



**NAMAN SHARMA**  
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# Daily **CURRENT AFFAIRS**

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 **Offline Centre Location:**  
SCO 173-174, Sector 17C, Chandigarh



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# 1. Centre unveils policy to tackle terror threats

## Why in the News?

The Union Home Ministry has released India's first-ever comprehensive anti-terror policy titled PRAHAAR (National Counter Terrorism Policy and Strategy).

The policy comes in the backdrop of:

- Rising cross-border terrorism
- Increased use of drones and cyber tools
- The April 22, 2025, Pahalgam terror incident
- Growing threats from global terror outfits such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State

The move marks a shift from a reactive to a structured, doctrine-based counter-terror strategy.



**Protection plan**  
India has released its first-ever National Counter Terrorism Policy and Strategy, PRAHAAR

- The nine-page document details the threat-profile, counter-terrorism strategy and the way forward
- It lists key agencies responsible for specific tasks
- It stresses that terrorism is not linked to any specific religion, ethnicity, nationality or civilisation

**Assessing threats:** India has been affected by 'sponsored terrorism,' the policy says.

## Background

India has faced terrorism for decades, including:

- Cross-border terrorism in Jammu & Kashmir
- Left-Wing Extremism
- Urban terror modules and sleeper cells
- Radicalisation via digital platforms

Previously, counter-terror efforts were guided by:

- National Investigation Agency (NIA)
- Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)
- Multi-Agency Centre (MAC) for intelligence sharing
- However, India lacked a formal national counter-terror doctrine integrating land, maritime, air, cyber and economic security dimensions.

- PRAHAAR fills this gap by offering a unified framework.

## **Features**

### **Recognition of Multi-Domain Threats**

The policy acknowledges terrorist threats across:

- Land – infiltration, sleeper cells
- Water – maritime routes, port vulnerability
- Air – drones and aerial logistics

It also identifies Cyber and Digital threats as emerging frontiers.

### **Protection of Critical Infrastructure**

**PRAHAAR highlights the safeguarding of:**

- Power sector
- Railways
- Aviation
- Ports
- Defence installations
- Space & atomic energy facilities

This reflects a shift toward economic security as national security.

### **Tackling Cross-Border Terrorism**

**The policy notes:**

- Sponsored terrorism from across the border
- Use of drones in Punjab and J&K
- Collaboration between terror groups and organised crime networks
- Use of local logistics by foreign-based handlers

### **Cyber Terrorism & Digital Radicalisation**

**The policy flags:**

- Use of social media and encrypted messaging apps
- Dark web operations
- Crypto wallets for terror financing
- Anonymous communication networks
- Drone and robotics misuse

### **CBRNED Threat Awareness**

**The policy highlights risks from:**

- Chemical
- Biological
- Radiological
- Nuclear
- Explosive
- Digital (CBRNED) materials

Preventing access to such materials is identified as a major challenge.

### **Legal & Institutional Reform**

- Legal experts to be involved at every stage of the investigation

- Aim to criminalise all terrorist acts comprehensively
- Denial of funding, weapons, and safe havens
- Standardised anti-terror structures across States

### **Community Engagement & De-radicalisation**

- Engagement with moderate religious leaders
- NGO-led awareness campaigns
- Preventing the recruitment of youth

## **Challenges**

### **Federal Coordination Issues**

- Law & Order is a State subject
- Uniform anti-terror structure may face resistance

### **Cyber & Encryption Barriers**

- End-to-end encryption complicates interception
- Cryptocurrency tracking remains technically demanding

### **Drone Proliferation**

- Cheap drones make surveillance and weaponisation easier
- Border management complexity increases

### **Radicalisation Ecosystem**

- Online echo chambers
- Cross-border propaganda networks

### **Legal Bottlenecks**

- Slow trials in terror cases
- Need to balance national security with civil liberties

## **Way Forward**

### **Strengthen Intelligence Fusion**

- Real-time data sharing between the Centre and the States
- AI-based predictive analysis

