

20th Nov, 2024

1. India's Maritime Sector and Sagarmathan GS 2 (Governance)

- **Why in News:** India's maritime sector is growing rapidly and playing an important role in the country's economic rise. In 2023, India contributed 16% to global economic growth and is expected to become the third-largest economy soon. As India's global influence increases, its maritime sector (shipping, ports, etc.) is becoming a key part of its economic and strategic plans.
- **More on News**
 - The importance of India's maritime sector was highlighted during the **first edition of 'Sagarmathan: The Great Oceans Dialogue'** held in New Delhi.
 - The 'Sagarmathan' event was organised by the **Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW)** and the **Observer Research Foundation**.
 - It was aimed to encourage dialogue on sustainable development and the future of the maritime sector.
- **About India's Maritime Sector**
 - India has a **7,500-kilometer coastline**, with **12 major ports** and over **200 minor ports**, making it a key player in global shipping. About **95% of India's trade** by volume is handled through its ports, and **70% by value**.
 - **Global Position:** India ranks as the **16th-largest maritime nation** in the world and is located along the world's busiest shipping routes. Many ships traveling between East Asia, America, Europe, and Africa pass through Indian waters.
 - **Growing Fleet:** India has a fleet of **1,530 ships** (as of 2023), making it a major player in global shipping. It is also the third-largest in the world for **ship recycling**, contributing to **sustainable maritime practices**.
 - **Port Infrastructure:** The cargo-handling capacity of Indian ports has grown by **87%** from 2014 to 2023. This is essential for supporting the nation's expanding trade and economy.
 - **Government Role:** The Indian government has supported growth in the maritime sector through initiatives like:
 - **100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** for port projects.
 - **Tax holidays** for port enterprises to encourage private investment.
- **Key Developments and Initiatives**
 - **Port Efficiency:** Indian ports have improved their efficiency. For example, in **2023-24**, major ports reduced their **container turnaround time** to **57 hours**, beating global benchmarks.
 - **New Shipping Fleet:** India plans to create a **new shipping company** to expand its fleet by at least **1,000 ships** in the next decade, which will help reduce foreign freight costs and increase trade.
 - **Paradip Port:** This port became India's largest by **cargo volume** in FY24, handling **38 million tonnes** of cargo.
 - **Future Investments:** The government plans to invest **\$82 billion** in port infrastructure by **2035**. A **new port at Vadhavan**, Maharashtra, with an estimated cost of **\$9.14 billion**, is a key project.
 - **Green Shipping:** The government is pushing for **eco-friendly shipping practices**. For example, the **Green Tug Transition Program** aims to replace traditional fuel-powered tugs at major ports with cleaner, sustainable options.

'India's vision for free, open maritime network is finding resonance across the world'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Stating that oceans are a shared heritage for nations and societies, as well as the lifeline for international trade, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that over the last decade, the capacity of the country's ports has been doubled. "By enhancing port efficiency, reducing turnaround times and strengthening last-mile connectivity, we have transformed India's shoreline. Today, the security and prosperity of nations is intimately connected to oceans, and recognising the potential of oceans, several transformative steps have been taken to bolster India's maritime capabilities," the Prime Minister said. "Our vision for a free, open and secure maritime network – be it the Indian Ocean or the Indo-Pacific region – is finding resonance across the world."



By enhancing port efficiency, reducing turnaround times and strengthening last-mile connectivity, we have transformed India's shoreline
NARENDRA MODI
Prime Minister

The 'Indo Pacific Oceans Initiative' envisions marine resources as a key pillar for growth for nations. This dialogue on oceans further strengthens the rules-based world order and enhance peace, trust and friendship between nations."

Maritime traditions
Highlighting India's rich maritime legacy and steps taken to build the sector, Mr. Modi said India's maritime tradition goes back several millennia and is among the richest in the world.

The thriving port cities of Lothal and Dholavira, the fleets of the Chola dynasty, the exploits of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj are great inspirations, he added.

The two-day dialogue that started on Monday saw over 1,700 participants, including over 215 delegates from 60 countries.

