

Goyal calls for consensus-based decision-making at WTO ministerial meet

NEW DELHI, MAR 28: COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY Minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday said that consensus-based decision-making is the bedrock of the WTO's legitimacy highlighting the need to provide fair opportunity for member countries to participate meaningfully in global trade.

Speaking on 'Decision making including past mandates' on the second day of the WTO Ministerial Conference (MC) 14 in Yaounde, Cameroon, Goyal said that it is important for the WTO not to ignore the sovereign right of each member to not bind itself to rules which they do not agree to.

India stressed the importance of the WTO to undertake a careful stock-taking of the current impasse and the underlying causes, while ensuring discussions remain transparent, inclusive, and member-driven, the Commerce Ministry statement said.

India also highlighted that an integrated multilateral trading system cannot thrive alongside fragmentation within its own institutional framework.

On "Level playing field is-



sues," the minister said that discussions must take into account the asymmetries from the 'Uruguay Round.'

The 'Uruguay Round' (1986-1994) was the eighth and most ambitious round of multilateral trade negotiations conducted under the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) involving 123 countries.

India emphasised that without effective adjudication, rules lose their enforceability which affect smaller economies.

India also cautioned against weaponising trans-

parency to justify trade retaliation or challenge legitimate domestic policies. Instead, it should be accompanied by meaningful and sustained capacity-building support, ensuring that all members can meet obligations fairly and effectively.

India also stressed that all members have a fair opportunity to build productive capacity, create employment, and participate meaningfully in global trade.

On the sidelines of the second day meeting at

WTO, the Minister also held bilateral talks with his counterparts from the US, China, Korea, Switzerland, New Zealand, Canada, Morocco, and Oman.

Discussions were mainly focused on matters related to deepening bilateral ties.

Commerce Secretary Rakesh Agrawal extended India's support for a time-bound restart of reform efforts with milestones, based on a more robust evidentiary analysis and through engagement with submissions and ministerial decisions.

Info Edge commits Rs 250 cr in deep-tech AIF; exits Shopkirana via share-swap deal with TIPL

NEW DELHI, MAR 28: Info Edge (India) Ltd will invest up to Rs 250 crore in an alternative investment fund (AIF) to back early-stage deep-tech companies in the country.

According to a regulatory filing, the company has entered into a contribution agreement with A88 Fund I, a scheme by SEBI-registered A88 Trust.

"Entering into a contribution agreement with A88 Fund I, a scheme launched by A88 Trust, a Trust registered with the Securities and Exchange Board of India as a Category II Alternative Investment Fund a€; to commit a contribution of up to Rs 250 crore in aggregate, directly and/or through wholly-owned subsidiaries, including by Smartweb Internet Services Ltd," the Info Edge regulatory filing said.

The objectives of the Scheme (A88 Fund I) will be to generate long-term growth for the contributors and support the Indian entrepreneurial ecosystem by



investing in early-stage deep tech companies in India (or primarily focused in India)

Info Edge's wholly-owned subsidiary, Smartweb Internet Services Ltd, will act as the sponsor and investment manager for the fund.

In a separate major decision, the company said it is exiting its associate company Shopkirana E Trading Pvt Ltd through a share-

swap agreement with Singapore-based Trustroot Internet Pvt Ltd (TIPL).

Under the agreement, Info Edge's wholly-owned subsidiary, Startup Investments (Holding) Limited (SIHL), will transfer its entire 26.14 per cent stake in Shopkirana to TIPL. The stake transfer is valued at USD 32.97 million.

In full settlement of this transfer, TIPL will issue

1,04,868 preference shares to SIHL, which translates to a 2.021 per cent stake in the Singaporean firm.

Alongside the share swap, SIHL will also make a primary capital infusion of USD 1.72 million into TIPL to subscribe to an additional 5,484 preference shares.

Both transactions with TIPL are expected to be completed by June 30, 2026. (PTI)

Amit Shah releases 'charge sheet' against TMC Govt, says Bengal polls key to nation's security

KOLKATA, MAR 28: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday sharpened the BJP's campaign pitch for the West Bengal Assembly polls by publishing a 'charge sheet' against the TMC government and framing the election as a battle not merely for the state, but for the country's security.

Launching a broadside at the ruling TMC in Kolkata, Shah alleged that during its 15-year rule, the state had become the country's "principal corridor for infiltration, appeasement politics and border insecurity".

