

## ISSUE BRIEF

# India's Personal Data Protection Act and the Politics of Digital Governance

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The South Asia Center serves as the Atlantic Council's focal point for work on greater South Asia as well as relations between these countries, the neighboring regions, Europe, and the United States. It seeks to foster partnerships with key institutions in the region to establish itself as a forum for dialogue between decision-makers in South Asia, the United States, and NATO. These deliberations cover internal and external security, governance, trade, economic development, education, and other issues. The Center remains committed to working with stakeholders from the region itself, in addition to partners and experts in the United States and Europe, to offer comprehensive analyses and recommendations for policymakers.

In February 2023, the Wall Street Journal heralded the India's emergence as a "global economic power."<sup>1</sup> India's rise can be attributed to improvements in infrastructure, the liberalization of stifling regulation, and a population poised to benefit from the expansion of digital services globalization. India's comparative advantage in high tech services makes the country well-positioned to capitalize on the expansion of the global digital economy. India's \$227 billion technology sector has achieved spectacular growth, with revenues up 15.5 percent in 2022.<sup>2</sup> Exports account for 78 percent of the technology sector's 2022 revenues, and technology exports make up over half of India's total services exports.<sup>3</sup>

India's competitiveness derives from its skilled workforce, relatively low wages, and high English proficiency. First, India accounts for 32 percent of the world's science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) graduates. Forty-three percent of India's STEM graduates are women—a higher proportion than the United States

- 1 Greg Ip, "As India Shakes Off Shackles, It Emerges as Global Economic Power," Wall Street Journal, February 23, 2023 [https://www.wsj.com/articles/as-india-shakes-off-its-shackles-it-emerges-as-a-global-economic-power-431811c0?mod=economy\\_more\\_pos1](https://www.wsj.com/articles/as-india-shakes-off-its-shackles-it-emerges-as-a-global-economic-power-431811c0?mod=economy_more_pos1)
- 2 "Technology Sector in India 2022: Strategic Review," NASSCOM <https://nasscom.in/knowledge-center/publications/technology-sector-india-2022-strategic-review>
- 3 "Technology Sector in India 2022: Strategic Review," NASSCOM <https://nasscom.in/sites/default/files/nasscom-annual-strategic-review-executive-summary-2022.pdf>

(34 percent), Canada (31 percent), and the United Kingdom (38 percent).<sup>4</sup> India adds over 2.5 million software developers to its workforce annually<sup>5</sup> and is expected to surpass the United States with the largest population of developers by 2024.<sup>6</sup> Second, competitive wages drive services export competitiveness. On average, a software engineer in India earns around \$5/hour, in contrast to \$36/hour in the United States.<sup>7</sup> Third, India has 128 million English speakers—the second-highest number globally—making it an attractive consumer market and a key hub for multinational corporations to outsource services.

India recognizes the importance of establishing policy foundations for digital commerce, as cross-border data flows are essential to firms in all sectors, not just in technology. In manufacturing, three dimensional printing and robotics are revolutionizing production processes. Agriculture is benefiting from sensors and analytics, which optimize crop yields and resource usage. Healthcare is being transformed by electronic medical records, health information exchanges, and algorithms that analyze patient data and detect illness. Financial services are using blockchain technologies and AI to enable faster and more secure transactions. All industries rely on electronic payments, data analytics, and cloud storage to streamline various processes. With customers located worldwide, cross-border data flows are the byproduct of digital transactions. Data privacy frameworks can facilitate these flows by building consumer trust, thereby unlocking innovation and efficiency in all sectors.

Given the significance of cross-border data flows to its economy, India has actively engaged in multilateral and bilateral discussions on digital trade governance. It is a member of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), a strategic forum comprising the United States, Japan, India, and Australia, a possible venue for coordination on digital governance. India has also joined the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), a US-led framework for

economic cooperation which will facilitate conversations seeking “high-standard rules of the road in the digital economy, including standards on cross-border data flows and data localization.” The US-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET), launched by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Joe Biden during the Quad summit in May 2022, presents an opportunity to build India-US trade ties through an industry-focused agenda. Finally, India and the United States have launched a new bilateral Defense Industrial Cooperation Roadmap to accelerate technological cooperation.

