Module 25 · Trade facilitation P19 · topic 25

SM pp. 1239–1246 (FTP side: SM 1251–1253). Mostly MCQs — J23 ECL deposits, D23 export documents and ICEGATE, J24 import documents — plus **J25 Q6(a)** National Trade Facilitation Action Plan + FTP measures (7 marks). **New for Dec'26**: deferred duty for "Eligible Manufacturer Importers" and new due dates (Supp D26 p.23–25). Expected ~1.5 marks.

BACKGROUND

- WTO **Trade Facilitation Agreement** concluded 2013, in force 2017; India ratified it in April 2016 and set up the **National Committee on Trade Facilitation (NCTF)**. [SM 1239, SM 1251]
- **NTFAP aims (J25 Q6(a))**: cut transaction cost and time (ease of doing business); cut cargo release time; paperless regulatory procedures; predictable, transparent legal environment; better infrastructure for investment. [SM 1251]
- **FTP measures (J25 Q6(a))**: free passage of export consignments; Niryat Bandhu; DGFT online portal; e-IEC; e-RCMC; e-Certificate of Origin; online QCTD; eBRC + EDPMS; 24×7 helpdesk; AEO programme; Towns of Export Excellence; Status Holders. [SM 1251–1253]

Status holder	Exports (US $ million, current + 3 preceding years)
One / Two / Three Star	3 / 15 / 50
Four / Five Star	200 / 800

[SM 1253]

CUSTOMS MEASURES (SM LIST OF 18, THE ONES ASKED)

- **Mandatory documents cut to three** — commercial invoice cum packing list merged; SDF with the shipping bill no longer needed. Export: Bill of Lading / AWB, invoice cum packing list, shipping bill (D23 MCQ → **bill of entry** is not one); import: the same with the bill of entry (J24 MCQ → **shipping bill** is not one). [SM 1245]
- **ICEGATE** = Indian Customs Electronic Commerce / Electronic Data interchange (EC/EDI) Gateway (D23 MCQ). [SM 1241]
- **SWIFT** single window: one **Integrated Declaration** to customs on ICEGATE replaces separate forms to PGAs (FSSAI, quarantine, Drug Controller…), from **1-4-2016**. [SM 1244–1245]
- CCSP insurance and bond cut from **30 days to 10 days** of goods' value; 24×7 clearance at **17** air cargo complexes and **19** seaports; mate receipt abolished; printouts cut; ECCS for courier; IDPMS with RBI; CCFC at ports. [SM 1243–1246]
- **s.46(3)** (FA 2021): bill of entry by the end of the day **before** arrival (holidays included); can be filed up to 30 days before; late → charges unless sufficient cause. [SM 1246]

DEFERRED PAYMENT OF IMPORT DUTY ("CLEAR FIRST, PAY LATER")

- Deferred Payment of Import Duty Rules, 2016 from **16.11.2016**. Who: **AEO T-2 / T-3** importers, **Authorised Public Undertakings**, and from **1-4-2026 Eligible Manufacturer Importers** (till March 31, 2028). [SM 1240–1241, Supp D26 p.23–24]
- Intimate the Pr. Commissioner / Commissioner of the port; ICEGATE login; pay **electronically**. Lost if more than one default in any three consecutive months (until dues + interest cleared); not for goods not assessed / not in the BE. Differential duty on reassessment within one day. [SM 1241]
- **Eligible Manufacturer Importer** (N. 12/2026-Cus (NT), Circular 08/2026): manufacturer importer approved by the Directorate of International Customs; valid IEC; at least **25** import / export documents last year (**10** for MSMEs); a GST registration as factory / manufacturing; PAN turnover over **₹5 crore**; in business **two** financial years; all GST returns filed; clean record; CA solvency certificate. Existing AEO-T1 entities meeting these also qualify. [Supp D26 p.23–25]

BE returned for payment	Due date: SM (old)	From 1-3-2026
1st–15th, months other than March	16th of that month	**1st of next month**
16th–last day, other than March	1st of next month	1st of next month
1st–15th March	16th March	**31st March**
16th–31st March	31st March	31st March

Old: [SM 1242] · New: N. 13/2026-Cus (NT) dated 01-02-2026, Supp D26 p.25 (table is a picture). Holidays excluded.

ELECTRONIC CASH LEDGER · S.51A

- Every deposit towards duty, interest, penalty, fee goes to the ECL; ECL balance pays any customs sum; unused balance refundable; Board may exempt deposits (s.51A(4)). From 1-4-2023, phased. [SM 1242]
- **Exempt from ECL**: customs stations without the automated system; **accompanied baggage**; payments other than electronic payment of duty, **IGST**, compensation cess, interest, penalty, fees. Courier terminals came into the ECL from **01.03.2024**. J23 MCQ → **payment of IGST is not exempt**. [SM 1242–1243]

AEO

- Tiers AEO-T1, T2, T3 for importers / exporters; **AEO-LO** for others. T3 needs T2 held continuously for two years (or T2 with AEO business partners). Benefits: secure supply chain, MRA-country clearance, lower dwell time, customs support abroad. [SM 1241, SM 1252]

⚠ SM OUT OF DATE

SM 1242 still prints the old due-date table (1st–15th → 16th). For Dec'26 use the **1st of the next month** (March → **31st March**), N. 13/2026-Cus (NT), effective 01.03.2026 (Supp D26 p.25, picture); and add **Eligible Manufacturer Importers** to the eligible classes. [Supp D26 p.23–25]

PROBLEMS BOX · DEFERRED-DUTY DUE DATES (RECOMPUTED BY SCRIPT)

WORKED PATTERN · OLD v NEW TABLE

BE returned	Old (SM)	New
10 May 2026	16 May	1 June
20 May 2026	1 June	1 June
10 March 2026	16 March	31 March
5 December 2026	—	1 January 2027

Our working from the two tables (holidays ignored); script m25_patterns.py.

PRACTISE THESE

J23 Q1(ix) ECL · D23 Q1(xi), Q1(xiv) · J24 Q1(xi) · J25 Q6(a) NTFAP + FTP measures · ICMAI Practice Workbook: no problem on this module.

ANSWER FRAME · J25 Q6(a) (7 MARKS)

(1) WTO TFA → India ratified, NCTF formed; (2) the five NTFAP aims; (3) list 8–10 FTP measures with one line each (free passage, Niryat Bandhu, e-IEC, eBRC/EDPMS, e-CoO, AEO, TEE, status holders).

MEMORY HOOK

"Clear first, pay on the 1st — March pays by the 31st." Three documents; one window; ECL for everything except baggage and non-automated stations.