

## **WTO sets up dispute panel on India's import duties on ICT products**

The World Trade Organization (WTO) on Monday agreed to a second request from the EU to establish an adjudication panel over India's customs duties on imports of certain information and communications technology (ICT) products, including mobile phones, taking the dispute up a notch.

However, New Delhi blocked the complaints by Japan and Chinese Taipei to setup panels.

While the EU asked India to agree to establish a single panel to review the three complaints, India said it was disappointed with the EU request. Since India had blocked the EU's request for a panel in February, it can't do so a second time as per WTO rules.

Consultations on the issue took place last year but failed to settle the dispute prompting the EU's request for a panel.

As per a Geneva-based trade official, the EU said it sought to address the matter with India through consultations but without success, with 400 million euros in annual ICT exports to India affected by the duties

The dispute is crucial for India as losing it will directly benefit China, from where India imported telecom equipment parts worth \$3.4 billion and mobile phones worth \$665.21 million in the April-February period of 2019-20. While China is involved in consultations on the issue with India, it has not asked for a panel.

India said the complaints seriously undermine its sovereignty as it goes beyond its commitments under the first ITA agreement (ITA-I).

**Source : The Economic Times**