This issue brief delves into the politics of India’s evolving digital governance, focusing on the draft Digital Personal Data Protection Bill of 2022 (DPDPB). The DPDPB aims to balance the interests of Indian consumers seeking enhanced privacy and data security against the business need for unconstrained data flows. The government’s responsive approach to stakeholder feedback on previous versions of the bill indicates that achieving these goals is feasible. However, concerns persist about ambiguities surrounding data transfers and institutional arrangements that exempt the government from complying with the law in ways that may encourage surveillance and censorship of opposing viewpoints.

### THE DIGITAL PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION BILL IN THE CONTEXT OF INDIA'S DIGITAL GOVERNANCE

In 2015, India launched the Digital India Initiative to provide digital infrastructure and services to Indian citizens, aiming to realize its potential as a digital economy giant. The goal of the Initiative is to transform India into a “digitally empowered society and a knowledge-based economy, by ensuring digital access, digital inclusion, digital empowerment, and bridging the digital divide.”<sup>8</sup> The digitization of public services facilitates the growth of India’s digital economy by expanding access to digital markets. India is an innovator in the ambitious provision of digital public goods and infrastructure.<sup>9</sup>

4 Akanksha Khullar and Nalini Bhandari, “Women in STEM: Is India Doing Better Than the ‘Developed’ World?” The Quint World, July, 23, 2022 <https://www.thequint.com/voices/opinion/over-40-of-indian-stem-graduates-are-women-but-what-about-jobs>

5 “Top Destinations with the Highest Number of Software Developers,” The Scalers <https://thescalers.com/top-destinations-with-the-highest-number-of-software-developers/#3-top-offshore-destinations-to-choose-from>

6 Violet Lieby, “Worldwide Professional Developer Population of 24 Million Projected to Grow amid Shifting Geographical Concentrations,” Evans Data Corporation, June 21, 2019 <https://evansdata.com/press/viewRelease.php?pressID=278>

7 Software Engineer average salary in India, 2023,” In.Talent.com <https://in.talent.com/salary?job=software+engineer#:~:text=The%20average%20software%20engineer%20salary%20in%20India%20is%20%E2%82%B9%201%2C150%2C000,or%20%E2%82%B9%20461%20per%20hour>.

8 <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1885962#:~:text=Government%20has%20launched%20the%20Digital,and%20bridging%20the%20digital%20divide>.

9 <https://hbr.org/2017/11/how-india-is-moving-toward-a-digital-first-economy>

New Delhi recognizes that the goals embedded in the Digital India Initiative require a comprehensive framework for the governance of the digital economy. “With each change in technology, each big quantum jump in the way we live, new challenges come up. We have to find ways...of absorbing technology because it brings many new opportunities and challenges with it,” said Ashwini Vaishnaw, India’s minister of electronics and information technology in 2022.<sup>10</sup> The goal is to “create a legal and regulatory framework which is in tune with times, which matches India’s needs and is built around our realities,” Vaishnaw noted. By establishing the rules for the collection and storage of personal data, the DPDPB represents a key part of the evolving framework.

India is working to become a global leader in digital regulation. The DPDPB is part of India’s broader digital governance, which includes two other “horizontal”: the draft Telecommunications Bill and the forthcoming Digital India Bill.<sup>11</sup> The Telecommunications Bill regulates digital infrastructure in India, while the Digital India Bill will provide an overarching framework for digital regulation. The government is currently holding multi-stakeholder meetings on the Digital India Bill, including with major US companies, to gather feedback on the draft bill before its public release.<sup>12</sup> India is also pushing for digital governance and digital economy issues to be included in the G20 agenda for 2023. India’s G20 presidency is an important opportunity to showcase its successful digital campaigns to the world.

Due to political consultations and industry stakeholder pushback, the DPDPB is the fourth version of a privacy law pursued by the government in recent years. The previous data protection and privacy bill, first proposed in 2019, was withdrawn in August 2022 following strong opposition from foreign and domestic companies across industries.

The opposition centered on certain aspects of the bill, particularly the strict regulations related to cross-border data transfers as well as data localization. These regulations would increase compliance costs and pose privacy and data security concerns while also potentially degrading service quality and creating technical challenges for global services.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, the bill granted the Indian government the authority to request user data from private companies.<sup>14</sup> As a result of these consultations, the government concluded that a new comprehensive legal framework was needed for the digital economy, including a new privacy bill, which led to the development of the DPDPB.

