

Industry Wants Govt to Give it More Time

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Self-sealing is available to a small category of exporters, but most do not opt for it as their containers are then opened at ports. Sealing in presence of excise inspector, despite the attendant issues, ensured that containers were not opened later.

The latest move is also in line with the rollout of goods and services tax (GST) that allows seamless flow of information about company and its business to tax authorities, thus eliminating the need of the presence of inspectors during sealing. The industry, however, wants the government to give it some time to sort out the technology aspect of the process for a smooth transition.

"We have asked the Central Board of Excise and Customs to give us some more time," said Ajay Sahai, director general, Federation of Indian Export Organisations. India is placed 133 in the World Bank's ease of doing business rankings, though it made substantial improvement in its performance on the Customs front. The government has adopted a national trade facilitation action plan while the SWIFT system allows importers and exporters to file just one form at ports for clearance from all agencies including the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, Drug Controller General of India and Plant Quarantine and Wildlife Crime Control Bureau.

The foreign trade policy announced in 2015 has set export target of \$900 billion by 2020. In 2016-17, India's merchandise shipments aggregated at \$275 billion.