Highlights of January

This month, the United States and China signed the Phase One US-China trade deal covering areas, including intellectual property, technology transfer, trade in food and agriculture products, financial services, macroeconomic policies and currency, expanding trade, and dispute resolution. However, critics claim the deal ignores issues such as subsidies for China’s state-owned enterprises.

The controversy related to the proposed sale of .ORG to Ethos Capital by Internet Society continues. The Office of the Attorney General of the State of California is now seeking information from ICANN on the proposed transfer of the .ORG registry to Ethos Capital, leading ICANN to seek another extension from the PIR board until 20 April 2020. While ISOC, PIR and Ethos have reverted on the questions raised by the members of the US congress and ICANN, however, concerns related to the lack of transparency in the sale process and potential negative impact of the sale (on free speech, rights of internet users, not for profits, etc.) are being voiced by several internet community members and organisations. Six members of the US Congress have written to ICANN, to reject the deal while a newly formed Cooperative Corporation of .ORG Registrants have asked ICANN to transfer the .ORG registry to them. More updates on this topic will be shared in the next newsletter.

The deployment of 5G technology continues to be much debated: US has been advocating against the deployment of 5G networks by Huawei or Chinese companies citing security risks, while China has urged the global community to adopt an “open, equitable, fair and non-discriminatory environment for 5G technology”. Britain this month gave a go ahead to Huawei to build non-core 5G networks, EU in their recently launched toolbox on cyber security of 5G networks has suggested to member states to adopt a balanced approach related to “high risk vendors” and not banning them outright and India has allowed Huawei to participate in 5G trial. Apart from whether Huawei or other Chinese companies pose a security threat or not, the 5G issue compounds owing to the complex nature of the technical, security and geopolitical challenges related to its implementations and we can expect to see this debate go on for some more time.

Security remained a much discussed topic this month and the trend will continue. “The Global Risks report 2020” was released by WEF mentions large scale cyber attacks as one of the major risks of 2020. The EU issued a statement in support of the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime “The Budapest Convention” while stating it did not support the UN General Assembly Resolution “Countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes.” US and Estonia will cooperate to build a joint cyber threat intelligence platform.

The cyber attacks and databreaches reported this month include, the Wyze breach that exposed sensitive data of 2.4 million users, a cyber war between hacker groups of Turkey and Greece; cyber attacks on the Austrain Foreign Ministry, ransomware attack on Forex company Travelex; the servers at the UN office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights being hacked last year; a hacker leaking passwords of half million internet-connected devices in the dark web; the US National Security Agency discovered a cryptographic vulnerability.
in Windows for which Microsoft later released a patch; data breach by Indian Airline company SpiceJet affected 1.2 million users.

The reported **fines for data breaches, privacy violations** this month include, Facebook being fined by Brazil of 1.6 million USD for improper sharing of user data; Facebook to pay 550 million USD to settle a law suit in Illinois for illegally collecting and storing facial recognition data; Dixons Carphone has been fined 500,000 pounds for the data of 14 million people being compromised after a cyber attack.

In terms of **emerging technology**, the US (White House) has published **10 principles** for AI regulation; the Partnership on AI has initiated “Closing Gaps in Responsible AI” project; The UK government has published security requirements for IoT devices; the The US National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) published the second public draft of **recommendations for IoT Device Manufacturers**; the US Senate has passed the Developing and Growing the Internet of Things (DIGIT) Act.

Amidst debate over privacy concerns, **adoption of surveillance technologies** such as facial recognition technology (FRT) continued this month. The London police announced plans to deploy FRT. India plans to install FRT at 983 railway stations. On the other hand, the EU is contemplating a **temporarily ban on the use of FRT in public places**.

Uber ceases to operate in Colombia from 31 January, keeping with a ruling made by the Superintendence of Industry and Commerce (SIC) where the company was found to be skirting the law governing the public transport market. In US, Uber has made changes to align with the new law related to the status of platform workers.