• Major Government Schemes in Maritime Sector

- **Sagarmala Programme:** A key initiative to improve ports, enhance connectivity, and develop coastal areas. It focuses on port modernization, better roads and railways to ports, and increasing coastal trade.
- **Maritime India Vision (MIV) 2030:** A plan to make India a global maritime leader. It covers over **150 initiatives** across 10 areas, including ports, shipyards, and inland waterways, to boost growth in the next decade.
- **Inland Waterways:** The government is working to develop **26 new national waterways** to ease transportation and reduce congestion on roads and railways.

2. Italy-India Joint Strategic Action Plan 2025-2029 GS 2 (International Relations)

- **Why in News:** India and Italy outlined their vision for deepening bilateral cooperation in the **Joint Strategic Action Plan 2025-29**. The document covers various key sectors, including defence, trade, energy and space. This Action Plan was issued after a meeting between PM Modi and his Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni on the sidelines of G20 summit in Brazil.

• India-Italy bilateral relation

○ Political Relation

- Political relations were established in 1947.
- In November 2020, during a Virtual Summit between PMs of India and Italy, **2020-2025 Action Plan was adopted**.
- PM Modi paid his first official visit to Italy in Oct. 2021 to attend the G20 Summit.
- During this visit, a Joint Statement announcing a **Strategic Partnership on Energy Transition** was issued.
- In March 2023, PM of Italy, Giorgia Meloni, paid a State visit to India. She was also the Chief Guest and Keynote Speaker at the 8th Raisina Dialogue, 2023.
- During this visit, **India and Italy announced the elevation of the bilateral relationship to the level of strategic partnership.**

○ Economic Relation

- In 2023, bilateral trade between India and Italy amounted to €14.34 billion.
 - India's exports to Italy were €9.16 billion, while imports from Italy stood at €5.18 billion, **resulting in a trade surplus of €3.98 billion in India's favor.**
- **Italy is India's 4th largest trading partner in EU**, after Germany, Belgium and Netherlands.
- **Italy is the 18th largest foreign investor in India** with a cumulative FDI inflow of USD 3.53 billion from January 2000 to December 2023.
- Indian investment in Italy is estimated around USD 400 mn.

India and Italy to negotiate defence industrial road map, focus on maritime sector

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

India and Italy agreed to negotiate a defence industrial road map, and agreement for the mutual protection and exchange of classified information as also an agreement on cooperation in the maritime and port sector. This was stated in the Joint Strategic Action Plan 2025-29, which outlines their vision for the next five years.

"Negotiate a defence industrial road map, between the two Ministries of Defence and promote a Memorandum of Understanding between the Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers and the Italian Industries Federation for Aerospace, Defence and Security," the joint action plan said. "Welcome interactions between respective Armed Forces in the framework of Italy's growing interest in the Indo-



The Joint Strategic Action Plan 2025-29 was released outlining both countries' vision. ANI

Pacific Region, aimed at increasing interoperability and cooperation, including negotiations of any useful arrangement supporting such interactions."

On G-20 sidelines

The action plan was issued after the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni on the sidelines of the G-20 summit on Monday in Brazil. "Our talks centred

around deepening ties in defence, security, trade and technology. We also talked about how to boost cooperation in culture, education and other such areas," Mr. Modi said on X after the meeting.

They also agreed to explore avenues of enhanced partnerships and dialogue among public and private stakeholders, focusing on "technology collaboration, co-production and co-development of defence platforms and equipment".

In the last few years, there has been an increase in military-to-military visits between the two countries' armed forces. In a historic maritime engagement, the navies of India and Italy carried out their maiden exercise by Carrier Strike Groups (CSG) off the Goa coast. The sea phase was led by INS Vikramaditya and ITS Cavour along with INS Visakhapatnam and ITS Alpino.

