

Government may bring next draft of e-commerce policy in 10 days

The government is trying to bring out the next draft of the ecommerce policy within the next 10 days, a senior commerce department official said on Wednesday.

“We are trying to bring out the next draft in ten days” the official said in an interaction with various seller associations including the All India Online Vendors Association and Confederation of All India Traders.

The department of commerce came out with the first draft of the policy last week.

The sellers highlighted the draft policy’s proposal to allow 49% foreign direct investment (FDI) in inventory model as long as Indian goods are sold, which is currently banned.

They reasoned that this maybe intended to help MSMEs but will very much harm traders who after all still largely sell Indian goods.

The meeting comes in the wake of industry and individual companies raising concerns over clauses related to data localisation, contradictions in Press Note 3, deep discounts, preference to RuPay and digital products in the draft ecommerce policy.

“Offline and online are different models...we need strong implementation of this policy,” said Ashwani Mahajan, national co-convener of Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM), an affiliate of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and asked for a rollback of the FDI in inventory model clause at the interaction.

Officials from Snapdeal and MasterCard attended the meeting.

Though the policy talks about setting up an ecommerce regulator, the associations said the draft doesn’t mention the “important task of adjudicating disputes between online vendors and ecommerce companies which is a long standing demand by online vendor groups”.

Sellers also raised the “questionable role” of commerce ministry in the drafting of this policy.

Another representative raised the issue of waste generation, waste disposal and the environmental impact of packaging done by ecommerce companies.

(Economic Times)