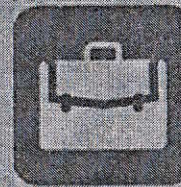


CBIC Vetting Fully Paperless Customs Compliance Framework for SEZs

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New Delhi: A proposal for a completely paperless customs compliance framework for special economic zones (SEZs) is being reviewed by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), said officials. The framework will be in sync with new legislation proposed by the Centre to turn the SEZs into comprehensive economic hubs, with larger participation of states and further ease of compliance to attract investment. A working group of officers recently submitted a detailed report identifying processes which can be migrated to the ICES (Indian Customs EDI System) or

the Indian Customs Electronic Gateway (ICEGATE) system to make the customs process automated and smooth. The



CBIC has identified processes, including filing bills of entry, filling shipping bills and risk-based examination of cargo which will be migrated to the ICES systems. "We did a very comprehensive review of part of the touch points between the customs and SEZ units and the processes involved and how we can automate them," a senior official told ET on condition of anonymity.

WHY THE SHIFT?

While customs has done a lot of work on

ease of doing business, SEZ units have been left out of their benefit. They don't use the ICES. While the basic filing on SEZ is online, there are a lot of contact points in that procedure.

Permissions have to be taken from time to time. SEZs have to apply for renewing them and goods are examined most of the time. Businesses had proposed that all their filings be shifted to the ICES. So, whatever benefits that flow from it to normal importers and exporters will also be available to SEZs.

In her budget speech, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced that the SEZ Act will be replaced with a new legislation that would enable states to become partners in development.