- **Defence**
 - India has a huge "footprint" on Italian soil because of the supreme sacrifice made by Indian Soldiers during the Second world war and for the sake of freedom in Italy.
 - By 1945, a total of 5782 Indian soldiers died in Italy with as many as six of them receiving the VICTORIA CROSS.
 - In February 2023, Italy deployed an official from its Embassy to the Information Fusion Center – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) to strengthen maritime security and support anti-piracy efforts in the Indian Ocean Region.
 - India and Italy are also exploring joint productions in defence and aerospace sectors as well as technology transfers.
 - India and Italy also have a **Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism**.
- **Energy cooperation**
 - In 2021, Strategic Partnership on Energy Transition was inked to advance collaboration on areas like green hydrogen and bio-fuels.
- **Cooperation in Science and Technology**
 - The first India-Italy Innovation Day was held virtually on 14th July 2021. Since then, both the countries are celebrating this event every year.
- **Indian Community in Italy**
 - Estimated at 180,000 including PIOs, it is the third largest community of Indians in Europe after UK and the Netherlands.
- **Key Highlights of Italy-India Joint Strategic Action Plan 2025-2029**
 - **Political Dialogue**
 - Regular meetings between Heads of Government, Foreign, Trade, and Defence Ministers.
 - Annual bilateral consultations between the two Foreign Ministries.
 - Intensify ministerial-level meetings to enhance sectoral cooperation.
 - **Economic Cooperation and Investments**
 - Strengthen bilateral trade, investment, and joint ventures in high-potential sectors (e.g., green technologies, sustainable mobility, food processing, semiconductors).
 - Promote trade fairs, business forums, and industrial partnerships.
 - Advance collaboration in automotive, infrastructure, and advanced manufacturing.
 - **Connectivity**
 - Collaborate on sustainable transport and climate action.
 - Enhance maritime and land infrastructure cooperation, including the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor.
 - Finalize a maritime and port cooperation agreement.
 - **Science, Technology, IT, Innovation, and Start-ups**
 - Expand partnerships in critical technologies like AI, telecom, and digital services.
 - Explore Industry 4.0, clean energy, and critical minerals initiatives involving academia and SMEs.
 - Enhance STEM research collaborations, scholarships, and joint projects.
 - Launch the Indo-Italian Innovation and Incubation Exchange Programme.
 - **Space Sector**
 - Expand ASI-ISRO collaboration on Earth observation, heliophysics, and lunar exploration.
 - Promote peaceful outer space usage and commercial space partnerships.
 - Organize an Italian space delegation visit to India by mid-2025.
 - **Energy Transition**
 - Organize "Tech Summits" to foster industrial partnerships.
 - Collaborate on green hydrogen, biofuels, and renewable energy solutions.
 - Support the Global Biofuels Alliance and International Solar Alliance.

- **Defence Cooperation**
 - Hold annual Joint Defence Consultative meetings and Joint Staff Talks.
 - Enhance interoperability and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.
 - Develop a Defence Industrial Roadmap and MoU between SIDM and AIAD.
 - Focus on maritime cooperation and defence research.
- **Security Cooperation**
 - Enhance cybersecurity, counterterrorism, and capacity-building efforts.
 - Hold yearly Joint Working Group meetings on international terrorism and crime.
 - Share best practices and conclude agreements on classified information protection.
- **Migration and Mobility**
 - Promote safe migration channels and labour training, with a pilot project for health professionals.
 - Enhance student, researcher, and academic mobility.
 - Counter irregular migration effectively.
- **Culture, Academia, Cinema, and Tourism**
 - Foster exchanges between universities and technical education institutions.
 - Collaborate on exhibitions, heritage preservation, and restoration projects.
 - Promote film co-productions and enhance tourism.
 - Strengthen cultural bonds and implement the 2023 Executive Programme of Cultural Cooperation.

3. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G)

GS 2 (Governance)

- **Why in News:** For the first time, the **Union Rural Development Ministry** has introduced **self-surveys** to identify beneficiaries in the second phase of **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G)**. This allows potential beneficiaries to register themselves through a mobile application, Awaas+, designed for data collection.
- **About the Initiative**
 - **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G)** is a flagship rural housing scheme initiated by the Indian government in 2016.
 - The scheme is aimed at providing affordable housing to rural households that lack proper housing facilities, focusing particularly on economically disadvantaged sections of the population.
 - PMAY-G is designed to ensure that every rural family has a pucca house with basic amenities like sanitation, water, and electricity.
 - The first phase of the scheme focused on constructing around **95 crore houses** based on the beneficiary list derived from the **2011 Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC)**.
 - After the success of the first phase, the second phase of the scheme was launched with a revised target to construct **2 crore houses**.
 - The Union Cabinet allocated a total outlay of **₹3,06,137 crore** for the second phase in August 2024. This phase also aims to enhance the scope and inclusivity of the scheme.
- **Progress So Far**
 - **First Phase Completion:** Out of the original target of **95 crore houses**, about **2.67 crore houses** have been completed successfully. This marks a significant achievement in providing housing for rural households.
 - **Chhattisgarh's Lagging Progress:** Chhattisgarh is the only state that has been unable to meet the target for beneficiaries listed under the **SECC 2011**, but the state is expected to catch up in the coming months.
 - **Beneficiaries from SC and ST Communities:** Around **5 crore houses** out of the completed 2.67 crore are for beneficiaries belonging to **Scheduled Castes** and **Scheduled Tribes**.

