Govt Nod for IT Hardware Imports

Authorisation to help monitor shipments without hurting supply

Import Check

Import Management System to cover 7 products

Laptop, tablet, all-in-one PC, ultra small form factor computer & servers covered

Measure within WTO framework

Aim is to develop trusted supply chain, boost local production

TOP IMPORT SOURCES

	FY23 ($ m)	Share (%)
China	5118.4	59
Singapore	1404.4	16
Hong Kong	807.5	9
US	344.7	4
Malaysia	324.8	4
Taiwan	272.5	3
Netherland	132.8	2
Vietnam	125.9	1

Our Bureau

New Delhi: India, on Thursday, launched a new online system of authorisation for imports of laptops, tablets and personal computers, aiming to monitor shipments of such hardware without hurting market supply.

Director general of Foreign Trade (DGFT) Santosh Kumar Sarangi said that policy tweaks seek to monitor the imports of these products to ensure that they were coming from "trusted" sources. The import authorisation will remain valid till September 30, 2024.

An industry expert said around 100 applications are pending with the government for import of ICT products which would be processed now after the newly launched portal.

"We need data to see if imports are coming from one source. We need to monitor them as 2-3 countries such as China, Singapore and Hong Kong account for more than 80% of these imported goods," said an official.

The new system will come into force from November 1 but importers were allowed to apply for import authorisation from from Thursday. There will be no restrictions based on quantity, value, country or origin. The government will not reject any import requests and will only use the data for monitoring, the official said.

"There is no withdrawal of any notification...only clarification and policy tweaks have been done," Sarangi said.

In August, the government placed these products in the restricted imports category, making licence mandatory to import them.

A day later, following a meeting of electronics firm executives with senior officials from the IT ministry, as well as the DGFT, the government extended the deadline for implementation until October 31.

"Though an online system has been put in place, these IT hardware products are still "under the restricted" category and "there is no change in that", Sarangi said, adding that importers would not be required to register to seek authorisation.

The importers are allowed to apply for multiple authorisations. While seeking the authorisation, an importer will have to provide an import item summary, and details of past import, export, and turnover.

India imported IT produces worth $8.7 billion in the 2022-23 financial year (FY23) against $10.3 billion in FY22 and $7.1 billion in FY21.

On the post-September 2024 scenarios, S Krishnan, secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, said that the government will study the data, interact with the industry, and then decide on ways to move forward.

The India Cellular and Electronics Association said that the decision to "maintain restriction-free imports of laptops and tablets until September 2024" comes as a vital support to the industry and "addresses immediate industry concerns".