In terms of **digital currency**, WEF has launched a consortium for digital currency governance; the Indian think tank Niti Aayog has released a discussion paper “Blockchain: The India Strategy” recommending Reserve Bank of India to issue a central bank digital currency and Canada issued guidance for cryptocurrency exchanges.

In the **Indian context**, some of the key developments this month include, the Ministry of External Affairs is setting up a new division called New, Emerging and Strategic Technologies (NEST) to act as a nodal agency for issues pertaining to emerging technologies.

The Supreme Court pronounced that the indefinite internet restrictions in Jammu and Kashmir are against the constitution.

In the ongoing Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) issue, the Supreme Court has rejected the review petition filed by the Telecom companies seeking a review of the earlier order asking them to pay Rs 1.47 trillion as past statutory dues by 23 January. While the telecom sector has been requesting the government to waive the interest and penalties on the dues owing to huge financial stress the sector is facing, which is affecting the viability of the sector, the government has clarified that there is no proposal currently being discussed. With the telecom sector being under duress and the critical role it plays in connecting the unconnected, it is expected that this issue would be discussed further.

To prevent sexual abuse of children online and access to online child sexual abuse material (CSAM), a fourteen member adhoc committee has made **forty recommendations** that includes permitting law enforcement agencies to break end-to-end encryption for tracing abusers, make the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) the nodal agency to deal with all child related issues, appoint e-safety commissioners at state levels, mandatory apps in all devices and filters to regulate children's access to pornography content, regulation of online payments for purchasing pictures of children online and strengthen international alliances against child abuse.
Responding to the case against Cryptocurrency ban, the RBI has clarified to the supreme court that while Cryptocurrency is not banned in the country, however, it is illegal for banks to have a working relationship with Cryptocurrency platforms.

The Joint Select Committee (JSC) reviewing the draft Data Protection Bill (PDP Bill) has sought comments on the bill by 25 February.

In a step to be prepared to implement the OECD proposed global digital tax on overseas companies, once the OECD Framework is finalised, India is enabling provisions to make overseas platform that advertises, streams or sells goods to an Indian IP address taxable in the country.

Updates from WEF

The World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2020 was held in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland from 21-24 January. The seven key themes this year were: Tech for good, better business, beyond geopolitics, society and future of work, healthy futures, how to save the planet and fairer economies.

Climate change was much discussed followed by sustainability, growing geopolitics, digital technologies their potential and downsides, and future economy and even refelcted in the remarks of the UN Secretary-General António Guterres at the forum, “if one looks at global politics and geopolitical tensions, with the global economy, and the mega trends – climate change, the movement of people, digitalization – the truth is that they are more and more interlinked, interfering more and more with each other.”

Several reports were released by WEF during this meeting which includes: Shaping the Multiconceptual World 2020 Cybercrime Prevention Principles for Internet Service Providers, Jobs of tomorrow – Mapping Opportunity in the New Economy, Oxfam’s Time to care report and the Global Social Mobility Report 2020.

Highlights of First MAG Meeting

The first IGF 2020 First Open Consultation and MAG Meeting was held in Geneva, Switzerland from 14-16 January. During the meeting a stock taking of the IGF2019 meeting was done and the implementable suggestions for IGF 2020 were summarized, there was a discussion on the charter of the BPF’s for 2020, tentative timelines and events for 2020, approving the MAG working groups for 2020.

Post the meeting there was a call for inputs and feedback for validating the IGF 2020 proposed main tracks (Data Governance, Digital Inclusion and Security, Safety, Stability and Resilience), additional sub themes if required, how to integrate new issues by 6 February.