Govt. allows self-survey for Phase 2 of PM Awas Yojana

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

For the first time since the beginning of the flagship rural housing scheme – Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin – in 2016, the Union Rural Development Ministry is allowing “self-survey” for beneficiaries. For the second phase of the PMAY-G programme, which has a target of 2 crore houses, the Centre is conducting a survey to identify the beneficiaries. As part of this, training of 2.6 lakh surveyors was completed last week.

“This is to ensure that no one is left behind. It also leaves little ground for complaints that a surveyor did not include a household because of bias or prejudice,” an official at the Ministry said.

The government is using mobile application, Awaas+, for recording the data. The limitation for the self survey is that multiple applications or beneficiaries cannot be surveyed using one phone.

In August, the Union Cabinet had sanctioned a total outlay of ₹3,06,137 crore for the second phase of the scheme.

- **Second Phase Target:** The government is focusing on completing the survey and beneficiary identification by **November 30, 2024** to meet the targets for the second phase.

4. Russia's Updated Nuclear Doctrine GS 2 (International Relations)

- **Why in News:** Russian President **Vladimir Putin** approved an updated version of Russia's **nuclear doctrine**, which outlines when Russia **may use its vast nuclear arsenal**. This update comes amid rising tensions with the West, particularly because of **US military aid to Ukraine**. The new doctrine suggests that **long-range missiles** provided by the US to Ukraine could trigger a **nuclear response** from Russia.
- **Key Changes in the Nuclear Doctrine**
 - The new policy document declares that Russia "takes all necessary efforts to reduce the nuclear threat and prevent aggravation of interstate relations that could trigger military conflicts, including nuclear ones".
 - Nuclear deterrence is aimed to ensure that any potential adversary realises the inevitability of retribution in case of an aggression against Russia and its allies.
 - Russia views nuclear weapons as a **last resort** to protect its sovereignty and territory.
 - The doctrine articulates Moscow could use nuclear weapons "in response to the use of nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction" against Russia or its allies.
 - **Conditions for Nuclear Use:** The new doctrine makes it easier for Russia to use nuclear weapons.
 - Main situations where Russia might consider using them:
 - **Nuclear or Mass Destruction Weapons Attacks:** If Russia or its allies are attacked with nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction.
 - **Conventional Attack on Russia or Allies:** If there is an aggression using conventional (non-nuclear) weapons that threatens Russia's sovereignty or territorial integrity.
 - **Attack on Key Military or Government Targets:** If an enemy attacks critical Russian military or government facilities, weakening Russia's ability to retaliate.
 - **Imminent Threats:** If Russia detects an incoming missile or aircraft that poses a significant threat to its territory or allies.
 - **Support from Nuclear Powers:** If a non-nuclear country attacks Russia, but is supported by a nuclear-armed country (like the US), Russia will treat it as an **attack by the entire military bloc**.
 - **Focus on Nuclear-backed Attacks:** One important change is that the new doctrine treats attacks by **non-nuclear countries** supported by nuclear powers (e.g., US-supplied weapons to Ukraine) as a **joint attack**, meaning Russia could target not just the attacker but also the nuclear power backing them.
 - **Goal of Deterrence:** The core purpose remains the **deterrence of aggression**. The doctrine aims to ensure that potential adversaries understand the **inevitable retaliation** they would face if they attack Russia or its allies.
- **Why Did Russia Update Its Nuclear Doctrine?**
 - The new version of the nuclear doctrine was approved shortly after **Ukraine used ATACMS missiles**, supplied by the US, to strike Russian territory.
 - Such missile strikes, especially from **NATO-backed Ukraine**, could trigger a nuclear response according to the new doctrine.