### **Cyber Capability Enhancement**

- Indigenous encryption-breaking tools
- Strengthening CERT-In and cyber forensic labs

### **Border & Drone Defence**

- Anti-drone systems deployment

- Coastal radar network strengthening

### **Financial Disruption**

- Stronger AML/CFT enforcement
- Coordination with global frameworks like FATF

### **Fast-Track Terror Courts**

- Specialised prosecutors
- Witness protection mechanisms

### **Community-Based Counter-Radicalisation**

- Digital literacy campaigns
- Rehabilitation pathways for vulnerable youth

### **International Cooperation**

- Intelligence sharing
- Extradition treaties
- Joint counter-terror exercises

### **Conclusion**

PRAHAAR represents a paradigm shift in India's counter-terrorism architecture, moving from event-driven responses to a strategic, multi-domain doctrine. By integrating cyber, economic, maritime, drone and CBRN threats into one unified framework, India signals readiness for 21st-century hybrid terrorism. However, success will depend on:

- Cooperative federalism
- Technological preparedness
- Legal robustness
- Community partnership

If implemented effectively, PRAHAAR could become the backbone of India's long-term national security architecture - transforming counter-terrorism from reaction to prevention.

## **2. Interfaith marriages not prohibited under new U.P. conversion law: HC**

### **Why in the News?**

The Allahabad High Court recently held that interfaith live-in relationships and marriages are not prohibited under the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act, 2021. The Court granted police protection to 12 interfaith live-in couples, observing that none of the partners had converted their religion, and therefore, the anti-conversion law did not apply. The ruling

reinforces the constitutional guarantees of life, liberty, privacy, and freedom of choice under the Constitution of India.

## **Background**

### **Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act, 2021**

The Act was enacted to curb unlawful religious conversions through:

- Misrepresentation
- Force
- Undue influence
- Coercion
- Fraud
- Allurement
- Marriage



#### **It mandates:**

- Prior declaration before conversion
- Magistrate inquiry
- Penal consequences for unlawful conversion

However, it does not prohibit interfaith marriage per se, unless conversion is proven to be unlawful.

#### **Judicial Context: Right to Choose a Partner**

The Supreme Court has repeatedly upheld adult autonomy in matters of marriage and live-in relationships:

- *Shafin Jahan v. Asokan K.M.* – Recognised the right to choose a partner as part of Article 21.
- *Lata Singh v. State of Uttar Pradesh* – Held that inter-caste/interfaith marriages are legal.
- *Shakti Vahini v. Union of India* – Directed protection against honour crimes.

## Observations

### The Bench led by Justice Vivek Kumar Singh observed:

- The Court does not view petitioners “through the lens of religion” but as consenting adults.
- The State has a constitutional duty to protect life and liberty.
- No discrimination can be made based on caste, creed, sex, or religion.
- The anti-conversion law applies only where actual unlawful conversion occurs.
- Even same-sex couples can live together peacefully — therefore, the State cannot object to heterosexual interfaith relationships between consenting adults.

## Features

### Reinforcement of Article 21

- Right to life includes the right to dignity, autonomy, and privacy.
- Choice of partner is integral to personal liberty.

### Religious Neutrality

- The Court treated petitioners as citizens first, not as members of religious communities.

### Limitations on State Power

- The State cannot presume illegality without proof of coercive conversion.

### Protection for Live-in Relationships

- Live-in relationships between consenting adults are legally recognised.
- Police protection was granted to prevent harassment.

## Challenges

### Misuse or Overreach of Anti-Conversion Laws

- Families often file complaints alleging coercion.
- Police action may precede proper inquiry.

### Social Opposition & Honour-Based Pressure

- Interfaith couples face threats from:
  - Families
  - Community groups
  - Vigilante actors

### Administrative Burden

- Mandatory prior declarations may:
  - Violate privacy
  - Lead to harassment

### Communal Polarisation

- Interfaith relationships are often politicised under the narrative of “love jihad.”

