling from a nationalised bank. The caller explained a rather lucrative investment scheme. To impress his would-be victim and gain latter's confidence, the caller rattled off the personal details and financial profile of the senior citizen, including his name, the number of his dependents, his savings account number and bank balance", revealed a crime branch officer. Further, the caller suggested an investment scheme offering a 10 percent interest. The senior citizen agreed and deposited few lakhs in a particular account.

A month later, he got a call from another person claiming to be a provident fund official. He (official) disclosed the details of the senior citizen's investment and implied that his case was at risk since the details had gone to the income tax department and for ensuring his safety the senior citizen should invest a few lakhs under an amnesty scheme. The victim diligently followed the given instructions. Moreover, he continued receiving such fake calls and kept on 'investing' money up to 1.2 crore before he realised that he had been conned.

(The Times of India, January 19, 2016)

For more details please access at: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/Senior-citizen-buys-bank-scheme-loses-Rs1-2-crore/articleshow/50644735.cms>

Energy Guzzling One-Star Air-Conditioners Banned in the Indian Market

The government has banned the sale of entry-level one-star air-conditioners in the Indian market and introduced improved energy efficiency guidelines for frost-free refrigerators. Besides, it has also made it compulsory for companies to adhere to energy rating rules for hi-end inverter ACs from 2018. Manufacturers said the move will increase the price of entry-level ACs since the starting range will be a two-star unit that are priced around 3,000 more than the one-star model and cost upwards of 20,000. It will also push up the prices of four and five-star refrigerators significantly, and make the most energy efficient five-star inverter ACs dearer by around 5,000, three senior industry executives said.

The rules have been notified by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), the nodal body under the Power Ministry for energy efficiency rating of consumer electronics.

BEE has just started voluntary energy labelling for inverter ACs with several manufacturers going to launch such products this summer. Inverter AC controls the speed of the compressor motor as per the ambient temperature as compared to the other models, which run on a fixed speed. "The initiative will ultimately reduce the price difference between inverter and non-inverter models", said Daikin Air-conditioning India Managing Director Kanwal Jeet Jawa.

(ETRetail.com, February 18, 2016)

For more details please access at: <http://retail.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/consumer-durables-and-information-technology/consumer-electronics/government-bans-energy-guzzling-one-star-air-conditioners-in-the-indian-market/51033498>





Ensure People Hit By Card, Banking Frauds Get Money Back Soon

In order to help people hit by card or banking frauds, the government and Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will take required steps for immediate crediting back of money to their accounts in blocked mode, and completion of probes within 3 months so as to release the amount.

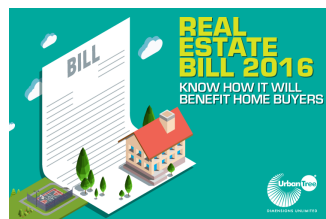
The Finance Ministry has released guidelines for promotion of payments through cards and digital means to move towards “less cash society”.

It has asked the departments and organisations concerned to take steps to withdraw convenience fee, service charge and surcharge on customers who make card or digital payments for essential commodities, utility service, petrol pumps, gas agencies, railway tickets, and tax department, among others. “The Department of Financial Services (DFS)/RBI shall take steps to create necessary assurance mechanisms for fraudulent transactions wherein, in case of a fraudulent transaction, the money will be credited back to customers’ account and blocked and subsequently released after the investigation is complete, within 2-3 months”, as per the guidelines.

Furthermore, they have also been asked to strengthen the role of banking ombudsman to provide greater customer confidence and to formulate a comprehensive customer protection policy for transactions through cards and digital means.

“The DFS/RBI shall take steps to optimally use funds under Depositor Education and Awareness Fund (DEAF) for expanding acceptance infrastructure and conducting awareness campaigns for a less cash society”, the Ministry said in an office memorandum.

For more details please access at: - http://www.igovernment.in/article/2016/03/03/ensure-people-hit-cardbanking-frauds-get-money-back-soon?utm_source=newsletter-core&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=20160303



Positive Sides of Real Estate Bill to Benefit Buyers!

The Real Estate bill seeks to set up a Real Estate Regulatory Authority in states and federal territories to oversee real estate transactions. It will help regulate sector and bring in clarity in terms of who governs/monitors realty projects. The bill is touted as a key reform measure in the vast real estate sector.