Putin signs revised nuclear doctrine amid Ukraine war

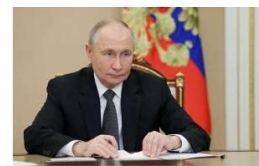
Any massive aerial attack on Russia could trigger a nuclear response, it says; the updated doctrine comes after Biden allowed Ukraine to strike deeper in Russia with longer-range US missiles

Associated Press
MOSCOW

President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday signed a revised nuclear doctrine declaring that a conventional attack on Russia by any nation that is supported by a nuclear power will be considered a joint attack on his country.

Mr. Putin's endorsement of the new nuclear deterrent policy comes on the 1,000th day after he sent troops into Ukraine, on February 24, 2022. It follows U.S. President Joe Biden's decision to let Ukraine strike targets inside Russia with U.S.-supplied longer-range missiles.

The signing of the doctrine, which says that any massive aerial attack on Russia could trigger a nuclear response, demonstrates Mr. Putin's readiness to tap the country's nuclear arsenal to force the West to back down as Moscow presses a slow-moving offensive in Ukraine. Asked whether the up-



New chapter: The endorsement of the new nuclear deterrent policy comes on the 1,000th day of the Ukraine war. REUTERS

dated doctrine was deliberately issued on the heels of Mr. Biden's decision, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said the document was published "in a timely manner" and that Mr. Putin instructed the government to update it earlier this year so that it is "in line with the current situation."

Mr. Putin first announced changes in the nuclear doctrine in September, when he chaired a meeting discussing the proposed revisions. Russia's President has previously warned the U.S.

and other NATO allies that allowing Ukraine to use Western-supplied longer-range weapons to hit Russian territory would mean that Russia and NATO are at war.

'Critical threat'
The updated doctrine states that an attack against Russia by a non-nuclear power with the "participation or support of a nuclear power" will be seen as their "joint attack on the Russian Federation". It adds that Russia could use nuclear weapons in response to a nuclear

strike or a conventional attack posing a "critical threat to sovereignty and territorial integrity" of Russia and its ally Belarus, a vague formulation that leaves broad room for interpretation.

It does not specify whether such an attack would necessarily trigger a nuclear response. It mentions the "uncertainty of scale, time and place of possible use of nuclear deterrence" among the key principles of the nuclear doctrine.

The document also notes that an aggression against Russia by a member of a military bloc or coalition is viewed as "an aggression by the entire bloc," a clear reference to NATO.

At the same time, it spells out conditions for using nuclear weapons in greater detail compared with previous versions of the doctrine, noting they could be used in case of a massive air attack involving ballistic and cruise missiles, aircraft, drones and other flying vehicles.

- **Global Security Concerns and Policy Implications:**

- **Dangerous Precedent:** Russia's actions may embolden other nations like Iran and North Korea to consider or flaunt nuclear capabilities as a deterrent in conventional conflicts. This could lead to an increase in nuclear arsenals globally and undermine efforts toward nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.
- **Erosion of Non-Proliferation Efforts:** The war has highlighted the vulnerabilities of non-nuclear states, potentially motivating them to seek nuclear capabilities. The Budapest Memorandum, where Ukraine gave up its nuclear arsenal for security assurances, now appears ineffective, potentially discouraging future disarmament agreements.
- **Shift in Nuclear Deterrence:** The traditional clear distinction between nuclear and conventional warfare is being blurred. Russia's signaling suggests that nuclear weapons might be considered for coercion in lower-stakes conflicts, thereby altering the global nuclear deterrence landscape.

- **Challenges and Future Implications:**

- **Increased Proliferation Risk:** Smaller states in conflict-prone regions may pursue nuclear capabilities to secure asymmetric advantages in conventional warfare, increasing regional and global proliferation anxieties.
- **Undermining Global Stability:** The potential for tactical nuclear weapon use in conventional conflicts poses severe risks to global stability, threatening to replace the deterrent effect with an escalatory spiral.
- **Need for Revised International Policies:** The international community must reassess and strengthen nuclear non-proliferation treaties and mechanisms to address the emerging threats posed by such nuclear posturing and to ensure global security.