In November 2022, India released the DPDPB, which focuses solely on “personal” data.<sup>15</sup> The stated purpose of the bill is to “to provide for the processing of digital personal data in a manner that recognizes both the right of individuals to protect their personal data and the need to process personal data for lawful purposes, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.”<sup>16</sup> The DPDPB mandates that data fiduciaries (entities that collect and process personal data) obtain consent from data principals (individuals whose personal data is being processed) before processing their personal data. The DPDPB also requires that data fiduciaries implement appropriate security safeguards to protect personal data. According to the Indian government, the bill frames the rights and duties of citizens and the obligations of data fiduciaries to use collected data lawfully.

There are notable changes in the DPDPB relative to its predecessors. First, the new bill removes the data localization requirement, which was among the most contentious provisions proposed in the prior bill.<sup>17</sup> The DPDPB permits cross-border data transfers to destinations “notified by” the Indian government, “after an assessment of such factors as

10 <https://inc42.com/buzz/complete-digital-regulatory-framework-14-16-months-vaishnaw-google-for-india-2022/>

11 <https://inc42.com/buzz/complete-digital-regulatory-framework-14-16-months-vaishnaw-google-for-india-2022/>

12 <https://government.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/governance/govt-to-discuss-with-tech-majors-on-digital-india-act-before-releasing-draft-for-public-opinion/97043185>

13 “USTR Releases 2022 National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers,” Office of the US Trade Representative, March 31, 2022 <https://ustr.gov/about-us/policy-offices/press-office/press-releases/2022/march/ustr-releases-2022-national-trade-estimate-report-foreign-trade-barriers> “2022 Investment Climate Statements: India,” US Department of State, 2022 <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-investment-climate-statements/india> “Global IT Bodies Express Concern Over Data Protection Bill,” Economic Times, March 2, 2022 <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/information-tech/global-it-bodies-express-concern-over-data-protection-bill/articleshow/89930675.cms>

14 Aditya Kalra and Aftab Ahmed, “India nixes privacy bill that alarmed big tech companies, works on new law,” Reuters, August 14, 2022 <https://www.reuters.com/world/india/indian-government-withdraws-data-protection-bill-2022-08-03/>

15 The Digital Personal Data Protection Bill 2022” [https://www.meity.gov.in/writereaddata/files/The%20Digital%20Personal%20Data%20Potection%20Bill%2C%202022\\_0.pdf](https://www.meity.gov.in/writereaddata/files/The%20Digital%20Personal%20Data%20Potection%20Bill%2C%202022_0.pdf)

16 “Digital Personal Data Protection Bill, 2022,” <https://innovateindia.mygov.in/digital-data-protection/>

17 Justin Sherman, “India’s new data bill is a mixed bag for privacy,” Atlantic Council, November 23, 2022 <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/southasiasource/indias-new-data-bill-is-a-mixed-bag-for-privacy/>

it may consider necessary” (Clause 17). Second, the new bill removes criminal liability and incorporates large penalties for non-compliance.

A third set of changes has received considerable criticism from democracy and civil rights advocates. Unlike previous iterations of the data privacy framework, the new bill bestows blanket authority on the government to exempt state agencies from certain provisions of the bill, a change that critics say allows the government to potentially abuse its privileged access to data. To justify these changes, the government controversially claims that “national and public interest is at times greater than the interest of an individual.”<sup>18</sup> A variety of stakeholders disagree, particularly in light of recent moves by the government to control information on the internet. These criticisms gain further salience following the Indian Supreme Court’s landmark judgment in 2017 (*Puttaswamy v. Union of India*) declaring privacy a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution.<sup>19</sup>

## CONCERNS ABOUT INTERNET GOVERNANCE AND FREE SPEECH

One major concern related to internet governance in India is the potential impact on free speech, which has been highlighted by recent crackdowns on internet freedom. In late 2020, as tens of thousands of farmers protested agricultural reforms proposed by the Modi government, protesters and their supporters used social media platforms to amplify their opposition and to express solidarity with the movement. In response, the government requested that Twitter censor accounts it claimed were spreading misinformation.<sup>20</sup> International observers were alarmed by the government’s inclination to censor political messaging over private platforms. This has raised concerns about the potential for such censorship to suppress opposition and limit the free exchange of ideas.