As of now, the real estate sector was largely unregulated in India. If a consumer had a complaint against a developer he would have to make rounds of consumer or civil courts. Also absence of standardisation and lack of adequate consumer protection has constrained the healthy and orderly growth of the industry. Not anymore! Once the bill becomes an Act, in case of any grievance, the consumer can go to the real estate regulator for redressal.

The bill will make it mandatory for all commercial and residential real estate projects where the land is over 500 sq. mt. or eight apartments will have to register with the regulator before launching a project. By making registration of the project compulsory with the regulatory authority, the bill aims to provide greater transparency in project marketing and execution. Failure to do so will attract a penalty, which may be up to 10 percent of the project cost and a repeat offence could land the developer in jail.

(Hindustan Times, March 10, 2016)

For more details please access at: - <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/all-you-need-to-know-about-real-estate-bill-listed-for-rs-passage-today/story-bvr7LwbdLpH7bLc02B97zN.html>

BIS Act Amended Bill to Enable Government to Standardise More Products

Parliament passed a bill to replace the 30 year-old Bureau of Indian Standards Act and bring more products like jewellery under the mandatory standard regime besides ending the ‘Inspector Raj’.

The Bureau of Indian Standards bill 2015 was passed unanimously by a voice vote in Rajya Sabha after two members withdrew amendments. The bill was passed by Lok Sabha in August last year. “Our mandate is to protect consumers. So, we have broadened the ambit of the bill to ensure consumers get quality products, services, systems and processes”, Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said in the Upper House, while replying to the queries of the members on the bill.

Currently, 92 items are under mandatory standards and only products and systems come under the ambit of standards. The bill proposes to “include services, besides articles and processes under the standardisation regime”. The bill also seeks to establish the Bureau of Indian Standards as a national body and empower the Centre to authorise any other agency having necessary accreditation for the purpose of conformity assessment against Indian standards.

(PTI, March 08, 2016)

For more details please access at: http://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/bill-to-enable-govt-to-standardise-more-products-passed-in-par-116030801449_1.html





FSSAI Moves Away From Inspector Raj, Shuts Two Offices

Less than a year after forcing Nestle India to recall samples of Maggi and having a run-in with Patanjali Ayurved for manufacturing and selling *atta* noodles without requisite licenses, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India has said it's moving towards a "deregulation" and "self-compliance" regime.

As a first step, the food regulator has ordered its sub regional offices in Lucknow and Chandigarh to be wound up with effect from March 31, 2016. From April, the FSSAI will carry out its regulatory work: licensing, enforcement and monitoring of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 remotely, from its New Delhi headquarters and four regional offices in Kolkata, Chennai, Mumbai and Guwahati. Orders for the closures were communicated to the Chandigarh and Lucknow offices on February 24, 2016 by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) Director, Establishment, Rakesh Chandra Sharma.

FSSAI CEO conveyed to Times of India, "The decision to close down the two offices was carefully considered. They had limited staff and were not adding value. Our attempt is to downsize and rationalise our resources. We do not want food safety officials to be a nuisance to businesses. Rather we want citizens to have confidence in them".

(The Times of India, March 31, 2016)

For more details please access at: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/lucknow/FSSAI-moves-away-from-inspector-raj-shuts-2-offices/articleshow/51624965.cms>

Survival on Imported Water by 2050



Do not be surprised, if the country is forced to import drinking water by 2050, thanks to the fast-depleting groundwater stock that is expected to reduce to 3,120 litres per day a person by then.

Recent study shows that today going by 2001 figures, the daily per capita groundwater availability in the country has come down to 5,120 litres, about 35 percent of the 14,180 litres in 1951. In 1991, it was less than half of the 1951 stock. By 2025, it is projected that the daily per capita availability will be just 25

percent of the base year. And the figures from a Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) study warn of a reduction to 22 percent by 2050, going by the present rate of exploitation of groundwater. The depleting water beneath your feet is an indication of vanishing rainwater harvesting with ponds, lakes and wells, poor awareness, and reduced green cover, stated experts.

(The Times of India, April 22, 2016)

For more information please access at: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/By-2050-you-may-have-to-live-on-imported-water/articleshow/51935321.cms>

Make Celebrities Accountable for Misleading Ads

A parliamentary panel has suggested that celebrities be held accountable for the brands they endorse, especially if an advertisement in which they feature is found to be misleading.