ICANN Updates

This month, ICANN announced the appointment of Chris Mondini as ICANN Vice President, Stakeholder Engagement, Europe and Managing Director, Brussels and the launch of the Dr. Tarek Kamel Award for Capacity Building. On the much discussed sale of .ORG, ICANN and PIR mutually agreed to extend the date for ICANN to review PIRs submission by another 30 days. Webinars were organized by the third Accountability and Transparency Review Team (ATRT3) on its draft report which is open for comments till 31 January and ICANN’s Draft FY21-25 Operating & Financial Plan and Draft FY21 Operating Plan and Budget.
ICANN is seeking comments from the community on the proposed amendment of the .COM Registry Agreement (RA) by 14 February and the proposed dates for ICANN Public Meetings to be held in 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027 and 2028, the revised dates for ICANN75, Annual General Meeting in 2022 and the second security stability and resiliency review team draft report (SSRT2) by 4 March.

Further, applications are invited for the Community Childcare Grants Pilot Program for ICANN68 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia till 14 March and the community excellence award.

### ISOC Updates

This month, the Internet Society sent an open letter to the Ministry of Electronics and IT, Government of India over concerns related to the draft Intermediary Rules especially related to breaking encryption; created a page to share key points on the .ORG sale; announced the 2020 Chapters Training Program and the results of the Chapter Evaluation, organised a webinar on the 2020 Global action plan; released a paper Major initiatives in Cybersecurity: Public and Private contributions towards increasing cybersecurity.

### APNIC Updates

This month APNIC participated in several events across the region, including Bangladesh Network Operators Group (bdNOG 11) meeting in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh, the Myanmar Internet Exchange and Myanmar Network Operators Group Forum (MMIX MMNNOG Forum 2020) in Yangon, Myanmar, the South Asian Network Operators Group (SANOG 35) in Karachi, Pakistan, where Paul Wilson, DG APNIC, presented a keynote emphasising the need to deploy IPv6 and the role of NOGs in Internet development.

APNIC Meeting:

The APRICOT 2020/ APNIC 49 will be held in Melbourne, Australia from 12 – 21 February (workshops from 12-16 February and conference from 18 – 21). Three policy proposals are expected to be discussed during this meeting: prop-130 related to modification of transfer policies, prop-133 on clarification on Sub-Assignments and prop-134 related to PDP updates.

Nominations are open for two co-chair position of Policy SIG and Cooperation SIG and Chair position of Routing Security/RPKI/* SIG till 16 February.

Upcoming Opportunities:

Registration is now open for a four-day Advanced BGP and Route Origin Validation (ROV) workshop to be held by APNIC with support of MyIX from 13 to 16 April in Puchong, Malaysia with the support of MyIX.

### TRAI Updates

In the month of January, TRAI released the telecom subscription data as on 30 November, 2019 reporting a growth in broadband subscribers to 661.27 million, the Indian telecom services performance indicator report for the quarter ending September, 2019 and the annual report of TRAI for the year 2018-19; issued the Telecommunication Consumers Education and Protection Fund (Fifth Amendment) Regulations, 2020; launched the complaint management system (CMS) portal and app and issued directions to implement Green Technology in the Telecom Sector and submission of the Carbon Footprint Report to all basic, CMTS, UASL, Unified License & UL (VNO) Licensees, international long distance service providers, internet service providers, national long distance service providers and implementation of The Telecom Commercial Communications Customer Preference Regulations (TCCCPR), 2018; extended the comment period on the
consultation papers: Traffic Management Practices (TMPs) and Multi-Stakeholder Body for Net Neutrality to 13 February and counter comments to 27 February 2020 and Transparency in Publishing of Tariff Offers to 7 February and for counter comments to 21 February

For the Broadcasting sector the regulator released a press note on NTO 2.0 highlighting how it provides freedom to stakeholders to price their services while ensuring freedom of choice to consumers. However, the broadcasters have filed cases against NTO 2.0 amendments in Bombay and Gujarat high courts.

Other Updates

Updates:

- The Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) announced the “Self Regulation for Online Curated Content Providers” on Wednesday, naming Hotstar, Voot, Jio, and SonyLiv as signatories. Amazon, Netflix are however not part of this initiative.