The internet crackdown took a more formal legal turn in 2021 with the introduction of the Information Technology Rules, a set of laws governing online platforms.<sup>21</sup> Several features of these laws generated pushback from US tech companies and civil liberties advocates.<sup>22</sup>

The IT Rules led to charges of increasing government censorship of online platform content. Twitter reported that the Indian government issued thousands of requests for the company to remove content that was critical of the government (though Indian officials assert that content moderation is needed to combat misinformation). In May 2021, the government raided Twitter headquarters following Twitter’s application of a content warning about manipulated information tweeted by an official from Modi’s ruling Bharatiya Janata Party.

A second concerning extension of the IT Rules proposed in January 2023 would require platforms to remove any content that the government deems misinformation.<sup>23</sup> The Editors Guild of India issued a statement urging the government “to expunge this new amendment, and to initiate meaningful consultations with press bodies, media organizations, and other stakeholders on the regulatory framework for digital media, so as to not undermine press freedom.”<sup>24</sup>

Third, the IT Rules also required social media platforms to appoint at least three Indian residents as full-time executives. The move was designed to enforce requests for content removal: local executives would be held criminally liable and face jail time if the platforms did not comply with the requests.<sup>25</sup> When Twitter missed the deadline to appoint Indian executives, the government revoked Twitter’s intermediary status, meaning that it was liable for posted Twitter content. In 2022, Twitter sued the Indian government

18 Munsif Vengattil and Aditya Kalra, “India proposes easier cross-border data transfers under new privacy law,” Reuters, November 18, 2022 <https://www.reuters.com/world/india/india-releases-draft-new-data-protection-bill-2022-11-18/>

19 “Fundamental Right to Privacy,” Supreme Court Observer <https://www.scobserver.in/cases/puttaswamy-v-union-of-india-fundamental-right-to-privacy-case-background/>

20 Varsha Bansa, “India’s Government Wants Total Control of the Internet,” Wired, February 13, 2023 <https://www.wired.com/story/indias-government-wants-total-control-of-the-internet/>

21 These rules are formally known as the Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code.

22 Varsha Bansa, “India’s Government Wants Total Control of the Internet,” Wired, February 13, 2023 <https://www.wired.com/story/indias-government-wants-total-control-of-the-internet/>

23 Varsha Bansa, “India’s Government Wants Total Control of the Internet,” Wired, February 13, 2023 <https://www.wired.com/story/indias-government-wants-total-control-of-the-internet/>

24 “Regulatory framework for digital media should not undermine press freedom: Editors Guild of India,” Economic Times, January 19, 2023 <https://government.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/governance/regulatory-framework-for-digital-media-should-not-undermine-press-freedom-editors-guild-of-india/97113898>

25 Karan Deep Singh and Kate Conger, “Twitter, Challenging Orders to Remove Content, Sues India’s Government,” New York Times, July 8, 2022 <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/05/business/twitter-india-lawsuit.html>

in response to orders that the platform remove content and block certain accounts.<sup>26</sup>

A fourth controversial provision of the IT Rules mandates that messaging platforms make users traceable and identifiable at the request of the Indian authorities. In response to this rule, Meta's WhatsApp filed a lawsuit against the government, arguing that the new rule is incompatible with end-to-end encryption and in violation of personal privacy.<sup>27</sup> Civil rights groups decried the government's overreach and warned that DPDPB should be tailored to avoid codifying an expansion of the government's surveillance powers.

### THE POLITICS OF DIGITAL GOVERNANCE IN INDIA

The DPDPB and the Digital India Bill will be the central pillars of India's digital governance with important implications for digital trade. Digital governance describes the laws and regulations surrounding data and the digital economy. Technology increasingly enables services transactions over the internet, expanding the definition of what is tradeable. Digital trade refers to cross-border exchange of services and goods, enabled by digital technologies such as smartphones, the internet, and online platforms. Digital trade entails cross-border flows of information, including personal data. As digital trade expands, there is a need for governments to upgrade the rules for data collection, processing, and transfer.

