

# Goyal Meets Industry Stakeholders on E-commerce, Data Localisation

Opportunities for India in growing digital economy, cross-border data flow, privacy issues on agenda

Our Bureau

**New Delhi:** As India looks to finalise a national e-commerce policy, commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal on Monday held a series of meetings with industry stakeholders on digital trade and data localisation.

“Common issues for discussion include opportunities for India in the growing digital economy, value addition in Indian GDP due to advent of e-

commerce, understanding data flows from four aspects—privacy, security, safety and free choice—ownership and sharing of data, gains and costs of cross-border flow of data and means to monitor use of data,” the commerce and industry minister said in a statement as the series of meetings were on.

The meetings come in the wake of a draft policy on e-commerce in which the government has proposed regulating cross-border data flows, locating computing facilities within the country to ensure job creation and setting up a dedicated data authority for issues related to sharing of community data, asserting that the data generated in the country is a national asset and citizens and the government have a sovereign right over it.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT),

which made public the draft policy for comments in February, has received more than 125 comments.

The US has criticised India’s data localisation norms and draft e-commerce policy terming certain proposals as “most discriminatory and trade-distortive”.

Goyal is meeting the industry representatives in four cohorts.

As per the statement, issues like strengths and weaknesses of Indian companies who may benefit from e-commerce, threats from large foreign competition, level playing field and impact of anti-competitive practices such as predatory pricing and other discriminatory practices are expected to come up for discussion in his meetings with Indian e-commerce firms.

On the other hand, gains and costs

of cross-border flow of data, ownership and sharing of data and efficiency gains and losses on utilising Indian data servers, emails and clouds are likely to be deliberated during his meeting with e-commerce companies.

With Indian information technology firms, Goyal is expected to discuss the likely increase in costs and efficiency losses due to data localisation timeline to create a data infrastructure to comply with data localisation norms. “Anticipated increase in costs and efficiency losses due to data localisation, monitoring use of data from lenses of privacy, security, safety and choice and efficiency gains and losses on utilising Indian data servers, emails, clouds are the issues on the agenda of the minister’s meeting with foreign IT firms,” the government said in the statement.