

1. World Consumer Rights Day

Why in News?

- Recently, The Department of Consumer Affairs was celebrated World Consumer Rights Day on March 15, 2023. The theme for this year's celebration is "Empowering consumers through clean energy transitions".

Highlights

- The primary focus is to deploy technology to reduce dependence on traditional energy sources like fossil fuels and enable a rapid transition to clean energy solutions that promote sustainability, security, affordability, and access to consumers in the long term
- E-commerce has become one of the most preferred mediums of shopping for consumers. However, there has been a rise in the number of e-commerce grievances registered by consumers on the National Consumer Helpline (NCH).
- Therefore, NCH is being strengthened technologically to receive more complaints and redress common consumer grievances of refund, replacement, and deficiency in service speedily.
- NCH works as an alternate dispute redressal mechanism at the pre-litigation level. NCH is accessible in over 17 languages, including recently added Maithili, Kashmiri, and Santhali languages.
- The E-Daakhil Portal has been set up to facilitate online filing of consumer complaints.
- It provides a hassle-free, speedy, and inexpensive facility to conveniently approach the relevant consumer forum, dispensing the need to travel and be physically present to file their grievance. The objective is to digitise and make it easy for consumers to access justice with the help of technology.
- In line with the LiFE (Lifestyle for environment) movement, the Department has initiated the creation of a "Right to Repair portal" to protect consumers against planned obsolescence, resulting in increasing e-waste.
- The portal is expected to address concerns regarding the price, originality, and warranty of spare parts.
- The Department is planning to organise a hackathon for designing charging solutions that work with wearable devices, with an emphasis on reducing electronic and electrical waste (e-waste) and promoting a more sustainable consumer ecosystem. Wireless charging methods are also being explored, which will help significantly in e-waste proliferation.