While privacy regulations can enhance the security of consumer data, they also run the risk of stifling innovation in the digital economy by increasing the costs of digital transactions. In addition, there is a risk that such regulations can infringe on users' privacy by allowing for excessive government demands for user data. As a result, governments must balance the interests of various stakeholders within

institutional constraints to achieve effective, politically sustainable digital governance.<sup>28</sup> In this context, I assess the political environment of India's digital governance, highlighting the interests of consumers, businesses, and civil society.

Indian consumers have strong data privacy and security concerns. A national survey by OpenText found that 84 percent of respondents were willing to pay more for products and services from companies that prioritize data privacy protection.<sup>29</sup> In a Cisco survey, 59 percent of respondents in India reported making inquiries about their data, the highest among surveyed countries.<sup>30</sup> In terms of regulatory preferences, 71 percent of Indian respondents in a Cisco poll were aware of the data privacy bill, 80 percent believed it would have a positive impact, and only 2 percent expressed negative views.<sup>31</sup>

Turning to business interests, the Indian government has made progress in addressing previously controversial issues. For example, the DPDPB has removed local data storage requirements and now allows personal data to be transferred to "notified" countries, which has been welcomed by firms engaged in digital trade.<sup>32</sup>

However, concerns about the degree of openness in data flows persist. Clause 17 of the DPDPB remains ambiguous, with unclear criteria for destination country notification ("such factors as it [the Centre] may consider necessary"), as well as uncertain requirements for the data fiduciary ("in accordance with such terms and conditions as may be specified"). Furthermore, the bill makes no mention of additional transfer mechanisms, such as standard contractual clauses, which could enable transfers outside India to unnotified destinations. In addition, the Reserve Bank of India's data localization requirements for payment processing companies remain in

26 Karan Deep Singh and Kate Conger, "Twitter, Challenging Orders to Remove Content, Sues India's Government," New York Times, July 8, 2022 <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/05/business/twitter-india-lawsuit.html>

27 Mike Isaac, "WhatsApp Sues India's Government to Stop New Internet Rules," New York Times, June 4, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/25/technology/whatsapp-india-lawsuit.html>

28 Weymouth, Stephen, "Digital Globalization: Politics, Policy, and a Governance Paradox," Cambridge University Press (Elements in International Political Economy series), forthcoming.

29 CRN Team, "84% of Indians prefer doing business with organisations that protect their personal data," CRN India, March 9, 2021 <https://www.crn.in/news/84-of-indians-prefer-doing-business-with-organisations-that-protect-their-personal-data/>

30 Just 34% reported the same in runner-up Brazil. See "Data Transparency's Essential Role in Building Customer Trust," CISCO Secure, 2022, [https://www.cisco.com/c/dam/en\\_us/about/doing\\_business/trust-center/docs/cisco-consumer-privacy-survey-2022.pdf](https://www.cisco.com/c/dam/en_us/about/doing_business/trust-center/docs/cisco-consumer-privacy-survey-2022.pdf)

31 "Data Transparency's Essential Role in Building Customer Trust," CISCO Secure, 2022, [https://www.cisco.com/c/dam/en\\_us/about/doing\\_business/trust-center/docs/cisco-consumer-privacy-survey-2022.pdf](https://www.cisco.com/c/dam/en_us/about/doing_business/trust-center/docs/cisco-consumer-privacy-survey-2022.pdf)

32 Ken Koyanagi, "India's new data protection bill gets Big Tech, startup support," Nikkei Asia, December 8, 2022. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Comment/India-s-new-data-protection-bill-gets-Big-Tech-startup-support>

place, and their future under the new data protection regime is uncertain.<sup>33</sup> If cross-border transfer barriers become too onerous, de facto localization could impede innovation and trade. Therefore, further clarification and guidance are important in this area.

Civil society organizations play a crucial role in advocating for consumer privacy protections and warning against the potential economic and political power of large companies in digital governance. Despite this, some civil society organizations have expressed opposition to certain aspects of the DPDPB. Their objections can be divided into two primary categories: the government's ability to exempt itself from complying with personal data protections, and the perceived lack of independence of the enforcement body.