5. Meta to challenge CCI's order on WhatsApp data-sharing policy

Recent events of importance

- **Why in News:**

- WhatsApp plans to appeal the Competition Commission of India's (CCI) ruling imposing a \$25.4 million fine for anti-competitive practices related to its 2021 privacy policy.
- The policy, requiring user data sharing with Meta-owned apps for advertising, sparked concerns over competition and privacy, with allegations that WhatsApp exploited its dominant position to enforce the terms.

- **Competition Commission of India (CCI)**

- **About**

- It is a **statutory body** established in March 2009 under the Competition Act, 2002

- **Objectives:**

- Eliminate practices having adverse effect on competition
- Promote and sustain competition
- Protect the interests of consumers
- Ensure freedom of trade in the markets of India

- **Members:** It consists of one Chairperson and six members who shall be appointed by the Central Government.

Meta 'disagrees' with CCI fine over WhatsApp privacy policy, will appeal it

SOUAMYARENDRA BARIK
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 19

META, WHICH WAS FINED Rs 213 crore by India's competition watchdog over WhatsApp's controversial 2021 privacy policy update, said it "disagrees" with the Competition Commission of India's (CCI) decision and plans to appeal it.

On Monday night, the CCI said it was fining the social media giant for "abusing" its dominant position in relation to the messaging platform's privacy policy update from three years ago over how the privacy policy was implemented, and user data was collected and shared with other Meta companies. "...the 2021 update did not change the privacy of people's personal messages and was offered as a choice for users at the time. We also ensured no one would have their accounts deleted or lose functionality of the WhatsApp service because of this update," Meta said in a statement on Tuesday, following the CCI's decision.

"The update was about introducing optional business features on WhatsApp, and provided further transparency about how we collect and use data. And since that time, WhatsApp has been incredibly valuable to people and businesses, enabling organisations and government institutions to deliver citizen services through COVID and beyond, and as well as

supporting small businesses, all of which furthers the Indian economy. WhatsApp is able to do all of this because it offers services supported by Meta," it added.

Beyond the monetary fine by CCI

The Commission also issued cease-and-desist directions and directed Meta and WhatsApp to implement certain behavioural remedies within a defined timeline. As per the CCI's order, WhatsApp will not be allowed to share user data collected on its platform with other Meta Companies for advertising purposes, for a period of five years.

The CCI said it has concluded that the policy update on a "take-it-or-leave-it" basis "constitutes an imposition of unfair conditions" under the Competition Act. Regarding data sharing between Meta companies, the Commission said that sharing of WhatsApp users' data between Meta companies for purposes

other than providing the messaging service "creates an entry barrier for the rivals of Meta" and "results in denial of market access in the display advertisement market." "Meta has engaged in leveraging its dominant position in the OTT (over the top) messaging apps through smartphones to protect its position in the online display advertising market," in contravention of the Competition Act, the CCI said.

The CCI also said that WhatsApp's privacy policy should include a detailed explanation of the user data shared with other Meta Companies, which should specify the purpose of data sharing, linking each type of data to its corresponding purpose. "Sharing of user data collected on WhatsApp with other Meta Companies... for purposes other than for providing WhatsApp services shall not be made a condition for users to access WhatsApp Service in India," the CCI said.

₹213-CRORE FINE

On Monday night, the CCI said it was fining the social media giant Rs 213 crore for "abusing" its dominant position in relation to WhatsApp's privacy policy update from three years ago.

WhatsApp's privacy policy controversy

In January 2021, WhatsApp had notified users that it was updating its privacy policy - which was mandatory for them to accept - with an expanded scope of data collection and data sharing between Meta companies. While users in India could not opt-out of the updated policy, WhatsApp's users in the European Union could due to the bloc's strong data privacy laws. After the policy update caused furor - with several users quitting the app en masse to join rivals like Signal and Telegram - the CCI, in 2021, initiated suo motu proceedings and ordered its investigative arm, the Office of the Director General, to investigate the policy.

