

16 May, 2024

Digital Competition Bill

Context: India plans a new digital competition law, mirroring European regulations, to curb tech giants like Google, Facebook, and Amazon from favouring their own services or leveraging data for affiliated companies.

Introduction of the Digital Competition Bill, 2024:

- India proposes a new digital competition law inspired by the EU, targeting tech giants like Google, Facebook, and Amazon.
- The law aims to prevent self-preferencing of services and data exploitation between affiliated companies.
- Heavy penalties, potentially amounting to billions of dollars, are proposed for violations.

Recommendations of Committee:

- Ex-ante Regulation of Digital Competition:** Proposal for Digital Competition Act to enable CCI to regulate large digital enterprises before anti-competitive events occur.
- Systemically Significant Digital Enterprises (SSDEs):** Designation of entities offering core digital services as SSDEs susceptible to market concentration.
- Thresholds for SSDE Classification:** Use of quantitative thresholds and qualitative criteria for SSDE designation based on financial strength and service spread.
- Associate Digital Enterprises (ADEs):** Requirement for group enterprises engaged in core digital services to comply as ADEs.
- Obligations of SSDEs:** Prohibition of certain practices, including favouritism towards own products/services and data use for competition.
- Enforcement of Provisions:** Empowerment of Director General for investigation and enhancement of technical capacity within CCI.
- Penalties:** Adoption of civil penalties based on global turnover, capped at 10% of SSDEs' turnover.

Criticism of the Draft Bill:

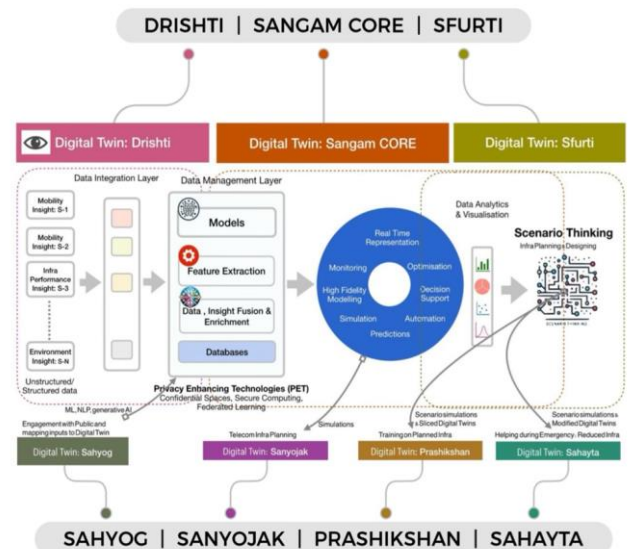
- Resistance from big tech companies, industry bodies, and consultancies due to the stringent regulatory framework and compliance burden.
- Concerns raised about potential impact on innovation and research, as well as arbitrary decision-making by the Competition Commission of India (CCI).
- Companies express apprehension about the broad definition of significant platforms and its potential impact on smaller businesses.

Sangam Initiative

Context: The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) proudly announced the selected participants for Stage 1 of the ground-breaking 'Sangam: Digital Twin with AI-Driven Insights Initiative'.

- Launched on February 15, 2024, the Sangam initiative endeavours to transform infrastructure planning and design.
- It utilises digital twin technology to develop accurate and dynamic models of physical environments.
- This approach facilitates real-time insights and predictive analytics, improving the efficiency and precision of infrastructure projects.
- The initiative integrates telecommunications, computational technologies, sensing, and imaging to create comprehensive digital replicas of physical assets.
- Its goal is to tackle complex challenges in infrastructure development effectively.

SUB-PARTS OF THE 'DIGITAL TWIN: SANGAM'



Spectrum of Expertise

- Geospatial and Structural Specialists:** Organisations and professionals skilled in geospatial digital twins and building information modelling (BIM) are essential for crafting detailed digital replicas of physical spaces and structures.
- Utility Network Professionals:** Experts in geo-tagged utility network information from sectors like power, telecom, and gas provide critical data for infrastructure planning and management.

