

e-waste poses a big challenge, says expert

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Recycling and proper disposal of growing e-waste has become a major challenge that the government must address without delay by putting in place a policy and legal framework, says Vinnie Mehta, executive director of the IT Products Manufacturers Association (MAIT).

"Even at the current low levels of IT penetration, the country has been generating huge quantities of e-waste and the quantum was increasing with each passing day. A recent study conducted by MAIT revealed that 3.3 lakh tonne e-waste was generated in 2007 and the figure was likely to touch 4.7 lakh tonne by 2011," said Mehta, who was in the city to attend a conference today.

"The emerging scenario made it imperative to enact a legislation to ensure environment-friendly management of e-waste. MAIT is in touch with the Union Ministry of Environment and Forest and the Central Pollution Control Board in this regard," Mehta added.

He said the best option was to make recycling mandatory for the suppliers of personal computers and other IT products. This could be achieved by going in for tenders with a provision casting responsibility on the producer to "take back" used products.

Regarding the low penetration of IT in Himachal, he said the state government could come out with a scheme to provide soft loans to employees for purchase of personal computers right down to class IV employees. Computer literacy was important to enable people to take full advantage of the e-services being provided by various departments.

The target should be to ensure that every home had a personal computer. In Goa, the government had launched a scheme to provide all schoolchildren with computers. A state like Himachal, which had been doing well in education and other sectors, could aim for similar targets.