

Government Instant Messaging System (GIMS)

April 26, 2020

Context: The government is testing a prototype of an Indian equivalent of popular messaging platforms, such as WhatsApp and Telegram, for secure internal use.

- GIMS is the instant messaging platform for Government communication.
- GIMS platform provides GIMS mobile client for instant messaging and GIMS Portal for administration and monitoring of platform.
- It is Designed to suit the hierarchy and communication policies of the government.
- Adaptable to both the central and state government organizations for intra and inter organization communication.
- Designed and developed by the Kerala unit of National Informatics Centre (NIC),
- There are specific provisions in GIMS for documents and media sharing in keeping with the hierarchies in the government system.
- It is being developed as a secure Indian alternative without the security concerns attached with apps hosted abroad or those owned by foreign entities.
- Like WhatsApp, GIMS employs end-to-end encryption for one-to-one messaging
- GIMS is being touted as a safer bet as the platform has been developed in India, the server hosting it is installed within the country and the information stored would be in government-based cloud – NIC-operated data centres that are only meant for captive use by the government and its departments.

Other

- The launch of the new app comes amid the recent controversy over the WhatsApp breach that some Indian users' mobile devices were targeted through a spyware called Pegasus.
- Pegasus spyware was developed by Israel-based NSO Group and it attempted to breach mobile phones of a possible 1,400 users globally, including 121 from India.
- Based on reports on alleged snooping of mobile devices of Indian citizens through WhatsApp using Pegasus, CERT-In (Indian Computer Emergency Response Team) has said it had sought submission of relevant details and information from WhatsApp and NSO group.