

TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES WARY OF LAW ON DIGITAL COMPETITION

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Representatives of Amazon, Google, Netflix, Apple, Facebook Meta, Uber and Twitter appeared before the committee.AFP

To tackle unfair and predatory practices in the digital market space, the parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance in the first week of September will submit a report on how the competition law needs to evolve for the digital market. The majority of the tech companies which were invited to a meeting on Tuesday, however, expressed reservations about the necessity of any additional framework or law.

“In the first week of September, the Standing Committee on Finance will be submitting a report on the evolution of competition law for the digital market. We will take into account India’s unique circumstances; at the same time, we also examine competition laws associated with digital markets around the world,” panel chairperson Jayant Sinha said.

The European Union has recently passed the Digital Markets Act and Digital Services Act; there are several Bills pending in the British Parliament and the U.S. Congress associated with digital markets, he added.

On Tuesday, representatives of Amazon, Google, Netflix, Apple, Facebook Meta, Uber, and Twitter appeared before the panel. A lot of questions were directed at Google and Apple’s practice of restricting developers and companies which put out their apps on their stores from working with the other players. According to the source, Apple representatives argued that they hold a minuscule proportion of the Indian smartphone market, at 1.5% in total, and only 17 developers in India pay them a commission.

“Giving out the numbers, they claimed that since their share in the digital space in India is so low that the question of anti-competitive practices doesn’t arise,” one of the members said. The members made note of the “exclusionary” search engine used by Amazon, which pushes for certain brands that may be partially owned by Amazon parent company over that of local manufacturers. All tech firms have been asked to submit their responses by August 29.

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