

AFTER GOVT GIVES INDUSTRY TIME UNTIL OCT 31...

IT Hardware Cos: Defer Curbs by 9-12 Months

Tell MeitY officials they would need the time to set up India manufacturing

Subhrojit Mallick & Aashish Aryan

New Delhi: Apple, Dell, HP, Acer and others have sought an extension of nine months to a year of the deadline for licences required for the import of laptops, tablets, all-in-one personal computers and other items, people familiar with the matter said.

In a meeting with senior ministry of electronics and information technology (MeitY) officials on Tuesday, executives of these companies said they would need this time to set up manufacturing facilities in India.

"The companies need reasonable time to set up manufacturing. We are also unsure about the process for licensing, and the data needed from us. So, we will need this time," one of the industry executives present at the meeting said.

The government said last week that a licence will be needed for the

import of laptops, tablets, all-in-one personal computers, ultra-small factor computers and servers after August 31. A day later, following a meeting of electronics company executives with senior officials from the IT ministry as well as the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), the government gave the industry time until October 31.

"For clearance of import consignments with effect from November 1, 2023, a valid licence for restricted imports is required," the DGFT said, announcing the extension. These imports are allowed freely at present. Representatives of the major hardware companies as well as those of the lobby groups Manufacturing Association of IT Hardware (MAIT) and the India Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA) attended the closed-door meeting, the people said. Apple, Dell, HP and Acer didn't respond to queries.

The government assured the in-

dustry that the import licensing norms for specified electronics items were not to discourage or ban imports but to minimise them and look at ways of promoting exports from India by augmenting domestic manufacturing capabilities, officials said.

Apart from foreign original equipment manufacturers (OEM), government officials also met senior executives from Indian OEMs and sought details of their production capacity and the time needed to ramp up, the people said.