One significant objection to the DPDPB is that ambiguous provisions and exemptions invite government misuse. Clause 8 specifies circumstances under which personal data processing may be deemed consensual, a provision that privacy advocates argue lacks sufficient clarity. One controversy around this clause centers on the broad criterion of "any public interest in processing for that purpose" (Clause 8.9), which some critics argue can be interpreted in ways that compromise fundamental rights. Other vague criteria, such as "interests of the sovereign," "security of the state," "maintenance of public order," and "friendly relations with foreign states" may be used to violate free expression and due process.<sup>34</sup>

Second, there are concerns surrounding the independence of the enforcement body, the Data Protection Board (DPB). The DPDPB grants the government the authority to appoint and dismiss members of the DPB, as well as establish the terms and conditions of their service.<sup>35</sup> This has led to concerns that the DPB lacks independence from the state. As Anushka Jain from the Internet Freedom Foundation stated, "One of the biggest concerns is that the chief executive of the board

will be appointed by the Union government. In addition, how the data protection board will be formulated has also been left to subsequent rules that will be made by the government. Hence, the independence of the board is in question."<sup>36</sup> These concerns have led to calls for revisions to the DPDPB that would grant the DPB greater autonomy.

An independent DPB is critical for oversight because the enforcement body is tasked with determining compliance with provisions of the law by the government's own data fiduciaries and data processors. Vijayant Singh, senior associate at Ikigai Law, argues that "the central government has concentrated a lot of discretionary and decision-making powers to itself. The role of the data authority contemplated in previous bills has been diluted. Its ability to devise regulations and codes of practice is removed and handed over to the government."<sup>37</sup> Without independent constraints on the government, there is a risk of increased surveillance, privacy violations, and censorship—all of which are concerning given the recent crackdowns on free speech under the IT Rules.

In conclusion, a digital privacy law is a critical aspect of India's digital regulatory framework, with the potential to protect personal information while also promoting innovation and digital trade. However, concerns remain about the DPDPB's restrictiveness of data transfer provisions and the potential misuse of the law to monitor and suppress opposing views. These concerns may require further amendments to enhance India's competitiveness in digital trade while also safeguarding individual rights. As India aims to excel in digital globalization, establishing a data privacy law that maintains a balance between privacy, innovation, and democratic values is of utmost importance.

Interconnected digital economies created by technology and data flows require complex policy coordination among countries for effective governance.<sup>38</sup> To move forward in discussions on digital trade governance, India and the

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33 In 2018, Reserve Bank of India issued data localization guidelines requiring payment companies to store all information related to electronic payments by Indian citizens on servers located in India. (Source: "India's Data Localisation Norms And IT Rules Are Significant Barriers To Digital Trade: US Government," Medianama, April 11, 2022 <https://www.medianama.com/2022/04/223-us-government-data-localisation-trade-barrier/>)

34 "India: Data Protection Bill Fosters State Surveillance," Human Rights Watch, December 22, 2022 <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/12/23/india-data-protection-bill-fosters-state-surveillance>

35 The DPB is tasked with determining non-compliance with the DPDPB, imposing penalties for non-compliance, directing individuals to act in accordance with the law, and directing data fiduciaries to mitigate harm and address data breaches.

36 Gargi Sarkar, "Experts Raise Questions On The Autonomy Of The Proposed Data Protection Board" INC42, November 25, 2022, <https://inc42.com/buzz/autonomy-of-the-proposed-data-protection-board-is-in-question-experts/>

37 Gargi Sarkar, "Experts Raise Questions On The Autonomy Of The Proposed Data Protection Board" INC42, November 25, 2022, <https://inc42.com/buzz/autonomy-of-the-proposed-data-protection-board-is-in-question-experts/>

38 Weymouth, Stephen, "Digital Globalization: Politics, Policy, and a Governance Paradox," Cambridge University Press (Elements in International Political Economy series), forthcoming.

United States can leverage existing venues such as the Quad and IPEF to drive greater alignment on critical digital issues such as cross-border data flows, data protection, and digital commerce. The launch of iCET presents a substantial opportunity to create momentum in India-US trade ties through an industry-focused agenda. Policymakers should work toward creating data privacy frameworks that facilitate cross-border data flows while also protecting consumers. These conversations are essential as they have the potential to unlock innovation and expand trade in all sectors while promoting economic growth.

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Condoleezza Rice

Horst Teltschik

William H. Webster

\*Executive Committee Members

*List as of March 6 2023*





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