## Way Forward

## Clear Guidelines for Enforcement

- Ensure anti-conversion laws apply only when coercion or fraud is proven.

## Police Sensitisation

- Training to uphold:
  - Article 14 (Equality)
  - Article 19 (Freedom)
  - Article 21 (Life and Liberty)

## Strengthening Safe Mechanisms

- Fast-track police protection cells for vulnerable couples.
- Confidential grievance redress mechanisms.

## Judicial Oversight

- Regular monitoring to prevent harassment under conversion laws.

## Public Awareness

- Promote constitutional morality over social morality.

## Conclusion

The ruling of the Allahabad High Court marks an important reaffirmation of constitutional values over social prejudice. By clarifying that interfaith marriages are not prohibited under the Uttar Pradesh anti-conversion law, the Court strengthens:

- Individual autonomy
- Freedom of choice
- Secularism
- Unity in diversity

In a plural society like India, the judgment reinforces that the Constitution protects citizens as individuals first, beyond religion, caste, or community identity.

## 3. Waiting for opportunity to serve people of Bengal: PM

### Why in the News?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi wrote an open letter to the people of West Bengal ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections, stating that he is “waiting for an opportunity to serve” the State. He urged citizens to take an oath to build a “Viksit West Bengal” (Developed West Bengal) by 2026, while criticising the current governance situation and alleging corruption, misrule, and illegal infiltration.

