



## 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**