



GACs to Address Complaints Against Social Media Platforms

For Prelims: Social Media, Cyber Surakshit Bharat Initiative, Cyber Swachhta Kendra, Online cybercrime reporting portal, Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C).

For Mains: Initiatives Related to Social Media.

Why in News?

Recently, the Union government **notified the formation of three [Grievance Appellate Committees \(GACs\)](#)** that will address user complaints against **social media and other internet-based platforms**.

- These panels will also be **empowered to oversee and revoke content moderation-related decisions taken by these platforms**.

What are GACs?

- **Composition:**
 - Each of the three GACs will have a **chairperson, two whole-time members** from different government entities and **retired senior executives** from the industry **for a term of three years** from the date of assumption of office.
 - **The First Panel:** It will be chaired by the chief executive officer of the [Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre](#) under the [Ministry of Home Affairs](#).
 - **The Second Panel:** It will be chaired by the joint secretary in charge of the Policy and Administration Division in the [Ministry of Information and Broadcasting](#).
 - **The Third Panel:** It will be chaired by a senior scientist at the [Ministry of Electronics and IT \(MeitY\)](#).
- **Solving of Conflicts:**
 - **The GACs will deal with two categories of disputes:**
 - Violation of law and rights of users including the right to free speech and privacy
 - Contractual dispute between a platform's community guidelines and a user
- **Functions:**
 - The GACs will act also **act as a layer of a tech-sector regulator** that the MeitY is expected to prescribe under the **upcoming Digital India Bill**, which is the successor to the [Information Technology Act, 2000](#).
 - The GACs **will adopt an online dispute resolution mechanism** where the entire appeal process, from its filing to the final decision, will be done online.
 - Any person aggrieved by a decision of the grievance officer of a social media intermediary **will be allowed to file an appeal to the GAC within a period of thirty days**.
 - The GAC will **have to deal with the appeal and resolve it within a month of receipt of the appeal**.
- **Significance & Need:**
 - GAC is a critical piece of overall policy and **legal framework to ensure that the internet in India is open, safe & trusted and accountable**.

- The need for GAC was **created due to large numbers of grievances being left unaddressed or unsatisfactorily addressed** by Internet Intermediaries.
- It is **expected to create a culture of responsiveness** amongst all internet platforms and Intermediaries towards their consumers.
- **Criticism:**
 - The proposal has previously drawn criticism over fears that **government-appointed panels will be able to dictate content-moderation decisions** taken by social media firms.

What are Present Government Initiatives for Cyber Security?

- [Cyber Surakshit Bharat Initiative](#)
- [Cyber Swachhta Kendra](#)
- [Online cybercrime reporting portal](#)
- [Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre \(I4C\)](#)
- [National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre \(NCIIPC\)](#)

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. In India, it is legally mandatory for which of the following to report on cyber security incidents? (2017)

1. Service providers
2. Data centres
3. Body corporate

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
(b) 1 and 2 only
(c) 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (d)

Mains

Q. What are social networking sites and what security implications do these sites present? (2013)

Source: IE