A Parliamentary Standing Committee on Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution tabled a report on the Consumer Protection Bill 2015 in Parliament, suggesting stringent provisions to regulate celebrity endorsements. The recommendations include fines of up to 50 lakh or a jail term of up to five years.

In its report, the committee also suggested empowering the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) to curb misleading advertisements. The panel called for severe penalties, including jail terms and cancellation of licence of those involved in food adulteration. It also recommended that the Department of Consumer Affairs be empowered to make laws to regulate e-commerce, direct selling and multi-level marketing, where the consumer complaints are on the rise, according to *Press Trust of India*. Activists have, over the years, resorted to art to express displeasure over road conditions. Such 3D speed 'barriers' were used in Philadelphia to campaign against rash driving.



(Livemint, April 26, 2016)

For more information please access at: <http://www.livemint.com/Consumer/hTD2KF6hOUDTi6Jh7QEhXO/Parliamentary-panel-suggests-finejail-for-celebrities-of-mi.html>



Traffic Fines through Plastic Money!

Traffic rule violators in city will soon be able to pay their fines by swiping credit or debit cards. Senior traffic department officials said that after Hyderabad and Mumbai police, now Ahmedabad traffic department is set to acquire Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) machines, which will generate electronic challans and allow paying fines by swiping credit/debit cards.

Officials from transport and traffic departments met to discuss introduction of such machines. Traffic department sources said tenders for such electronic machines will soon be released "There will be major changes in implementation and management of traffic rules in a short time. One of them will be introducing PDA machines", said a senior traffic department official. According to sources, images of the traffic rule violation will also be posted on the traffic department website for proof. Traffic rule violations in city have risen drastically from something above 12 lakh incidents in 2012 to about 29 lakh in 2015.

"Sometimes commuters claim they have no cash. In such cases, they will be able to pay fines by swiping cards. If they have no cards, the traffic department official on duty will enter his details in the machine and give him a challan", indicated an officer of the traffic department.

(The Times of India, January 07, 2016)

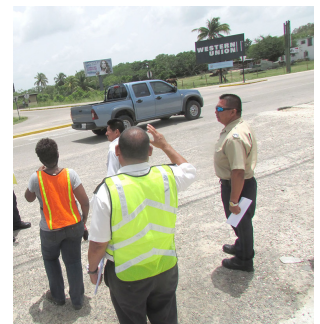
For more details please access at: - <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/Soon-pay-traffic-fines-with-your-debit-credit-cards/articleshow/50478826.cms>

Government to Undergo Road Safety Audit of Highways

Concerned over rising accidents, government decided to conduct road safety audit of 3,000 km of central and state highways this year. India accounts for 5 lakh road accidents annually in which 1.5 lakh people die and another 3 lakh are crippled for life. The loss due to this is equivalent to 3 percent of the GDP of the country.

Road Safety Audit involves evaluating highway improvement scheme during design, at the end of construction and post construction, to identify road safety problems and to suggest measures to eliminate or mitigate any concerns.

For more details please access at: http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/government-targets-road-safety-audit-of-3000-km-of-highways-in-2016/articleshow/50577457.cms?inttarget=no&utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Dailynewsletter&ncode=fecd2253caf0ca6c39eb1cb2a9



Booster in the Offing for Consumer Courts

Ministry of Consumer Affairs has constituted a three-member panel under former Supreme Court judge Justice Arijit Pasayat to assess infrastructure and manpower deficiencies in consumer forums and to suggest a broad framework for overcoming these impediments to strengthen these institutions at all levels.

The panel has been formed following a recent Supreme Court order. Though the total percentage of cases disposed off by all three categories of consumer foras - National Commission, state commission and district forums - is as high as 91.23 percent, the total number of pending cases is around 3.9 lakh. Over 60 percent of them are in district forums, which are touted as poor man's door to justice.

For long, there have been debates over why consumer forums are in bad shape and why hearings are deferred at the will of forum presidents or members. One of the key issues, according to Consumer Affairs Ministry officials, is vacancies. State governments are responsible for such appointments. There have several instances including in Delhi where one President of a district forum appointment of non-professionals as members of district forums, who consider such appointment as means of uplifting their social status. They are least bothered about disposing off cases.