### Background

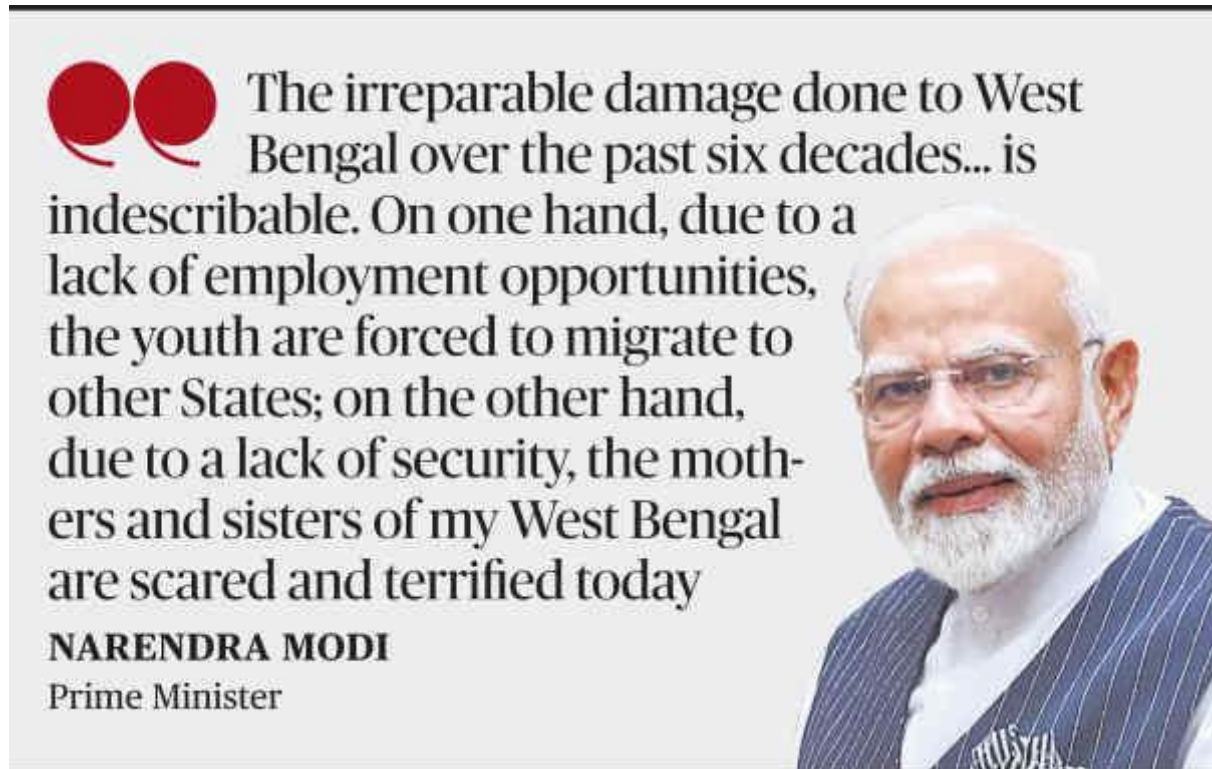
West Bengal

Trinamool Congress

Bharatiya Janata Party

- West Bengal has been governed by the Trinamool Congress (TMC) since 2011.

- The BJP has emerged as the principal opposition party in recent years.
- The 2026 Assembly elections are expected to be politically significant, especially in the backdrop of:
  - Allegations of corruption
  - Migration and employment concerns
  - Law and order issues
  - Border and citizenship debates



**The irreparable damage done to West Bengal over the past six decades... is indescribable. On one hand, due to a lack of employment opportunities, the youth are forced to migrate to other States; on the other hand, due to a lack of security, the mothers and sisters of my West Bengal are scared and terrified today**

**NARENDRA MODI**  
Prime Minister

### **BJP's Outreach Initiative**

**The Bharatiya Janata Party has launched a "Griha Sampak Abhiyan" (household outreach campaign) in February 2026:**

- Door-to-door engagement with voters
- Distribution of the PM's open letter
- Direct mobilisation ahead of elections

This strategy reflects a grassroots political campaign model aimed at voter contact and narrative-building.

### **Features of the Prime Minister's Letter**

- Appeal to Cultural Identity
- The PM invoked Rabindranath Tagore (Kabiguru), quoting:
- "Where the mind is without fear, and the head is held high..."

This attempts to:

- Connect emotionally with Bengali cultural pride
- Frame governance change as moral and civilisational renewal

## **“Viksit West Bengal” Vision**

**Aligned with the national vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, the PM proposed:**

- Freedom from corruption
- Good governance
- Industrial revival
- Women’s safety
- Youth employment

## **Focus on Citizenship & Matua Community**

- Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019
- Matua community
- The PM assured citizenship to refugee communities under the CAA.
- The Matua community, largely composed of migrants from Bangladesh, is politically influential in several constituencies.
- Citizenship assurance remains a key electoral issue in border districts.

## **Highlighting Union Government Schemes**

**The PM cited Central schemes operational in the State:**

- Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana – Banking inclusion
  - Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana – LPG connections
  - Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi – Direct income support
  - Swachh Bharat Mission – Toilet construction
- This reflects the Centre’s emphasis on welfare delivery despite alleged non-cooperation from the State.

## **Challenges Highlighted**

### **Federal Tensions**

- Allegations of non-cooperation between the Centre and the State.
- Political friction may affect the implementation of schemes.

### **Border & Infiltration Debate**

- West Bengal shares a long international border with Bangladesh.
- Illegal migration remains politically sensitive.

### **Employment & Industrial Decline Narrative**

- Claims of youth migration to other States.
- Debate over Bengal’s industrial trajectory.

### **Law & Order Concerns**

- Allegations of violence against women.
- Political clashes during elections.

## **Way Forward**

### **Strengthening Cooperative Federalism**

- Institutional mechanisms for Centre–State coordination.
- Joint development monitoring cells.

## Transparent Welfare Delivery

- Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) expansion.
- Digital tracking of beneficiaries.

## Border Management & Legal Safeguards

- Technology-based border surveillance.
- Humanitarian yet law-bound citizenship processes.

## Industrial Revitalisation

- Ease of Doing Business reforms.
- Revival of MSMEs and manufacturing clusters.

## Electoral Conduct & Governance Reform

- Free and fair elections.
- Strong action against political violence.

## Conclusion

The Prime Minister's letter to West Bengal signals the beginning of an intense political contest ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections.

By invoking cultural pride, welfare delivery, citizenship assurances, and governance reform, the outreach frames the election as a choice between "misrule" and a "Viksit West Bengal."