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- **Data Insight Providers:** Specialists focused on deriving actionable insights from data contribute valuable information for informed planning and response strategies.
- **AI and ML Innovators:** Professionals proficient in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) develop mathematical and graphical models supporting the proof of concept (PoC) functionality.
- **Gaming Engine Experts:** Specialists in gaming engines enable scenario simulation and enhance the PoC's interactive capabilities.
- **Visibility and Synchronisation:** Developing capabilities to "see" and synchronise with the Digital Twin in real-time, providing a comprehensive understanding of infrastructure and its usage. This aspect is named Digital Twin: Drishti.
- **Decision-Making Models:** Creating simulation models to facilitate strategic planning and decision-making, utilising AI and ML for predictive and scenario-based analytics.
- **Contextual Recommendations:** Offering specific, contextual actions based on data and models to enable adaptive and responsive changes in infrastructure management. This aspect is named Digital Twin: Sfurti.

➤ **Challenges and Impact:**

- Clean cooking has seen success in China, India, and Latin America but remains a challenge in Africa.
- Countries like Benin, Ethiopia, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Tanzania still heavily rely on biomass for cooking, with over 80% of the population using traditional methods.

➤ **Health Concerns:**

- The International Energy Agency (IEA) highlights the health risks associated with traditional cooking practices, particularly respiratory diseases affecting women and children.
- Household air pollution from dirty fuels and stoves contributes to 3.2 million annual deaths, with over 600,000 in Africa alone.

➤ **Financial and Environmental Implications:**

- Achieving universal access to clean cooking in Africa would cost an estimated \$4 billion annually, saving forests and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Governments are urged to allocate at least 5% of the \$80 billion spent annually on energy investments to clean cooking solutions.

➤ **Global Support and Commitments:**

- Over \$2.2 billion in pledges were made to support clean cooking initiatives in Africa during the summit.
- Norway allocated \$50 million, while the European Union committed \$431 million for clean cooking activities.
- The African Development Bank pledged \$2 billion over the next decade for clean cooking initiatives.

➤ **Government Commitments:**

- Tanzania aims to have 80% of its population adopt clean cooking methods by 2030, emphasising environmental sustainability and gender equality.
- Countries like Uganda and Mozambique are leading examples by implementing electric cooking devices.

Summit on Clean Cooking in Africa

Context: The Paris summit addressing clean cooking in Africa concludes with global pledges totalling \$2.2 billion.

➤ **Addressing Traditional Cooking Methods:**

- Over 1,000 delegates from nearly 60 countries gathered to tackle health and climate impacts associated with traditional cooking methods prevalent in Africa.
- Currently, over a billion people in Africa rely on charcoal and wood for cooking, posing significant health and environmental risks.

NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

National Socialist Council of Nagaland



The National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) on Wednesday (May 15, 2024) accused the Indian security forces of helping the "Kuki militant groups" to wage war against the "Meitei revolutionary groups" in Myanmar.

