Era of digital intelligence

What is the issue?

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- Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations are currently underway.
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- E-commerce is expected to be an important issue of discussion.
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What is the role of digital intelligence in this?

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- E-commerce continues to be a misnomer in the discussions.
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- What is actually under discussion is placing limitations on digital policymaking by any country in the name of promoting e-commerce.
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- Unlike other issues, there is lack of understanding with regards to the real nature of the digital issues involved and the relevant policy requirements.
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- There is no single thing as “data” or its global flows to negotiate about.
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- Instead, there are different kinds of digital services such as banking, retailing, the defence forces, public services, health and education services, etc.
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- Instead of seeing it as a global flow of data, one must see it as a global flow of intelligence.
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- So there should be negotiations about digital services in global trade talks.
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What is the future of digital intelligence?

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- Digital intelligence is going to be by far the single most important economic resource.
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- e.g Artificial Intelligence (AI) is recently named as a new factor of production, along with capital and labour.
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- Countries will be forced to negotiate economically with other countries that supply most of their AI software.
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- Such economic arrangements would reshape today’s geopolitical alliances.
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- There is a possibility of every sector getting organised around a very few centres of sectoral digital intelligence resulting in global consolidation in every sector.
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What is the way forward?

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- India is still lethargic about the current transformations in the IT sector that are taking place along with unprecedented job losses.
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- India should track the inflow and outflow of digital intelligence and apprehend the changes in trends.
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- Following this India must device a digital industrialisation strategy that ensures that the immense value arising from digitally-induced efficiencies in every sector is retained within India to its advantage.
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- This requires an independent digital policy by India to ensure its place in the global platform in future.
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- India should keep these developments in mind in negotiations with countries pushing for predatory global digital business.
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Source: The Hindu

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