WhatsApp and Facebook had challenged the probe in the Delhi High Court in 2021.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

- **Functions of CCI**
 - The commission is a **quasi-judicial body** who also gives opinions to statutory authorities.
 - It is also mandated to undertake competition advocacy, create public awareness and impart training on competition issues.
 - In order to fulfil its objectives, the commission may:
 - conduct an enquiry into certain kinds of agreements and dominant position of enterprise,
 - determine whether an agreement has AAEC (appreciable adverse effects on competition).
- **WhatsApp's 2021 privacy policy**
 - **About**
 - In January 2021 WhatsApp rolled out a new privacy policy and had given users time till 28 February 2021 to accept and update.
 - The 2021 update introduced significant changes, particularly in sharing user data between WhatsApp and Meta's platforms like Facebook and Instagram.
 - It allowed the sharing of user data, including phone numbers, contacts, and transaction details, for advertising and business-related purposes.
 - WhatsApp claims the update was necessary to improve business features. **It assures users that private messages remain encrypted and secure.**
 - The policy primarily concerns data shared with businesses and third-party apps for targeted ads and customer service integration.
 - **Concerns raised**
 - WhatsApp's 2021 privacy policy sparked global controversy, particularly in India, over concerns about undue control over user data and limited consumer choice, with non-compliance risking app access loss.
 - While WhatsApp claimed the update aimed to enhance business-user communication, **critics feared it would commercialize personal data.**
 - The absence of comprehensive data protection laws in India heightened the backlash, prompting legal scrutiny and the CCI investigation.
 - **Have other countries raised objections?**
 - WhatsApp has faced global legal challenges over its 2021 privacy policy.
 - European Union: In September 2021, Ireland's data regulator fined WhatsApp GBP 225 million for failing to meet transparency requirements under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). WhatsApp has appealed the decision.
- **WhatsApp-CCI dispute**
 - **About**
 - The WhatsApp-CCI dispute involves an investigation into WhatsApp's 2021 privacy policy, which mandated user data sharing with Meta, raising concerns about anti-competitive practices and data privacy violations.
 - **CCI's probe against WhatsApp**
 - The CCI initiated its probe in 2021 to assess whether the policy harmed competition by unfairly exploiting user data
 - The **CCI has now fined Meta \$25.4 million** and directed WhatsApp to stop sharing user data with Meta-owned apps for advertising purposes for the next five years.
 - This investigation is crucial in India, where data protection laws are still evolving. It has also sparked broader discussions about data privacy and competition law.
 - **Timeline of WhatsApp-CCI dispute**
 - January 2021: WhatsApp announced an update to its privacy policy, mandating users to accept terms that included sharing data with Facebook and its subsidiaries.
 - March 2021: The CCI launched a suo moto investigation into the update, citing concerns over potential abuse of dominance and anti-competitive practices.

- April 2021: WhatsApp and Meta challenged the CCI's jurisdiction in the Delhi High Court. The Delhi High Court dismissed the petitions, allowing the CCI to proceed.
- August, 2022: A division bench of the Delhi High Court upheld the single judge's decision, reaffirming the CCI's authority.
- October 2022: The Supreme Court dismissed appeals by WhatsApp and Meta, permitting the investigation to continue.
- November 18, 2024: The CCI fined Meta \$25.4 million and ordered WhatsApp to stop sharing user data with other Meta-owned apps for advertising purposes for five years.
- November 19, 2024: Meta announced its intention to appeal the CCI's decision.



MCQ Current Affairs
20th Nov, 2024

1. Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve lies in which state?

- a) West Bengal
- b) Tamil Nadu
- c) Kerala
- d) Andhra Pradesh

2. Exercise Sanyukt Vimochan, recently in news, is a:

- a) Joint military exercise
- b) Multilateral Maritime exercise
- c) Coastal surveillance exercise
- d) Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) exercise.

3. Consider the following statements regarding the Acute Mountain Sickness:

- A. It occurs when the body cannot acclimatise to high elevation.
- B. It creates a condition called high-altitude cerebral edema (HACE), where fluid collects in the brain.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) A only
- b) B only
- c) A and B
- d) Neither of two

4. Consider the following statements regarding the Binar Space Program:

- A. It aims to advance understanding of the Solar System and lower the barrier for operating in space.
- B. It is a satellite research program belongs to Australia.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) A only
- b) B only
- c) A and B
- d) Neither of two

5. Consider the following statements regarding the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA):

- A. It is an independent international agency to lead a collaborative worldwide movement for doping-free sport.
- B. Its governance and funding are based on an equal partnership between the sport movement and governments of the world.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) A only
- b) B only
- c) A and B
- d) Neither of two

Answers Current Affairs
20th Nov, 2024

1. b
2. d
3. c
4. c
5. c