"The Bengal election is important not only for the state but for the entire country. The security of the country is, in a way, linked to the Bengal election," Shah said.

Arguing that infiltration routes through Assam had been "shut" after the BJP came to power there, Shah claimed West Bengal was



now "the only remaining route" for infiltration.

"West Bengal is the only state from where infiltrators are entering the country and creating disturbances," he said. The BJP leader repeatedly linked the issue to what he described as the TMC's

"appeasement and vote-bank politics," accusing the state government of obstructing efforts to strengthen border management. Shah alleged that the Mamata Banerjee government had not provided land for border fencing despite re-

peated requests from the Centre and added that the refusal was "politically motivated".

"The TMC government has not provided land for border fencing as they want to create a vote-bank of infiltrators," Shah alleged. (PTI)

India among countries with highest total maternal deaths in 2023: Global analysis

NEW DELHI, MAR 28: India was among the countries in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa with the highest number of maternal deaths in 2023 of 24,700, translating to a maternal mortality ratio of 116 per one lakh livebirths, according to a new global analysis published in The Lancet Obstetrics, Gynaecology, and Women's Health journal.

Estimates suggest that Pakistan saw a total of 10,300 maternal deaths the same year, while the African countries of Ethiopia and Nigeria had 11,900 and 32,900 maternal deaths, respectively.

Researchers, led by those from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington and global collaborators, noted that though maternal deaths have declined over the past three decades, progress has slowed in recent years and

remains uneven across countries.

The Global Burden of Disease (GBD) 2023 research provides the most up-to-date global assessment of maternal mortality trends across 204 countries and territories through 2023, they said.

According to the latest Sample Registration System (SRS) 2021-23, the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) of the country stands at 88 per lakh live births.

A source in the Union Health Ministry said that the figure demonstrates progress in ensuring safe pregnancies and childbirth.

"Our progress in maternal health is globally recognised and according to the latest United Nations Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group (UN-MMEIG) Report, India has achieved an 86 per cent reduction in MMR since 1990, which far exceeds the global average of 48 per cent. This

accomplishment underscores India's commitment to meeting Sustainable Development Goals benchmark of reducing MMR below 70 by 2030," the source said.

The world saw a total of 2.4 lakh maternal deaths in 2023, which equates to a global maternal mortality ratio of 190.5 maternal deaths per one lakh livebirths — a decline by more than one-third from 321 maternal deaths per one lakh livebirths in 1990, the researchers estimated.

However, 104 of 204 countries and territories have yet to meet the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target of a maternal mortality ratio of under 70 per one lakh livebirths, the team said.

While leading causes of maternal deaths were found to vary by location, maternal haemorrhage and hypertensive disorders of pregnancy were responsible for the

largest share of deaths globally.

Improved access to antenatal care, safe delivery services, emergency obstetric care, and post-partum follow-up could substantially reduce mortality, especially in countries with the highest burdens, the researchers said. The COVID-19 infection also led to increases in maternal mortality early in the pandemic.

Before widespread vaccination during 2020-2021, COVID-19 caused temporary increases in maternal deaths in regions and locations with a high COVID-19 mortality, the team said.

With less than five years remaining to meet the SDG target, a renewed global action and sustained investment will be needed to accelerate progress, strengthen health systems, and improve countries' ability to monitor and reduce maternal mortality. (PTI)

Rentomojo files draft papers with Sebi for IPO; plans Rs 150-cr fresh issue

NEW DELHI, Mar 28: Rentomojo Ltd, an online rental and subscription platform for home furniture and appliances, has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to raise funds through an initial public offering (IPO).

The proposed IPO comprises a fresh issue of equity shares aggregating up to Rs 150 crore and an offer-for-sale (OFS) of up to 2,83,99,567 equity shares by existing shareholders, according to the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) filed on Friday.

The company proposes to utilise the proceeds from the fresh issue towards pay-



ment of debt, lease rentals or licence fees for its warehouses and experience stores, and for general corporate purposes.

Founded by Geetansh Bania, the company operates a technology-driven,

full-stack direct-to-consumer (D2C) platform offering rental and subscription services for furniture and home appliances across India.

Rentomojo is the largest player in the organised online rental segment for fur-

niture and appliances, with an estimated market share of 42-47 per cent based on subscription revenue in FY2025, as per a Redseer report cited in the draft papers. As of September 30, 2025, the company had over 2.27 lakh live subscribers across 22 cities, supported by a network of 21 warehouses.