Another big problem for delay in justice delivery system in the district and state forums is the inadequate support staff and physical infrastructure for carrying out the task. As per the SC order, the panel will visit each state and come out with the recommendations. It will send the recommendations to each state government for time-bound action and also a copy of each to the apex court. The court will hear this case on April 28, 2016.

(TNN, February 18, 2016)

For more details please access at: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Booster-in-the-offing-for-consumer-courts/articleshow/51033187.cms>



- George Cheriyan, Director CUTS participated in the International Conference on 'Education as a Driver for Sustainable Development Goals' organised by Centre for Environment Education, Ahmadabad on January 11-13, 2016. Cheriyan presented a Paper on 'Need and Ways of Educating the Consumers'.
- Deepak Saxena, Sr. Programme Coordinator, CART attended a conference organised by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Government of India at New Delhi, on January 14, 2016 on the occasion of Road Safety Week 2016.
- Deepak Saxena along with Project Officers of CART, Dharmendra Chaturvedi and Deepika Ranawat attended Consumer Outreach Programme organised by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) at Sikar, Rajasthan on March 29, 2016. Besides, Deepak Saxena attended Customer Outreach Programme on April 28, 2016 at Jaisalmer organised by TRAI Regional Office, Jaipur.
- George Cheriyan participated in the 16th Central Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting, chaired by Ashish Bahuguna, Chairman, FSSAI. The new Chief Executive Officer, Pawan Kumar Agarwal-PKA (IAS, WB 1985) was introduced and welcomed. During the discussions, George made the interventions on 'Constitution of State Steering Committees' including sharing the details of the committees and inclusion of consumer organisations.
- Madhu Sudan Sharma, Sr. Project Coordinator, CART participated in a three day workshop on Car Crash Safety in Chennai from February 09-11, 2016, organised by Consumers International. In the workshop, in addition to CUTS, representatives from Consumer Education and Research Centre (CERC), Ahmedabad, Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) and Consumers Association of India (CAI) from Chennai and VOICE from Delhi participated in the event.



- George Cheriyan attended the meeting of the Governing Council of Consumer International held in London on February 10-11, 2016. The meeting was attended by 17 members of the council, including the co-opted members.

- Deepika Ranawat represented CUTS at ITU-TRAI Training on Consumer Protection from March 21, 2016 to March 23, 2016 at New Delhi, India. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India jointly organised the Training on Consumer Protection. The training course aimed at sharing real experiences, brainstorm on possible solutions to address existing as well as emerging challenges amongst telecommunication, broadcasting and converged ICT regulators in the area of protecting consumers in the digital age. George attended the programme on the opening day in a session as speaker.



- During the period of March-April, Consumer Protection team visited various states to monitor the qualitative survey with the service providers and officials and common consumers. Madhusudan Sharma visited Jalpaiguri, West Bengal from March 01-04, 2016; Deepak Saxena visited Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh and Gazhiabad, Uttar Pradesh from March 08-10, 2016 and George Cheriyan and Amardeep Singh, Project Coordinator visited Chennai and Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu from March 07-12, 2016.

REPRESENTATION



- George Cheriyan and Madhu Sudan Sharma attended the Pre-budget Consultation with the Chief Minister at Jaipur on February 08, 2016. Cheriyan raised issues about strengthening of food safety regulation in the state; state road safety policy; road maintenance ambulance; and corpus fund for pothole maintenance' in the meeting.
- George Cheriyan attended the Meeting of the Central Consumer Protection Council presided by Minister Ram Vilas Paswan on April 19, 2016 at *Vigyan Bhawan*, New Delhi. George actively participated in the discussions and raised several consumer issues, which require urgent attention such as regulation of e-commerce, dual pricing, after sale services etc. The Minister deeply reviewed the functioning of GSK.

Upcoming Activities

- Commencing 165 village level Awareness Campaign Meetings under ProOrganic 2016-17 in six districts with the support of Swedish Society of Nature Conservation (SSNC) starting from April, 2016 to continue till December, 2016.
- Depositors Education and Awareness Programme with the support of Reserve Bank of India will be initiated on pilot basis in five cities of Rajasthan. First one will be a launch cum workshop on June 07, 2016 at Jaipur.
- Seminar cum Exhibition at Patna and various other activities under *Grahak Suvidha Kendra* (GSK) will be organised.
- GSK Advisory Committee Second Meeting.



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