➤ **About the National Socialist Council of Nagaland:**




- The National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) is a **Naga separatist and militant group** that operates in the **north-eastern part of India** and northwest **Myanmar**.
- It was founded on **January 31, 1980** by **Isak Chisi Swu, Thuingaleng Muivah** and **S.S. Khaplang**.
- Its main goal is to establish a sovereign Naga state called "**Nagalim**" that would include all Naga-inhabited areas.
- Its ideology includes Naga nationalism, **Christian nationalism**, **Maoism** and **separatism**.
- It was initially formed as a single entity but later split into two factions:
- NSCN-IM (Isak-Muivah faction): **Led by Isak Chishi Swu and Thuingaleng Muivah**, which signed a ceasefire with the Indian government in 1997.
- NSCN-K (Khaplang faction): Led by S.S. Khaplang until his death in 2017, known for its armed resistance against the Indian state.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSCN-IM signed a historic "Framework Agreement" with the Indian government in 2015. The agreement aims at finding a peaceful solution to the Naga issue by recognizing the unique history and culture of the Nagas. The NSCN has been declared a terrorist organization in India under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.
<p>BHISHM Cube</p> 	<p><i>Recently, the Indian Air Force conducted a test of BHISHM Cube for airdrop operations in Agra, Uttar Pradesh.</i></p> <p>About BHISHM Cube:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BHISHM Cube is an indigenous mobile hospital developed by India. It is a component of Project BHISHM (Bharat Health Initiative for Sahyog, Hita and Maitri). It aims to provide rapid and comprehensive medical aid during emergencies anywhere in the country. This demonstrates its potential for deployment in remote or inaccessible areas during emergencies. It is designed to treat up to 200 casualties, making it suitable for handling mass casualties. It is robust, waterproof and lightweight, ensuring durability and ease of deployment.
<p>Igla-S Air Defence Systems</p> 	<p><i>Recently, the Indian Army has procured Russian Igla-S Very Short Range Air Defence Systems under Emergency Procurements.</i></p> <p>About Igla-S Air Defence Systems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Igla-S is a Very Short Range Air Defence System (VSHORAD) developed by Russia. It serves as a portable, shoulder-fired surface-to-air missile system. It is designed to engage low-flying aircraft, helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). It provides a last line of defence for soldiers against aerial threats in battlefield scenarios. Indian Army has contracted Igla-S systems under Emergency Procurements (EP) to address critical air defence requirements. This contract includes launchers, missiles, night sights and a missile testing station. Igla-S systems are being assembled in India by Adani Defence Systems and Technologies Limited (ADSTL) under technology transfer from Rosoboronexport, Russia.
<p>6G Technology</p> 	<p><i>Recently, Electronics and IT Secretary S. Krishnan spoke at the Bharat 6G 2024 Conference in New Delhi, emphasizing the potential of 6G technology to bolster India's digital economy and productivity.</i></p> <p>About 6G Technology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6G is the sixth-generation cellular network expected to operate in untapped radio frequencies, utilizing cognitive technologies like AI for communication multiple times faster than 5G. 6G features include exploration of data transfer via Terahertz waves, AI integration for optimized network performance, enhanced security measures, ultra-reliable low latency communication and utilization of intelligent reflecting surfaces to amplify radio waves. Significance of 6G technology includes promoting sustainability, ensuring energy efficiency and building resilient networks for enhanced security. Applications of 6G technology include on-demand healthcare services, predictive agriculture systems, urban air mobility facilitation, transformative education methods, enhanced IoT (Internet of Things) connectivity and enabling new space exploration capabilities.

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Place in News

Eritrea

Recently, the second round of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) between India and Eritrea took place in New Delhi.

Eritrea (Capital: Asmara)

Location: Eritrea is a country, located in East Africa.

Boundaries: Eritrea shares its borders with **Red Sea** (Northeast and East) **Sudan** (West), **Ethiopia** (South) and **Djibouti** (Southeast).

Physical Features:

- The highest point in Eritrea is **Mount Soira**, also known as Soira Mountain.
- Eritrea has a few seasonal rivers and streams that flow during the rainy season, including the **Anseba River** and the **Barka River**.
- Eritrea is rich in mineral resources, with significant deposits of **gold, copper, zinc, potash**, and other minerals.
- Some of the notable mineral projects in the country include the **Bisha Mine**, which is one of the **highest-grade open-pit copper mines in the world** and the **Zara Gold Project**.

Independence: Eritrea gained independence from Ethiopia in **1993** after a prolonged armed struggle.



POINTS TO PONDER

- Which Egyptian pharaoh is associated with the construction of the Great Pyramid of Giza located on the Giza plateau in Egypt? – **Khufu (Cheops), the second king of Egypt's 4th dynasty**
- Which ministry oversees the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)? – **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**
- Recently, an unknown number of orcas have sunk a sailing yacht after ramming it in Moroccan waters in the Strait of Gibraltar. Which two bodies of water does the Strait of Gibraltar connect? – **Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean**
- What project has the Tamil Nadu Coastal Zone Management Authority recommended for development, with a condition to explore blue flag certification? – **Injambakkam-Akkarai stretch development project**
- Where was the seventh edition of the Indo-U.S. joint counter-terrorism exercise 'Tarkash' held recently? – **Kolkata (held between the India's National Security Guard (NSG) and U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF))**

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