On the financial front, revenue from operations stood at Rs 265.96 crore for the full fiscal year 2025 and profit after tax at Rs 43.11 crore for FY2025.

Motilal Oswal Investment Advisors, Axis Capital and IIFL Capital Services are the book-running lead managers to the issue. (PTI)

Govt revises PM E-DRIVE scheme, sets new deadlines for e-scooters, e-rickshaws

NEW DELHI, MAR 28: The Government has revised the PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE) Scheme to set new deadlines and unit caps for e-scooters and e-rickshaws.

The Centre has revised the guidelines under the Rs 10,900 crore PM E-DRIVE scheme, whereby electric two-wheelers registered till July 31, 2026 and electric three-wheelers (e-rickshaws and e-carts) registered till March 31, 2028, shall be eligible for incentives.

The maximum ex-factory price to avail an incentive is capped at Rs 1.5 lakh for electric two-wheelers and Rs 2.5 lakh for electric three-wheelers (e-rickshaws and e-carts).

The PM E-DRIVE Scheme is a fund-limited scheme. The total payout under the Scheme shall be limited to the scheme outlay of Rs 10,900 crore.

"In case the funds for the Scheme or its relevant sub-components are exhausted prior to the terminal date of



the Scheme, i.e. 31 March 2028, then the Scheme or its relevant sub-components will be closed accordingly, i.e. no further claims will be entertained," the Heavy Industries Ministry said in a notification.

However, the terminal date for registered electric two-wheelers shall be July 31, 2026, and the terminal date for registered electric

three-wheelers (e-rickshaws & e-carts) shall be March 31, 2028, the notification added.

A terminal date under a scheme refers to the final deadline or cut-off date by which a specific action must be completed, or a beneficiary must be registered to become eligible for the scheme's benefits.

As the target for sub-com-

ponent registered electric three-wheelers (L5) has already been achieved, this segment was closed on December 26, 2025.

Under PM E-DRIVE, the maximum number of registered vehicles to be supported has been capped at 24,79,120 for electric two-wheelers and 39,034 for e-Rickshaws and e-Carts. (PTI)

Govt releases new TV Ratings Policy; defines standards for registration, accountability

NEW DELHI, MAR 28: The Government on Friday released the TV Ratings Policy 2026, which sets out comprehensive guidelines for regulating television ratings in the country with the aim of ensuring transparency, independence and accountability in audience measurement.

The policy defines clear standards for the registration, operation, audit, and oversight of agencies providing TV rating services, an official statement said.

The TV Rating Policy 2026 replaces the existing guidelines for TV rating agencies in India issued on January 16,

2014. It is available on the website of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB).

Key highlights of the policy include ensuring ease in entry norms and reduction of the net worth requirement for a company willing to register as a TV rating agency from the existing Rs 20 crore to Rs 5 crore.

Strict anti-conflict measures include ensuring neutrality and the policy providing that at least 50 per cent of the board of directors must be independent directors with no ties to broadcasters, advertisers or advertising agencies.

Additionally, agencies have been prohibited from engaging in consultancy roles that could create conflicts of interest. For enhanced sample size and representative data, agencies must scale up their operations to 80,000 metered homes within 18 months (six months for existing rating agencies), eventually reaching 1,20,000 homes to improve data accuracy.

Measurement must be technology-neutral, capturing data across Cable, DTH, OTT, and connected TVs and the data shall be captured from all the TV viewing screens of the metered homes.

RBI injects Rs 65,322 cr in banking system via 6-day variable rate repo auction

MUMBAI, MAR 28: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday injected Rs 65,322 crore of banking liquidity into the banking system through a six-day variable rate repo (VRR) auction.

The RBI injected the funds at a cut-off rate of 5.26 per cent and a weighted average rate of 5.29 per cent, the central bank said in a release.

The liquidity injected was lower than the notified amount of Rs 75,000 crore, despite the sharp drop in surplus liquidity in the banking system due to advance tax

payments and GST outflows.

Currently, liquidity in the banking system is estimated to be in surplus of around Rs 48,698.38 crore as on March 26. In the last few days, the central bank infused transient liquidity of Rs 2,08,208 crore into the banking sys-

tem through VRR auctions of various tenures. Before this, RBI had infused Rs 3.50 lakh crore of durable liquidity into the banking system through open market purchase (OMO) of Government securities since January 2026. (PTI)