Beyond political rhetoric, the real test will lie in:

- Addressing employment and migration concerns
- Ensuring women's safety
- Strengthening federal cooperation
- Delivering inclusive development

In a State historically known for intellectual leadership and industrial progress, the coming electoral cycle will shape not only West Bengal's future but also its role in India's broader developmental trajectory

## 4. WhatsApp tells SC it does not share data with Meta

### Why in the News?

WhatsApp has told the Supreme Court that it does not share user data with other platforms of its parent company, Meta Platforms, in violation of privacy norms.

The statement came during a hearing challenging a ₹213.14 crore penalty imposed by the Competition Commission of India (CCI), which was upheld by the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT). The matter raises important questions regarding:

- Data privacy
- User consent
- Market dominance
- Competition law

### Background

#### The 2021 Privacy Policy Controversy

In 2021, WhatsApp updated its privacy policy, requiring users to accept data-sharing terms with Meta. The CCI found that:

- The “take-it-or-leave-it” policy amounted to abuse of dominant position.
- User consent was “manufactured”.
- Users were forced to accept the terms to continue using the service.

It imposed a penalty of ₹213.14 crore and directed corrective measures.

## NCLAT Ruling

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal upheld the penalty but modified certain directions. It emphasised:

- Restoring user choice
- Ensuring that:
  - Non-essential data collection
  - Cross-use (e.g., advertising) must be based on express and revocable consent

## Privacy message

WhatsApp submits its view before SC on user consent and sharing of data with Meta



■ WhatsApp and Meta challenge NCLAT order upholding ₹213.14-crore penalty imposed by CCI

■ Case arises from CCI findings on WhatsApp’s 2021 privacy policy

### KEY ALLEGATION

■ CCI found WhatsApp’s 2021 privacy policy a ‘take-it-or-leave-it’ practice

■ Regulator said users were forced to share data with Meta to keep using the app

■ Tribunal stressed user choice and consent for non-essential data use

### DEFENDING STATEMENTS

■ WhatsApp denies improper sharing, cites encryption and DPDP Act

■ Company says it will follow NCLAT directions by March 16, 2026

■ CCI argued the matter also involves competition law and consumer protection

## Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023

WhatsApp argued before the Supreme Court that:

- The DPDP Act now comprehensively addresses privacy concerns.
- It places a premium on lawful consent and data minimisation.

## Issues Before the Supreme Court Supreme Court of India

The Court is examining:

- Whether WhatsApp abused its dominant position.
- Whether the 2021 privacy policy violated:
  - Competition law
  - Privacy rights
- Whether data-sharing between WhatsApp and Meta is lawful.
- The extent of overlap between:
  - Competition law
  - Data protection law

The Bench had earlier remarked that commercial exploitation of personal data may amount to a “decent way of committing theft,” signalling serious constitutional concerns.

## Features

- Competition Law Dimension
- Under the Competition Act, 2002:
- Abuse of dominant position is prohibited.
- The imposition of unfair conditions on consumers can attract penalties.

## CCI's argument:

- WhatsApp holds dominant market power in instant messaging.
- Users had no meaningful alternative.

## Privacy Dimension

- The right to privacy was recognised as a fundamental right in:
- Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India

## Implications:

- Informational self-determination
- Data autonomy
- Meaningful consent

## Data as Market Power

### CCI argues that data-sharing:

- Strengthens Meta's advertising ecosystem
- Creates entry barriers for competitors
- Distorts digital market competition

Thus, the case goes beyond privacy into digital market concentration.

## Challenges

### Overlap Between Privacy & Competition Law

- Should privacy violations be handled only under DPDP?
- Or can competition regulators intervene?

### Meaningful Consent

- Is “opt-out” consent truly voluntary?
- Are users capable of informed digital choice?

### Market Dominance of Big Tech

- Network effects lock users into platforms.

- Data concentration enhances monopoly power.

