

Government of India  
Ministry of Finance  
Department of Revenue

LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1687  
TO BE ANSWERED ON MONDAY, 31st JULY, 2023/ SRAVANA 9, 1945(SAKA)

Faceless Assessment Group

1687. SHRI NATARAJAN P.R.:

SHRI M. SELVARAJ:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has received any representation from the importers to scrap the new system of Faceless Assessment Group (FAG) as it is creating more confusion and indirectly harasses the genuine trade in the name of the technology, as the very purpose for which it was introduced is being defeated;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Government thereon;
- (d) whether the Government has any intention/ proposal to scrap FAG and reinstate the old system of Bills of Entry (BE) for verifying the assessment to avoid undue delay in import clearance and to save the industry;
- (e) if so, the details thereof; and
- (f) if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE  
(SHRI PANKAJ CHAUDHARY)

(a) & (b): Some Representations have been received from importers, customs brokers, industry associations conveying difficulties they face for making suggestions, for improvements in faceless assessment that was introduced in the year 2020 but not for scrapping the scheme.

(c): Steps to streamline and improve the faceless assessment process have been undertaken. These include addressing risk other than through assessment, bringing higher degree of specialization in the functioning of faceless assessment groups, introducing anonymized escalation mechanism to redress grievance during the stage of assessment, automated system based generation of examination order in certain cases for enhancing uniformity, and reconfiguring faceless assessment groups and national assessment centres to better balance workload with manpower deployment.

The assessment of imports which have been interdicted by the risk management system is a function which is dynamic in nature on account of various factors including changes in nature of goods and regulatory environment. Further adjustments to adapt the faceless assessment framework to such changes would be made as and when needed.

(d) to (f): There is no proposal to scrap the faceless assessment framework. Faceless, contactless and paperless customs clearance processes are key elements of the Turant customs program which inter alia includes faceless or anonymized assessment, self-registration of goods, automated clearances, digitization of customs documents, for the objective of collectively achieving faster clearance, reduced interface and enhanced ease of doing business with each of the key elements reinforcing each other.

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