Reports & Articles:

- Competition Commission of India has released a report “Market Study of eCommerce in India.”
- The World Economic Forum (WEF) has released a report “Cybercrime Prevention Principles for Internet Service Providers”
- Oxfam has released a report “Time to care” that highlights the increasing economic disparity arising due to flawed and sexist economic system that values the wealth of the privileged few, mostly men, more than the billions of hours of the most essential work – the unpaid and underpaid care work done primarily by women and girls around the world.
- BKC has released a report Principled Artificial Intelligence: Mapping Consensus in Ethical and Rights based Approaches to Principles for AI
- SFLC has released their third report in the series on Intermediary Liability called The Future of Intermediary Liability in India.
- The European Data Protection Board has released Guidelines 1/2020 on processing personal data in the context of connected vehicles and mobility related applications
- CUTS International has released a report “Consumer Impact Assessment of Data Localisation”
- CUTS International has released a report “Competition and Regulation in India 2019”.
- ICANN Office of the CTO has released a paper on 5G Technology.

Events:

- The Dialogue organised a stakeholder Consultation on Platform Accountability on 9 January in New Delhi.
- CCG-NLU organised a round table discussion on the Future of Intermediary Liability and Information Platforms on 13 January in New Delhi.
- SFLC.IN organised a panel discussion on "Controlling Intermediaries- Shrinking Safe Harbour, Dwindling Freedom" on 17 January in New Delhi.
- JANOG 45 was held from 22-24 January in Sapporo, Japan.
- The International Cybersecurity Forum was held in Lille, France from 28-30 January.
- IAMAI organised a round table discussion on 'BhashaBharat' at India Digital Summit on 6 February to discuss on how to continue promoting internet services in local Indian languages and chart a road map for the off-take of e-commerce activities along with Fintech, Healthtech, Edutech, Traveltech etc. and adding 340 million potential users to digital ecosystem by the use of Indic'.
- ORF organised a round table discussion on the Indian data Protection Bill on 7 February in New Delhi.
Other Upcoming Events and Opportunities

Upcoming Events in 2020

- The second substantive session of the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) on development in the field of ICTs in the context of international security will be held from 10-14 February in New York.
- APRICOT 2020 will be held from 12-21 February in Melbourne, Australia.
- The Dialogue and CCG are organizing a Stakeholder Consultation on the building blocks of the Data Protection Authority in India on 18 February.
- 43rd session of the Human Rights Council will be held from 24 February - 20 March in Geneva, Switzerland.
- SFLC.IN is organizing a Panel Discussion on Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019 in 27 January in New Delhi.
- ICANN 67 will be held from 7-12 March in Cancún, Mexico.
- IETF 107 will be held in Vancouver, Canada from 21-27 March.
- 23nd Session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) will be held between 23 - 27 March in Geneva, Switzerland.
- WSIS Forum 2020 will be held from 6 - 9 April in Geneva, Switzerland.
- APRIGF 2020 will be held in Kathmandu, Nepal from 28-31 May.
- ICANN 68 will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 22-25 June.
- The dates of 28th Convergence India 2020 expo has been postponed from 7-9 July. For details visit this link.

Opportunities

- ICANN NomCom positions: There are seven leadership positions for the NomCom2020 to fill up. These include two seats for the ICANN Board of Directors, 1 seat in the GNSO Council, 2 seats on the At Large Advisory Committee, 1 seat in the ccNSO Council and 1 at the PTI Board of Directors. For more details please visit: https://www.icann.org/nomcom2020. Last date to apply is 25 February.
- Workshop proposals are being invited for APRIGF 2020 by 24 February. For more details visit this link.
- Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI) is seeking a Policy and Regulatory Specialist by 28 February. For more details visit this link.
- Application to the European Summer School on Internet Governance (EuroSSIG) which will be held from 19-25 July in Meissen, Germany is open till 31 March and for fellowship until 29 February.
- Registration is open for the seventh Middle East DNS Forum to be held from 24-25 March in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
- Registration is now open for APRIGF 2020 to be held in Kathmandu Nepal.

For Regional Update from Asia visit this link.

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