## **Regulatory Coordination**

- Need coordination between:
  - CCI
  - Data Protection Board (under DPDP)
  - Telecom & IT regulators

## **Way Forward**

### **Strengthening Consent Architecture**

- Clear opt-in mechanisms.
- Periodic consent renewal.
- Easy revocation.

### **Regulatory Convergence Framework**

- Formal coordination between CCI and Data Protection authorities.

### **Competition in Digital Markets**

- Interoperability mandates.
- Data portability provisions.

### **Judicial Clarity**

- **Supreme Court may clarify:**
  - Boundaries between privacy and competition law.
  - Standards for digital consent.

## **Conclusion**

The WhatsApp–Meta case is not merely about a ₹213.14 crore penalty. It represents a larger constitutional and economic debate on:

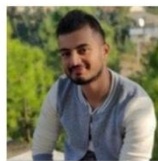
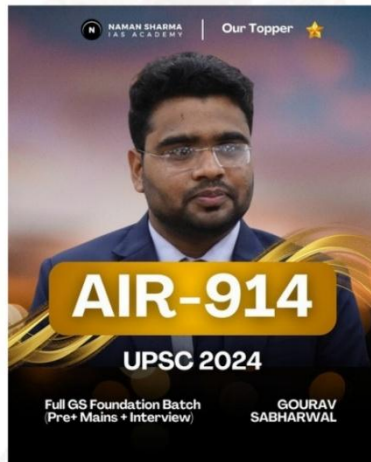
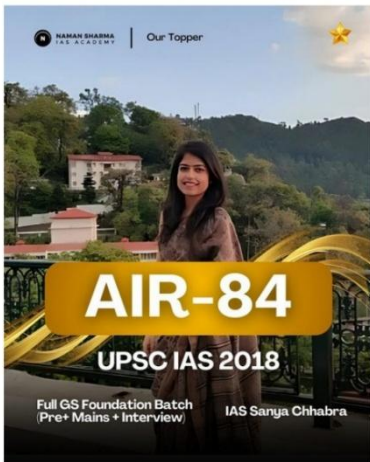
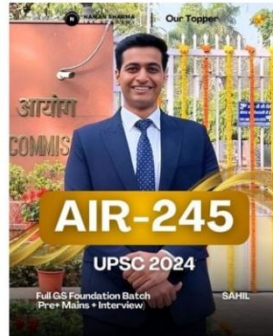
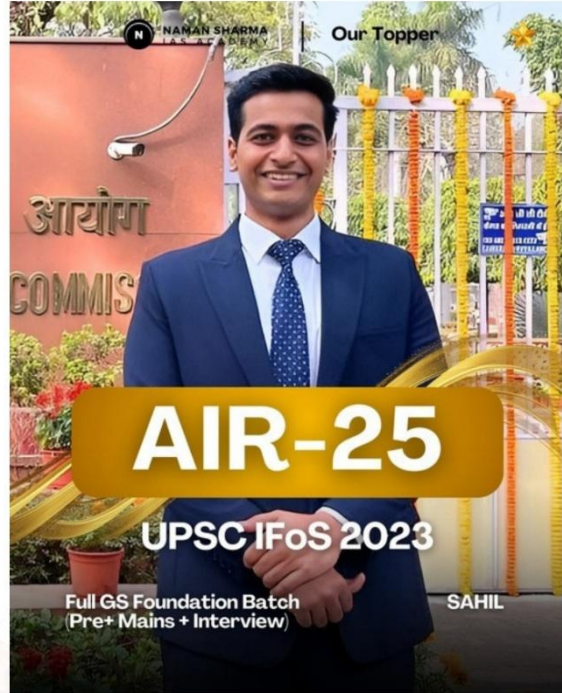
- Data as power
- Consent in digital ecosystems
- Big Tech dominance
- Protection of “silent consumers”

As India strengthens its digital regulatory architecture under the DPDP Act, this case may shape the future contours of:

- Data governance
- Competition enforcement
- Digital market fairness

The Supreme Court’s ruling will likely define how India balances innovation, privacy, and competition in the era of platform capitalism.

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